



Showing off their high fashion "art form" knits are (left to right) Ruth Silver in a Sheepscot yarn sweater; Joyce Adelman in a knit and crocheted jacket of chenille and rayon yarns; Alyeen Zerman in a sweater of and chenille.



Alyeen Zerman's grey and beige pull sleeve sweater of mixed fiber yarn took 11 balls of yarn at \$5.95 each and it didn't take long to knit.

## Sweater dressing

'Art form' knitting makes it high fashion



Maryann Karlstrom's sweater jacket took about 35 hours of knitting time and cost about \$65 for materials, but it's a one-of-a-kind garment.

Donna Pearl takes knitting out of the craft category and elevates it to an art form. What was once a hobby has grown into a business and a new shop in Birmingham. At age 19, she took up knitting as therapy for arthritis in her hands. "They were so bad I couldn't even close them," she says. The knitting therapy worked for her and today, she is an experienced knitter with a successful fashion enterprise. Mrs. Pearl began special order knitting several years ago and then went into a small shop in Birmingham. A month ago, she opened a large designer shop called "Yarns, etc." on the second level of the Merrillwood Mall. Bins of yarn line the front area of the shop, bolts of custom wooden fabrics are draped here and there, and carved wooden knitting needles rest in a nest of mauve and purple mohair yarn balls. Everywhere there are yarns and fabrics combined to vie for the attention of the shopper and potential knitter. In Mrs. Pearl's shop, fall yarn colors in warm autumn shades vie for attention with new lush pastels, eye-catchers for spring.

"SHEEPSGOAT yarn is one of the most unusual," Mrs. Pearl says, of the choices in the shop, all exciting visually and interesting tactically. She said knitting with sheepscot goat nets a simple knit-every-row sweater that looks intricate be-

cause of the yarn construction which is called "thick and thin." Cost of making a sweater of this yarn is under \$15. She said often two customers will buy three balls of yarn and make two sweaters of it. Many sweater patterns are stocked in the store but most of Mrs. Pearl's customers want to create one-of-a-kind garments. "They come in with sketches of what they want and I'm able to accurately get the design from their descriptions. First, she takes the customer's measurement, then does a schematic design. The final step is to write the full pattern and finishing instructions. She can also modify stock patterns to comply with a customer's ideas. Mrs. Pearl travels across the country looking for unusual yarns. "Most of my yarns are imported because our domestic yarns have not caught up with the innovative Europeans," she says.

SHE HOPES art form knitting will grow into a stronger American market. In her Birmingham shop, art-knit sweaters are popular knitting projects and many customers do some of the work right there. Mrs. Pearl is available to help with problems, show someone how to get things just right, or sew in a zipper. When the Eccentric visited several women were there for help with their knitting.

Staff Photos  
by  
Dick Kelley



## Where It's At

By JUDY SOLOMON

### Bread Winners

Here's a clever way to get your holiday table in shape. Diamond Bakery makes up loaves of twisted Challah egg dough bread in the shape of alligators (\$4.95), turtles (\$4.95) or hearts (\$3.95). Besides being conversation pieces, the bread is also delicious to eat. The bakery also makes oval-shaped Challah breads in enormous sizes. Priced at \$.150 per pound, they recently baked one that weighed 20 pounds. One day's notice requested. Diamond Bakery, 6722 Orchard Lake Road, West Bloomfield, 626-2212.

### It's About Time

This item wins my vote for the gift of the year. It's stunning; it fits in with any decor and it should delight both the men and women on your Christmas list. What we're talking about is a quartz crystal clock calendar (\$29.95) that alternately flashes the hour and minute, day and date continuously and accurately. The tiny clock-calendar fits into an enamel cube available in your choice of seven colors. Then the whole kit and kaboodle is set into a 3 1/4-inch-high by 3-inch-wide Plexiglass picture frame. The frame can be personalized with name or initials. Orders take two weeks. P.S. Stationery: 335-0989 or 626-7916.

### Have A Heart

For the person who has everything including a sense of humor and a love of fine craftsmanship, how about a heart-shaped wooden Yo-Yo complete with red satin string? Artisan Tom Pilant handcarves the Yo-Yos from rare hardwoods such as bubinga, cocobola, coarida, padouk, teak, walnut, wenge, zebra wood and purpleheart (how appropriate can you get!). Then he packs them in satin-lined, red velvet drawstring bags. To order one, send a check or money order for \$36.80 to Tom Pilant, 1247 E. Lincoln, Birmingham 48008.

### Deck the Halls

Just ask anyone in Grosse Pointe, Lynn Elvidge of Robette Creations is famous for her fine quality, unique, custom-made everlasting Christmas decorations. This year, Ms. Elvidge has asked Mary Stewart to be her Oakland County coordinator. On Tuesday and Wednesday, Dec. 2 and 3, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Ms. Stewart will display and sell a large variety of these Christmas items at her Birmingham home. Ranging in style from traditional to whimsical and contemporary, there are wreaths, swags, garlands, trees and table decorations. Mary and Lynn will also come to your home to decorate anything from a single room to an entire house for the holiday season. Mary Stewart, 642-2394



## Santa workshop opens Dec. 14

Santa's Secret Workshop will be open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at St. Michael School in Southfield. Young children may do their holiday shopping for parents, grandparents and brothers and sisters "in secret" while parents have coffee and doughnuts. Volunteers mothers will supervise the shopping. The secret workshop is on the lower level of

St. Michael Church, on 10 Mile west of Lahser. Gift prices will range from 25 cents to \$6. A fundraiser, the holiday store is sponsored by the Parent-Teacher Guild of St. Michael. It is geared to children younger than 12 but others are welcome. For more information call Lori Tucci at 356-6546.

## BERNARD PERRIS, CLAIRE PEARONE AND YOU.

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