

CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES MADE THE 2007 FALL KNIT & CROCHET SHOW IN OAKLAND MEMORABLE FOR ATTENDEES

“Many of the more than 2300 show-goers at the recent 2007 Fall Knit & Crochet Show in Oakland, CA, who filled out an event evaluation gave high marks for the classes offered and all of the special events that marked three energy-filled days,” said Event Manager Penny Sitler. “Comments ranged from ‘very enjoyable’ to ‘best classes I have had in several years’ to ‘fashion show was great!’ to ‘auction was excellent’ to ‘we need more market hours’.

The Show was co-sponsored by The Knitting Guild Association (TKGA – www.TKGA.com) and the Crochet Guild of America (CGOA – www.Crochet.org). Other show sponsors included: Bernat/Patons, Caron International, Clif Bar & Co./Luna, Coats & Clark, Lion Brand, South West Trading Co., Tahki Stacy Charles and Westminster Fibers. Caron International sponsored member meetings for TKGA and the CGOA. Coats & Clark provided Teach Me2 Crochet/Knit™ sessions throughout Show hours for anyone wishing to learn. Tahki Stacy Charles sponsored the 24/7 Knit & Crochet Lounge, and Westminster Fibers sponsored the Fashion Shows. Laura Bryant of Prism Yarns coordinated and emceed a Friday Vendor Fashion Parade on the Show Floor and a Member and Designer Fashion Show at the Saturday evening banquet. Nancie Wiseman joined Bryant as fashion show emcee on Saturday.

Seventy-seven booths presented knitting and crochet-related products during exhibit hours, and there were 78 classes. Exhibitor Gita Sturm of Gita Maria, Gold Beach, OR, shared: “The Fall Knit & Crochet Show was my most profitable show of the year. It was worth flying to and making a weekend out of it. It’s a lovely show!”

Goody bags for pre-registered attendees and free shopping bags were provided by Coats & Clark, Lion Brand, Bernat/Patons and South West Trading. Author book signings were held throughout the Show floor. World’s Fastest Crocheter and Knitter Time Trials were sponsored by the Craft Yarn Council of America. Door prizes from vendors and a host of manufacturers were lavishly bestowed throughout exhibit hours, at member meetings and at the Saturday evening banquet/fashion show.

The Helping Handbags Silent Auction drew more than \$600 in bids in support of the non-profit Needle Arts Mentoring ProgramSM (www.needleartsmentoring.org), a nationwide project of the Helping Hands Foundation, Inc. to teach needle arts to children across the country. Designers and vendors who donated handbags for the auction included: Sandra Benward, Continental Stitch, Colleen Davis, Margaret Hubert, International Freeform Crochet Guild, Nancy Nehring, Pluckings, Sheep City USA, Dragon Lady Designs, PlayingwithString.com, Carol Ventura, Karen Whooley, Y2Knit and The Yarn Place.

As part of the TKGGA National Conference, TKGGA members celebrated special guild anniversaries with prizes and cake. In "Recognition of Guilds that Represent the Best of TKGGA," certificates were awarded for 22 years with TKGGA to representatives from the Valley Needlers Guild (CA) and the Knitting Artists of Northern Virginia (VA). Certificates were also awarded to the North Coast Knitters (CA) for 19 years as part of the Association, and the Camellia City Stockin'ettes (CA) for 17 years of affiliation. The Knitting Guild Association, which was founded in 1984, currently boasts approximately 10,000 members and more than 270 local guilds.

A TKGGA Honorary Lifetime Membership award was bestowed on Barbara Scott for her years of varied service to the Association and most recently as long-time instructor of the TKGGA Basics, Basics, Basics knitting correspondence course. As Scott retires from teaching the popular lessons, Arenda Holladay has stepped in to take over the student load and keep the knitting course going strong.

A pin and the coveted title "Master Knitter" was conferred on Saturday evening on TKGGA members Lori Lober, Cheryl Mason, Susan Schroeder, Dawn Seymour and Doreen Stacy. Nineteen other TKGGA knitters have achieved the same status since last year's national conference but were unable to attend; they will receive their pins by mail. A total of 183 hand and seven machine knitters have completed all three Masters levels to earn the TKGGA Master Knitting Program's "Master Knitter" designation since the program began in 1985.

Dozens of Precious Pals (www.tkgga.com/preciouspals.shtm) - stuffed animals in knitted and crocheted outfits - were donated for presentation by TKGGA to children in crisis. This year's Precious Pals are designated for Beanies for Baghdad to aid U.S. troops in cheering children in Iraq and Afghanistan, many of whom are orphaned by current crises or otherwise have virtually nothing. Last year's Precious Pals were distributed by Volunteers of America to young Katrina victims.

The next Knit & Crochet Show is the 2008 Summer Knit & Crochet Show in Manchester, NH, July 25-27. It will feature the CGOA National Chain Link Conference and TKGGA Regional Conference. Look for details as they develop at www.KnitandCrochetShow.com. The Show's producer is Offinger Management Company (Offinger.com). Those interested in exhibiting in 2008 can contact KnitandCrochetShow@Offinger.com or write: The Knit & Crochet Show, 1100-H Brandywine Blvd, Zanesville OH 43701-7303.