

Podcast Script the First: June 2019

Hello! This is Lindsey, owner of Stilly River Yarns in Stanwood, Washington. We've been in business for just over two years now, and one of the things that customers enjoy and want to take part in the most is the community that we have at the shop - you've told us you want to hear more about what we're working on, what we see customers working on, new items, recipes, trends in the yarn and fiber arts world, book and podcast recommendations... and, well, who are we to not take that on in our mission as a full-service yarn shop? So here we are with what we hope will be a taste of Stilly River Yarns in audio form - the Stilly String Podcast. This will be a work in progress, and I'm a one-woman show (not just here, but in the shop as well), so if you have feedback or corrections, please drop me a line by email or let me know when you swing by the shop. I'll include our contact information in the show notes. Right now, the podcast is scheduled to go out once a month - I'm aiming for getting it out at the end of the third week each month.

With all that in mind... here we go! I'm going to start with what I'm currently working on, then move to recently finished and shared items, and then end with what's going on in the shop and any upcoming regional events. For photos and links to patterns, check out the shop's blog - I'll have a special post up for each episode.

All righty. First up is going to be "works in progress." I just started a version of the Vanora shell from the latest issue of Knitty. (If you're not familiar with Knitty, it's a completely free online fiber arts publication - in spite of the name, they've also added crochet and handspinning patterns and articles in the past few years.) I'm using Pollock by Juniper Moon Farms, which is a great summer blend of 55% silk and 45% linen - the colorway is called "Greyed Rainbow," and it's really subtle and lovely.

The fabric is incredible, too. I'm modifying it slightly because I really loathe tank tops/shells, so I'm adding sleeves and turning it into a drop-shoulder tee instead. (The pattern is basically just two big rectangular panels that get seamed, so picking up stitches for the sleeves shouldn't be a big deal, she said optimistically.)

I should also really get back to work on a languishing spinning project that I started... last year, I think? It's a blend of natural brown merino and undyed silk, and while it's lovely, I only have one bobbin's worth and I think there are 6 ounces of fiber left in my project box. Maybe that'll be my Tour de Fleece project.

Projects that are currently happening in the shop - I'm going to name these in no particular order, but our customers are crafting up a storm right now. This isn't an exhaustive list, but it'll give you a good idea of what's on the hooks and needles - I've seen an Almanac sweater by Tin Can Knits, a Derecho by Alison Green, a Nightshift shawl by Andrea Mowry, Unheeded Warnings (another shawl) by Barbara Benson, a Boyfriend Hat by Stephanie Nicole Bennet, Cowboys and Angels by Isabell Kraemer (which is another shawl), Hitchhiker by Martina Behm, Kline Shawl by Jennifer Dassau, Bonny by Tin Can Knits, and a vest called Areca by Shibui Knits. We've also heard about a Simurg shawl by Olga Sukhovalova - take a look at this thing on Ravelry. It's incredible, sculptural lace.

Recently finished - I'm finally done with the Isla shawl by Julie Blagojevich. If you follow the shop on Instagram, you may recognize this as the purple behemoth I've been working on for a few months. It ended up using 1500 yards of laceweight on a USD / 3.25mm hook, and I'm very glad to be on the other side of it. I used 1 cake of Ella Rae Rustic Lace Quad in the Florence colorway, but I did add in 1 ball of Ella Rae Rustic Lace in Ivory at the beginning because I just couldn't take the endless stretch of mauve at the beginning; I also did a small stripe of Ivory near the very end because I wasn't sure I'd be

able to finish on the yarn fumes I had left on the main color, and I wanted the darkest purple to end the shawl.

We also wrapped up our second year of participating in the Puget Sound LYS Tour - thank you so, so much to everyone who came to the shop to visit during the Tour! It is such an amazing, energizing time of year (even though we're completely exhausted at the end of each day), and it was fantastic to see so many returning visitors AND new people! We're really glad that you loved our patterns and yarns selections - many, many thanks to our pattern designers, Meredith Hainsworth and Karen Whooley, for their hard work and gorgeous designs. If you haven't encountered them in person or on social media, they're delightful women that we're proud to have in our community - we'll have links to their websites and feeds in the show notes. The Tour is an incredibly important part of our year, and we're so grateful to our shop volunteers, customers, and colleagues on the Tour for making the event possible each year. The Tour just announced next year's dates, so mark your calendars for May 13 through 17, 2020. It'll be the Tour's fifteenth anniversary, so expect lots of fun and excitement!

Non-knitting finishing work that has happened recently... I'm also getting back into reading. In the process of getting the shop opened and established - and having two young kids at home - my grownup reading has been necessarily limited to books on business, cookbooks, and whatever Pete the Cat / Wings of Fire / Little Monster books get brought my way. I just listened to *Midnight in Chernobyl* by Adam Higgenbotham, which is a non-fictional account of the circumstances leading up to and events during and after the Chernobyl nuclear plant disaster in 1986. I was five when it happened, and my grasp of nuclear engineering isn't that great - plus, I got hooked on the Chernobyl podcast that HBO put out earlier this spring (though I didn't watch the TV series because we don't have TV), and I was really interested in the detailed, character-driven storytelling that the series

seemed to focus on. I was *not* disappointed. I appreciate that Higgenbotham took great pains to make the science engaging and clear for the layperson, and that he painted a more complex picture of life and culture in the Soviet Union in the late 1970s and early 1980s than I think we typically get in the media and American pop culture. I also finished *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas as part of an online book club being run by Anne Vally of Little Skein in the Big Wool. It's a book club called We Need More Diverse Books and Yarn, and it was born out of the conversations on racism, diversity, inclusivity, and representation that have come to the forefront over the past year or so, both in the fiber arts world and in the wider cultural scene. It was a really good read - I thought Thomas did an excellent job of contextualizing and presenting so many of The Big Ideas in those conversations in an approachable way (especially important because the book was originally written for young adults). It's an emotionally heavy read, but Thomas's use of first-person limited narration by Starr is brilliant and - again - contextualizes the Big Ideas in a way that makes them so much more concrete and able to be discussed. I don't know that I would necessarily have picked up *The Hate U Give* on a trip to the library, so I'm glad to have been prodded to do so.

And now we come to the "what's new in the shop / what's happening here and regionally" part of the podcast. We are FINALLY almost done with our restock orders following the Puget Sound Local Yarn Shop Tour. Holy cats, I'm so glad to be approaching the end of the reorder process! I think I've put in something like a dozen orders, and there are only two or three left. We're restocked on favorites like Berroco Vintage, Berroco Nebula, and Zauberball Cotton; we've also added some fantastic new items. Woolbuddy needle-felting kits have just about everything you need to get going on your first 3D needle-felted project - the only thing you need is a felting mat. (I cut up a piece of dense green upholstery foam that I bought at JoAnn's, but we also have 100% wool felting mats in stock.) We've also added Zauberball Crazy as a test-run; it's a 75/25 superwash wool / nylon blend that acts very

much like a handspun fingering-weight yarn. Malabrigo Mechita arrived last week, and it's a fingering-weight superwash merino single that knits and crochets up beautifully. (I made Fortune's Shawlette in it for a friend of mind a few years ago, and it was maybe one of my favorite things that I've ever handcrafted.) Laurie from Fuzzy Britches Farm and Susanna from Bah Ram Ewe Farm have both stocked us up on local and locally-processed fibers; we have some specialty fibers like pure angora and mohair, breed-specific locks, and rolags that are both blends and breed-specific. There's a HUGE Akerworks order that arrived yesterday afternoon, complete with more drop spindles, Simple and Butterfly Kates, and Knitting Kits. The Knitting Kits are incredible and come fully stocked with typical fiber arts notions like removable stitch markers, mini-scissors, a tape measure, and tapestry needles... but the tray is magnetized so nothing falls out, AND there's a needle and hook sizer gauge built right into the edge of the tray. (Seriously. I toss mine in my project bag at the end of the day, and everything gets tossed into the Whobaru... maybe I have a stitch marker fall out occasionally, but that's it. I'm so happy with it!) AND - and and and - we had a visit from Amy of Word Picture Ink Design yesterday, and she dropped off some of her great Stronger Together enamel pins and stickers, plus "Celebrate Diversknitty / Hooked on Inclusion" stickers. We'll have Pride stickers and enamel pins from Amy sometime next week, too. We'll give you a link to her Instagram feed over on the blog post for this episode so you can check out all of her incredible work.

And now, regional fiber arts happenings!

- The Slow Yarn Crawl PNW is going on from now until Labor Day. More on our participation in that event in just a second.
- Black Sheep Gathering will be taking place in Albany, Oregon from July 5 through 7.

- The 2019 Tour de Fleece will be taking place from July 6 through 28 this year. We host spin-ins each Saturday from 1 to 4 PM, and we'd love to see you and your spinning setup come to visit!
- Bow Farmers' Market holds a Fiber Day each August; mark your calendars for this year's event on Thursday, August 22! We'll be there doing demos and saying hello.

For our shop-specific upcoming events - it's a busy summer here at Stilly River Yarns!

We're currently in the middle of the Slow Yarn Crawl PNW, which is happening from now until Labor Day (September 2 in the US). There are 35 participating shops in Idaho, Washington, and Oregon, and you can choose to do as many (or as few) shops as you like! There are prizes for completing various regions, but each shop will also have its own drawing... plus there's a grand prize drawing for completing the WHOLE THING. Passports cost \$10 USD, and we also have Slow Crawl logo enamel pins available for \$6 USD. Our patterns are the Shi Shi Beach Cowl, which is an intermediate- to advanced-level worsted-weight brioche cowl designed by Meredith Hainsworth of Useless Bay Knits; and the Cama Beach Scarf, a crocheted, asymmetrical triangular scarf that I designed. You can see photos of both items on the Slow Crawl page on our website - click on "Classes and Events" at the top, and then select the "2019 Slow Crawl" page. For those who don't feel super-confident about their brioche knitting skills, we've found two free worsted-weight patterns that'll help you build up to the Shi Shi Beach Cowl - those are listed on the Slow Crawl page of our website as well. (The Basic Brioche Cowl by Mercedes Tarasovich is a good intro to one-color brioche in the round; the Brioche Basic Beanie by Marilyn Blacketer is an opportunity to practice two-color brioche in the round and learn brioche decreases.)

Our shopiversary (observed) will be happening sometime in July. With the Stanwood-Camano school year getting pushed back so far this year, we've got a little too much on our plate to make it happen sooner.

By the time this gets posted, our new class listings and registrations should be available on the shop's website - basics of brioche, intro to lace, Swatchbuckling Adventures and Blocking 101 are all on the slate this summer.

And finally, speaking of Swatchbuckling Adventures, we're going to be down at the Seattle Knitters' Guild on Wednesday, July 10 to do an abridged version of that class. The guild meets at the Wedgwood Presbyterian Church, and the meeting will open at 7 PM; get all the details on the guild's website, seattleknittersguild.org.

That'll do it for our first ever podcast episode - again, thanks so much for listening, and be sure you tell your friends and fellow fiber people about us. If you're in the Stanwood area, please swing by to say hello - we love being able to put faces with names! Any questions or feedback? Please reach out - our contact information is at the bottom of our website, but we'll also have it in the show notes.

Until next time - take care, travel safe, and craft your heart out.