



Regina Spitzer says she always had a knack for knitting. At age 77, she is considered an expert at designing knitting patterns and has her own knit shop in Oak Park. (Staff photos by Gary Friedman)

# Knitting expert lends unique touches

By SHIRLEE IDEN

Ask Regina Spitzer why people still knit and she'll tell you they love to do it and love to look different.

Modeling isn't usually Franka Igiewicz's line, but here she shows one of the sweaters made by a client of the Exquisite Knit Shop where she sells yarn and gives instructions.

Mrs. Spitzer, 77, still runs the Exquisite Knit Shop which she started with her husband, Oscar, 32 years ago.

While her employees help people choose yarn and patterns, Mrs. Spitzer gives expert knitting instruction. Even though they may have to wait for her, her clients have learned to depend on her.

"We call her the computer," said Edie Klein, an employee. "She can remember the yarn, the needles and size and even if someone knits loosely or tightly."

Mrs. Spitzer, born in Vienna, Austria, said she always had a knack for knitting.

"But my husband was an expert at buying and was active in the business until his death two years ago," she said. "We always had imported yarns of all kinds that you couldn't get anywhere else."

"My husband used to sell wholesale as well as in the shop."

THE SPITZERS came to this country in 1948 from Shanghai where they had fled the Holocaust.

"We came here because my son, Kurt, wanted to continue his studies and a social worker suggested Detroit," she said.

"In Shanghai my son went to school with W. Michael Blumenthal, who is now Secretary of the Treasury. Now my son is a social work professor at Wayne State University."

She said her son worked at Ford Motor Company nights and studied days to gain his education.

"But I still remember leaving Shanghai," she said. "We had to take three big cases of paper bills to the bank to get our tickets. The inflation was great and the bills worth very little."

When they came to this area, they had to begin their lives all over again. With her knack for knitting and Spitzer's knack for business and buying, they began the knit store on Dexter Boulevard in Detroit.

Now the shop is in Oak Park and the Mrs. Spitzer continues to make her residence in Southfield.

With a talent that seems instinctive, she can look at a picture, measure out the parts of the garment and make a knitting pattern for the customer.

SHE STILL knits occasionally for her son, daughter-in-law and three grandchildren, but sometimes relies on others to do the hand work for her.

"I'm so busy that sometimes I will order something from a good knitter and simply pay for it," she said.

Mrs. Spitzer believes that, with good instruction, anyone can learn to knit.

"People who try to learn to love knitting," she added.

Each morning at 7:30 a.m., she turns the key in the lock to prepare for another day's business.

"I have nice customers and really nice employees," she said. "One girl has worked for me more than 20 years. My employees are my best friends."

She also maintains she sells the nicest yarn available anywhere.

"We do have the biggest selection of yarns and people know that," she said. "We have yarns from Italy and France as well. Lately the French yarn is the most interesting."

Last year's sensations were the chenille yarns which Mrs. Spitzer said got a lot of people interested in knitting.

"Another thing about knitting is that you can save a lot of money and always look different."

So many people come to Regina Spitzer for instruction because they know she's the top person in her field.

Even basketball star Bob Lanier knew where to go recently when he wanted to order a special kind of jacket.

## à la mode fashion calendar

Monday, July 2  
Alfred's Restaurant — Fashions from Rodier's will be modeled from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. in the restaurant in the Somerset Mall.

Tuesday, July 3  
Jaeger's — Fashions from Jaeger's will be modeled from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. in Alfred's Restaurant in the Somerset Mall.

Thursday, July 5  
Bonwit Teller — Fashions from Bonwit Teller will be modeled from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. in Alfred's Restaurant in the Somerset Mall.

Friday, July 6  
Mackenzie — Fashions from Mackenzie will be modeled from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. in Alfred's Restaurant in the Somerset Mall.

Saturday, July 7  
Tennis Lady — Tennis Lady fashions are modeled from 12:30 to 2:30 p.m. in Alfred's Restaurant.

### The Guest and Gift Shop.

Saks understands. We know you've been searching the highways and the bi-ways to scout for just the right...the perfect gift—either for yourself, or your friends. But, with so many necessary luxuries to be had...what to get? Where to go? We'll answer the second question first. Where to go? Saks, naturally. What to get? That's up to you. Our great Guest and Gift shop has truly a stupendous and sundry selection to satisfy all your home entertaining needs. A few marvelous cases in point: our exquisite Baccarat Collection, fine and casual dinnerware, gifts for the gourmet (including the amazing Cuisinart<sup>TM</sup> food processor), barware, uniquely decorative table accessories, crystal, and all sorts of ingeniously practical imports from around the world. Do stop by soon—to browse. We're sure you'll find something just...perfect. Summer comfort and gracious living are synonymous. And they both begin at Saks Fifth Avenue's Guest and Gift Shop.

*Saks Fifth Avenue*

Troy, Somerset Mall, Big Beaver at Coolidge  
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Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, 10 AM to 6 PM  
Sundays, Noon to 5 PM

### Solar energy update

The power of the sun, so obvious in the summer months, seems destined to play a bigger part in our future as it did in our ancient past.

This year the government is spending \$650 million on solar energy development. By 1985, the Department of Energy recommends the total be increased to more than \$3 billion.

Even now, the architecture of new buildings is being designed to conserve energy and take advantage of the sun's warmth and light.

The future may reflect the past, according to solar energy historians, who have found that many buildings in ancient Rome and Greece were built on the same principles used today in "passive" solar homes.

These homes are designed, insulated, and sited to gather as much heat as possible from the winter sun and only small amounts in summer.

In ancient Rome, building a structure that blocked a neighbor's sunlight was illegal. And in Greece, the ancient city of Olynthus was built on solar principles.

Living rooms of houses faced north while open courtyards were on the south. Although the houses had two stories, the southern wings were kept to one so as not to block the low winter's sun rays from slanting into the living rooms, where it was absorbed by adobe walls.

During the summer, protruding eaves shaded the southern facade; gardens flourished and the living rooms were cool. The west and east walls, exposed to the sun during the rest of the day, had no windows, so the houses stayed cool.

One big advantage of solar energy, says the American Lung Association, is that it does not pollute the air we breathe.

To find out more about curbing pollution, call the association at 961-1697.

## Where It's At

By JUDY SOLOMON

### Woman's writes

If you're a female and past 40, you're going to cherish Judith Wax's new book, "Starting in the Middle" (\$3.95). In a wonderfully wise and witty way, Ms. Wax analyzes marriages, discusses the late-blooming affair as well as the late-blooming career, examines the empty nest syndrome, the onset of wrinkles and how to cope with today's sexual revolution. On the latter, Ms. Wax delightfully concludes: "Even if I had been born in time for the Sexual Revolution, my parents wouldn't have let me go to it anyway. Not, at least, if it were being held in the summer. I was never allowed to go anywhere in polo season. And in the winter, they made me wear leggings."

### To boot

Gentlemen, take note! You don't have to go west but you have to look as though you did if you want to be in style this coming fall. Designer Ralph Lauren's authentic cowboy boots can help you do just that. Handmade in El Paso the handsewn, hand-lasted Lauren boots feature finely detailed stitching and intricate inlaid designs. Sold in Michigan exclusively at Sherman Shoes in Novi and Troy, four styles are in stock and the price ranges from \$125 to \$150 per pair.

Sherman Shoes, Somerset Mall, Troy, 643-6443 and Twelve Oaks Mall, Novi, 345-7276.

### Sweet talk

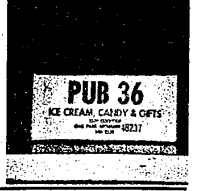
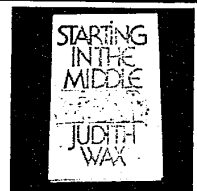
If you have a child at sleep away camp and you want to be a hero (or heroine) plus make things easy on yourself (why not?) head right on over to Pub Ice Cream and pick up one of their Camp Goodie Boxes (\$4.25 each). The boxes are filled with goodies of the kids' favorite kinds of candies, suckers and gums (but nothing chocolate because it might melt in the mailing process). Already sealed and ready to mail, all you have to do is address the box and then you can mail it at the post office right around the corner.

Pub Ice Cream, 23111 Coolidge, Oak Park, 541-9850.

### Going to pieces

Here's another great item to send to a child at camp or to a lover or to use as a clever party invitation. They're white, heart-shaped, 26-piece piece jigsaw puzzles that you write a personal message on, then break into pieces and mail in an accompanying envelope. Each packet contains six puzzles plus six envelopes and is priced at \$3. Another cute item at the RB Shop is the mouse-shaped eyeglass cases (\$5) each. Complete with eyes, ear and tail, the cases are available in a wide range of colorful cotton prints.

The RB Shop, 142 W. Maple, Birmingham, 644-5100.



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