



"A swatch is not wasted labour by any means; it makes an excellent pocket. "

— Elizabeth Zimmermann, in [The Opinionated Knitter](#)



a newsletter from  
**Meg Swansen**

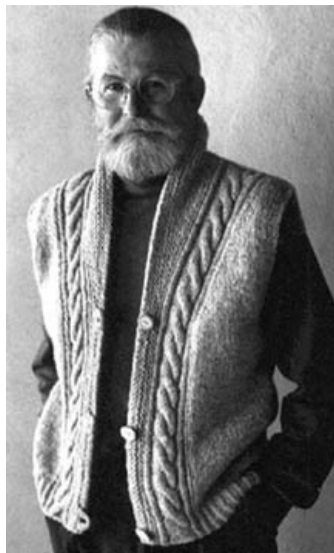
Dear Knitters,

After over a decade of wussy winters (about 12, Eleanor thinks), finally we are getting a proper one this year. Storm after storm has produced masses of snow; it is biting cold (the nostril-sticking, snow-squeeking, well below-zero kind); too cold for clouds, so we have plenty of sun. Lovely. The new warehouse is steaming along, warmed by the massive Russian stove; here is a shot of the building through the icicles dripping from my solar-collectors; you can just see my commuter-path through the yard.



Two more DVDs are in the works: the former video of my [Shawl Collared Vest](#) and a newly-taped DVD of EZ's [Ribwarmer](#), with the bonus [Butterfly Jacket](#).

Both garments were first shown in a 1956 issue of *McCall's Needlework* magazine. The [Ribwarmer](#) went on to become nearly as popular as EZ's [Baby Surprise Jacket](#), but the [Butterfly](#) has not been seen again until now.



We are at work on two new books:

### On the Website

[New Knit Along: Feb 08](#)



[Conch Hat starts Feb 4](#)



[New Colors Unspun Icelandic Wool](#)



*Double-Knitting, Reversible Two-color Designs* by M'lou Baber (stunning garments!)

Katharine Cobey's most beautiful book, *Diagonal Knitting*, is coming along nicely. We hope for Summer publication of the first and perhaps Winter '09 for Katharine's book.

And, look for celebratory articles about the 50th Anniversary of Schoolhouse Press in *Knit-N-Style* (by Michael DelVeccio), *Interweave Knits* (by Franklin Habit), and *Vogue Knitting* (by the editors).

The steady stream of queries I receive feed this electronic Newsletter beautifully; thank you—and keep 'em coming.

### Q&A

*Q: Is there some way you can tell me how to place stitch markers so that I don't have to count and I don't have to squint my eyes to see where the darn double decrease is???*

A: Dear Rose,

In most of our instructions and (I think) all our [DVDs](#), I demonstrate our method of putting a coil-less pin directly into the Important Stitch itself.

In case of a series of double-decreases where you are turning 3-stitches-into-one-stitch (as it might be on the [Baby Surprise Jacket](#)): count the stitches for the first row; work the double-decreases, then immediately put a coil-less pin into the resulting single stitch (just below the needle). This Marked Stitch will then be the middle of the next 3-stitches-that-turn-into-one. Since the coil-less pin is in the fabric itself—instead of over the needle—you need not move it again for several inches of knitting.

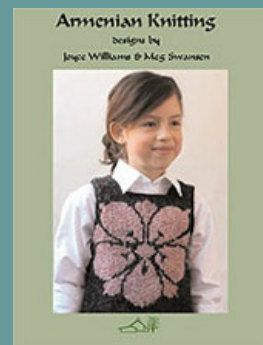
As your familiarity with knitting increases, you will learn to SEE the double-decreases and, often, may find your pin-marker way back at the cast-on edge. Also, we produced a very detailed [DVD of the BSJ](#) last year. I do make a point of showing the double-increases and double-decreases; sometimes it is helpful to see the garment being knitted.

*Q: I have just finished reading my Vogue Knitting mag silver anniversary collector's issue. On page 82, Meg mentions a new technique she came across for increasing. If I may quote from the mag:*

"I just learned something the other day: Instead of knitting into the front and back of the stitch, knit into the front of the stitch, don't remove it, go in as if you're going to knit into the back and slip it off. You eliminate the purl bump. And I've never used it because of the purl bump, and now the purl bump has been eliminated."

*OK. I have practiced this a few times—and for the life of me all I end up with is wrap round the needle twice. I must be doing something wrong. I am knitting a bolero and trying to create a nice neat edge along the front edging. so I don't end up with heaps of lumps and bumps. HELP!!!!*

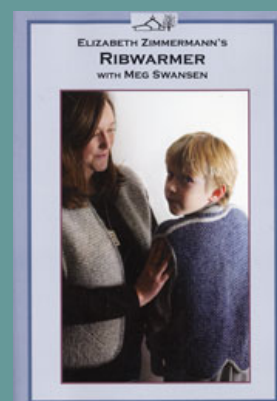
### [Armenian Knitting](#)



Armenian Knitting, \$24

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### [Ribwarmer DVD](#)



Ribwarmer DVD, \$25

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Sterling Silver Pendant, \$35

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A: Dear Treacy from Australia,  
Sometimes it is easier to SEE what is going on; I'll do it in two colors for clarification...

1: Knit into the stitch but do not remove it from the L needle



2: go into the back of the same stitch. STOP. slip both the strands off the L needle.

3: Voilà, a knit-into-front-and-back-of-the-stitch-increase with NO purl-bump.

Thank you Shirley Grade (of the Yarn House in Elm Grove, WI), via Amy Detjen, knitting camp assistant and technical editor.



Q: Will it be a problem if I block a shawl before attaching the I-cord border?

A: Actually, dear Renee, it is advisable to block before adding the Cord border; that way you can get just the right elasticity.

Q: I would like to know if I can put the 2 legs of the baby leggings on 1 40" circular and then knit them at the same time?

A: Dear Irene,

Although I have not tried a single 40" needle, I have worked both legs (sleeves) (stockings) on two 24" circular needles as follows:

Half the stitches of each leg are on one (24") needle; half on a second needle; two balls of wool. The last time I did that, my mantra became:

\*Same Needle, New Wool  
Same Wool, New Needle

Repeat from \*. I'll be interested to hear how you like the technique. I had to concentrate too much and am back to one leg at a time. There was an amazing woman at Camp who knitted 3 PAIRS of socks at once in this mode. (yes, that is 6 total socks on the needles with 6 balls of wool. Woof.)

Q: I have been thinking about the possibility of knitting sleeves on a fitted sweater by picking up stitches at the armholes and knitting downward (as usual) but then using short rows across the center top to create extra room for the sleeve cap so the sleeve (if you were to lay it flat) would look like the shaped sleeve caps you see for sweaters knitted flat. Have you ever tried or heard of such a thing?

A. Do you mean Sleeve-Cap Shaping? Elizabeth used it in several designs and you can find it in Barbara G. Walker's book, [Knitting](#)

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qty:

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The Application for Meg Swansen's Knitting Camps and Retreats for 2008 will be posted online February 1-6.

Please note: in future we will no longer send out 'dates' postcards or application postcards; please check the [Schoolhouse Press site](#) each Fall to find application dates.

**Subscriber Specials**



[From the Top](#). And, literally, I am in the middle of doing it myself on a lightweight cardigan right this minute. I worked an inset sleeve-steek so the armhole top would sit on the wearer's shoulder. Knit up around the cut armhole and, beginning at the shoulder top: k10, wrap, knit back-backwards 20, wrap, k forward 25, wrap, k backward 30, etc., for as many extra rows as you wish, forming a nice crescent-shape sleeve-cap.

Q: I just received my copy of [Armenian Knitting](#) where it is mentioned that Meg has two ways of trapping, one invisible and one with tiny specs (sometimes). Because the specs are a feature of Armenian knitting, I am assuming that the trapping methods in this book are not the invisible ones. Have you published the invisible method in an issue of [Woolgathering](#) or one of your books?

A: Actually, dear Gail, my Invisible method is identical to the moves photographed for Joyce's method (across top of page ??); except I hold one wool over each (index and middle) finger.

For me, showing or not showing is dependent upon whether the trapped color is Over or Under the MC. When it travels Under the MC, it is closer to the surface of the fabric and is more liable to peek through. When the trapped color travels Over the MC, it is being pulled away from the surface and is neigh unto invisible...for me, that is. I demonstrate both methods on the [Knitting Glossary DVD](#).

Q: I am a beginning knitter and I have what may be a very stupid question: I was reading over the [Adult Surprise Jacket](#) instructions where it says to measure the body-width, where on the body do I get these measurements from?

A: Dear Iris,  
Rather than have to guess at how much 'ease' to calculate, it is more reliable to measure your (or the recipient's) favorite-fitting sweater across the body, just below the armholes. Also—the ASJ is a LOT of knitting. I recommend you take a few evenings and 3 ounces of wool to knit the [baby version](#) first; even if you do not know a baby at present. It will give you a clue as to what you are about as you plough through the adult version (good February knitting).

Q: I am trying to find yarn to undertake a twine knitting project. My mother-in-law told me that [Schoolhouse Press](#) can sell me the right wool for this type of project.

A: Dear Jan,  
This is a bit controversial: the 'authentic' twined knitting is supposed to be worked using Z-ply wool, which is not easy to obtain in the USA (Nancy Bush has some, I believe). I have knitted nearly a dozen Twined Knitting projects and have only used S-ply wools; they look fine.

Additional controversy: I do not twist the two strands around each other between every single stitch—rather, when both wools are in back, I strand them. I have a test swatch with half knitted 'properly' and half knitted 'improperly. Without looking at the inside, knitters cannot tell which is which. Knitter's Choice.

#### ERRATA:

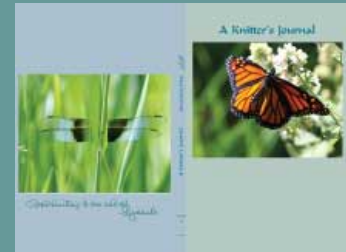
Q: I'm working on the [Celtic Knot hat](#) from [Armenian Knitting \(pg 10\)](#). Doing the basic double decrease on the top causes you to decrease the number knitted between the decreases on the following rows by 2, right? ...or am I missing something?

A: Omigosh YES, dear Mindy. We are going to reprint fairly soon and I will certainly make that change. Thank you for alerting us to the mistake!

#### STATS:

Thank you for this wonderful series of stats, dear Esther Paris—for those who like to know JUST what is going on as they are knitting

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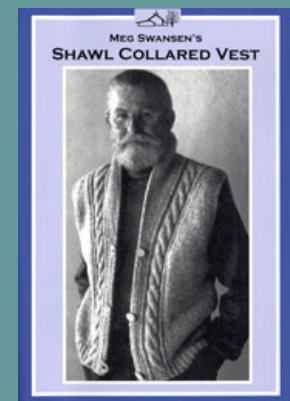
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EZ's [Baby Surprise Jacket](#):

Landmark Math for the BSJ

Total stitches in a BSJ (counting cast on/off as stitches): 15,079

10% point: row 9

20% point: row 19

25% point: row 25 (funny coincidence!)

30% point: row 32

40% point: row 47

50% point: row 60

60% point: row 71

70% point: row 82

75% point: row 91

80% point: row 99

90% point: row 107

and... TADA...

100% point: row 115

*"Maybe no one but I would care about such things. (I have an engineering mind-set.) But I like to think that any one who has started a BSJ and is wondering 'will I have enough yarn?' would like this information." — Esther Paris*

Do you have a question you would like to have answered in another newsletter? [Write to me](#).

Outward,  
EZ