

Friday, August 24, 2007

These women have one goal: Knit the world's largest sock

By Amanda Crissup

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KENNESAW - Balls of yarn in lime green, fluffy baby duck yellow and rich auburn snaked across the 72-inch wooden table Tuesday night at the Knitting Emporium. Knitters clicked and clacked away on what they hope will be the world's biggest sock.

Wanda Carter, owner of the Knitting Emporium and member of the AKG, hosted the Big Sock knit-in to give her usual Tuesday night knitting class something new to work on.

"I have all different levels of expertise but this is something where everyone can have the same level of satisfaction," Ms. Carter said.

Made of 1,500 stitches, Big Sock - as it's fondly addressed - is 23 times larger than the average hand-made sock, which typically consists of only 64 stitches.

"Our ladies enjoy doing a lot of different things," Ms. Carter said. "I just thought this would be something fun to do so they can tell their grandchildren 'I worked on the world's largest sock.'"

Measuring roughly two feet long, it's already a gargantuan knitting project.

"I just want to see the person who's going to wear this sock," said Sandy Bourdeau, an administrative assistant at a Kennesaw engineering firm.

Debra Davis, a member of the Atlanta Knitting Guild and the sock's current keeper, said the sock is well on its way to its target length of 12 feet, 3 inches before starting work on the heel.

"It's a good thing we got it in the beginning of its journey because when there's 6 feet of it, it'll be a lot harder to transport," Ms. Davis said.

The Sheep Farmers Association of Austria holds the current record for knitting the world's largest sock - a whopping 4.95 meters, or about 16 feet, tall.

The variegated sock is quite the world traveler. It originated in Hastings, England, with Jo Ratcliffe, a self-described 37-year-old mum and knitting enthusiast. Then Big Sock traveled to New York before it made its Georgia debut Aug. 1 with the AKG.

Since then, approximately 187 knitters, with up to 11 working on it at one time, have added about 10 inches to the project.

Using basic knit stitch, some folks, like Jessica Clevenger of Roswell, sought out the Big Sock to put their two stitches in. Some of the Knitting Emporium's regulars, like Lois Mitchell of Austell or Kathy Clark of Acworth, pulled up a seat at the sock for the camaraderie of working with yarn.

Temple Weinkle, a special education teacher from Acworth, agreed.

"It reminds me of my grandmother and sitting around working on a quilt," she said. "They're

such encouragers. That's why I stick around."

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