

# Unwinding

Knitting is a great de-stresser—once you get past the stressful part.

## SO, I'VE TAKEN UP KNITTING.

I don't know what I was thinking, really. It's not like I need more things to do. There really isn't room in my life for trips to the yarn store, nor is there room in my brain for concepts like K 5(6, 8, 10, 12), BO 2 sts, K to last 7(8, 10, 12, 14) sts BO 2, K 5(6, 8, 10, 12). And God knows there's no room in my already overcluttered house for yarn, needles, knitting-projects-in-progress, and the like.

Plus, I have cats. Who in their right mind would try to knit with cats around?

But I'm always looking for ways to unwind after work—to leave behind the page proofs, the stories that need to be assigned, the e-mails that I have no hope of keeping up with. And I have a couple of friends—like our former art director **April Scimio '84 A&A**—who are always talking about how they knit as a way to relax.

So I went to the local yarn shop, Stitch Your Art Out (owned by Kim Davis and the perhaps overeducated **Cynthia Spencer '81 Bus, '84 MA Lib, '94 MS, '02 PhD Edu**). I signed up for their Knitting 101 class.

And immediately found it to be unbelievably stressful.

Oh yeah, I should mention that I have zero aptitude for knitting. I grew up with a mom who was the queen of all that stuff: sewing, knitting, cross-stitch, quilting, lace-work. But it was my sister who got that gene; I'm much more interested in things like basketball and ice hockey.

So my initial attempts in the knitting class, and on my own after that, were—how shall I put this—pathetic. I'd jab the needle through the wrong hole in the yarn, wrap the yarn around the wrong way, forget to wrap the yarn around at all. I had no ability to discern whether what I had just created was a stitch or a boo-boo. And I created a *lot* of boo-boos. I was constantly having to drive out to my friend Cathy's house to hand her the mess. She'd look at it, frown, and say, "What were you *drinking*?" Then she'd spend 10 minutes untangling and repairing before handing it back to me, good to go again.

Eventually, I got the hang of it, more or less. I finished the scarf I started in class and have started a new one (for which I am proud to say I understand the pattern: K1, YO, K2tog, repeat). I've signed up for a class called "Beginner Hat." I can't picture ever getting to the point where I knit, say, Fair Isle sweaters or those adorable little toddler cardigans, complete with buttonholes and scalloped collars. But I'm having fun down here at my skill level (which I think is officially known in knitting circles as Junior High Home Ec Class).

So, yeah, I'm starting to see how this can be a pleasant way to spend an evening. Though I'm still not quite adept enough to, say, watch TV and knit at the same time; that's a guaranteed recipe for another trip out to Cathy's.

If my mom were still alive, she'd find all of this amusing, considering how badly she wanted to pass along her knitting know-how—not to mention her needles and her yarn stash—to me. If you had asked her when I was 14 whether I'd ever take up knitting, she would have laughed at you—and I would have, too. But apparently what April says is true: "Sooner or later, everybody knits."

*Tina*

Tina Hay '83 Bus, Editor  
tinahay@psu.edu

