

# The Vermilion Bay Light

The Monthly VBYC Newsletter  
2100 Verot School Road, Lafayette, Louisiana 70508 337-216-4564  
April, 2009

## 2009 VBYC KNITTING CRUISE!

Except for the man decked out head to toe in purple & gold sitting at video poker, the Casino-convenience store was empty. He peeked around the corner of his machine to see who else was coming here this early. Bounding through the glass doors were Heloise, Chris, Angella, Jason, and Mark, bundled in hats, scarves, and jackets: carload No. 1 of knitters from VBYC making a pit stop in Desallmands, Sunday, March 1, on their way to the port of New Orleans where the Norwegian Spirit awaited their check in. Refreshed, shopping bag full of junk food, the squad piled back into the car (payload bay stacked floor to ceiling with giant roller cases and matching Skacel messenger bags). Back seat drivers. “Are you sure this isn’t the way to Slidell?” “Keep left! Superdome to Poydras.” “Do we have time to stop in at Harrah’s?” “No, keep going. Jane said the street dead-ends”. Erato Street Terminal. Up the spiral drive to the shady interior of the parking garage. Bags entrusted to stevedores, parking spot claimed. Carry-on’s and knitting bags shouldered, the squad hovered to the elevators. Gwen, Mary Ann, and Rosalyn had carpooled also. They were somewhere in the same building. Elevator down, doors open: Ellis Island. “Where’s the end?” Serpentine line through the hall. “There they are!” The rest of the group stepped off an escalator and joined the line. Hugs.



“Good trip?” “When d’y’all leave?” “Made good time” “Stopped in Desallmands” “Need more coffee” “Where’s my cocktail?” “D’you bring extra needles?” Everyone was together now, making their ways slowly through the various phases of boarding, clearing a series of Checkpoint Charlies. Beep. “My belt buckle”. Queue up in the ropes, wait for the next available agent. Slice of life: young, old, in between, spring breakers, frat boys, newlyweds, seasoned and neophyte travelers, and sorority Suzettes. “Like, do you have gum?” “No, Sweets. I have tic-tacs. I don’t chew.”

Most of us had not cruised on the Norwegian Line before, which condemned us to a lengthy, but interesting wait before being sprung from check-in purgatory. Gwen had made several trips and was checked in and ready to board long before the rest of us had progressed half way through the ropes. But at last, ship cards in hand, we stopped to pose for a group photo, and proceeded to the gangway. “Sanitize, please”. Hands damp with rubbing alcohol, we were given complimentary bubbly and a hearty “welcome aboard” by a petite, over-stimulated crew member sporting Mardi Gras beads and obnoxious purple bal masque sunglasses. Well past the Fat Tuesday mood, having caught our share of parade throws the week before, we were much more interested in Glenda’s foamy welcoming gift than in her touristy get-up. “Thanks.” Through the doors and into a soaring two-story lobby with glass elevators (which Jason dubbed the “Wonka-vators” ) and a wrap-around mezzanine. “Damn, this champagne is good, even at 2pm”.

We split up into groups according to cabin mates to check out our digs for the week and drop off extra baggage in order to explore the ship and gain our bearings. Room numbers? Good question. Everyone forgot to ask. The first two or so hours were spent both exploring and searching for familiar faces. Eventually, we all found each other and discovered something near and dear to the knitting cruiser’s heart: the Helmet.

Strolling along the pool deck (fashioned to resemble the gardens of Diocletian's urban palace or Nero's Golden House), a sign beckoned: "Free Beer". Ah, peace which surpasseth all understanding! The fine print: buy 5, get one free. Still not bad. The "helmet" was an ice bucket shaped like a piece of football armor, carried by the facemask to make one's potables portable. Knitting bag, sunglasses, hat, helmet: next best thing to a knitted cast on.



Overlooking the Imperial pool flanked by contraposto Dianas and Apollos (both the decorative variety as well as the flesh-and-blood sort) was the fruit of ancient Roman occupation. The Romans tended to assimilate customs and such from the peoples they conquered. So, no surprise, the deck of the Golden House came replete with a Biergarten, straight from Germania. Thanks, Mr. Caesar! The Biergarten was our designated meeting spot. Good vantage point to observe the pool, good food and good beer — they always had helmets at the Biergarten. The comfortable

chairs here made the location conducive to knitting, unpacking shopping bags and showing off spoils, resting feet from a day's walking, and relaxing before the evening's activities.

Food: Always available and with many choices. Jason and Mark announced their preference for room service breakfast, until it was discovered that the room service breakfast menu was rather flimsy: sighs, decaf. Although Jason pre-breakfast English. In-room cantably to standard breakfast fare in from the second day on, Jason and and Chris for the buffet at 9:00a.m. generally up by then, had break-



sions or shopping long before the guitars. Those three were usually spotted in the afternoon lounging poolside or knitting, recuperating from their exhausting day. Evening eating. More choices: Main Dining Room? Buffet? Short Order? Usually it was buffet for the knitters, occasionally a Main Dining Room experience, or a "specialty restaurant", which was like a main dining room, but billed a bit better, carried a nominal cover charge, and required a reservation..



Italian specialty Restaurant: The whole gang together: Gwen, Heloise, Chris, Mary Ann, Angella, Jason, Rosalyn, and Mark. We ordered our anti's and our pastas, mortadellas and manicottis. Then, Mary Ann peered out across the table, making eye contact with everyone and announced clearly: "Today is Gwen's birthday." "I told you not to tell anyone!" "Well, I know." Impromptu roses arrived

at the table, and Mark and Jason's empty wine bottle served as the birthday vase. But that wasn't all. After the dessert came the sweetest course. The wait staff and restaurant host proceeded in rowdy procession to our table and set in front of Gwen a delightful birthday torte. Ah, and the singing! By then, the entire restaurant knew it was Gwen's special day. And that as it should be. Birthdays are for celebrating! Good food, good friends! Happy Birthday, Gwen!





Evenings were eventful, both planned and improvised. The Norwegian Spirit provided a full roster of night-time programs, games, and concerts. The first night, the whole group, having started the evening at various lounge venues, convened in the main theatre space after dinner to take in a concert advertised on the marquee as Zydeco. All of us from Acadiana, we were incredulous.

Cocktails in hand, we found our seats in the already crowded house. The lights dimmed, the curtain rose to a bandstand erected before a suspicious backdrop emblazoned with the words “Bourbon Street” with illustrations of the signature wrought-iron balconies of the Crescent City. Zydeco? Bourbon Street? What we knew from home as festival music to accompany dancing and merriment had been transformed into a stage performance during which we had to behave, sit quietly in theatre seats to appreciate like the Beethoven 7th. After a teary rendition of “Brighter Shade of Pale”, Hammond organ part played masterfully upon the accordion, several of us slipped out with the other natives, each one of us puzzled what exactly it was that we had just witnessed.

On another night, Glen Miller big band sound in the Galaxy of the Stars lounge. Gwen, Mark, Mary Ann, Heloise, Chris, Jason, Rosalyn, and Angella sat around cocktail tables taking in the cool, smooth tunes, dance floor filled with swing. Mark was the bashful wallflower, yet two lovely ladies at the table were already hinting at a chance to move across the parquetry. Jason took the opportunity and invited Angella,



then Heloise to dance. What an evening: Glen Miller, fine martinis, lovely ladies, and dancing!



After the ballroom closed, the horns packed into their cases, and the musicians departed, it was time for a game show: The Weakest Link. Mark and Jason both signed up. Many are called, but few are chosen. Mark was among the few, shooting daggers at Jason for convincing him he should apply for the event. After a host of questions, a few expletives uttered clearly into the microphone, with some long-distance hand

signals from our tables (thanks to Gwen, Mary Ann and Rosalyn for their help with the science questions!), Mark came in second place, winning a deck of Norwegian Line playing cards for his efforts (for the record, a “Bouche de Noel” is a yule log, and the study of poisons is “Toxicology”). On subsequent evenings, the knitters took in a Broadway revue and the hilarity of a Chicago-based comedy troupe.

There was always a contingency of folks stealing away to the casino to bolster the price of their cruise tickets, and of course, there was Maharini’s, Jason’s late-night hang-out (his chair now bears a gold-tone plaque permanently reserving the seat). The trendy cocktail lounge was located directly behind the casino floor. The place was decorated to resemble the interior of the posh tent of some nomadic chieftain: walls draped in black fabric, mod black, red, and royal blue upholstery, and queen-sized beds piled with velvet pillows. A martini-sipping paradise! On the evening when the Maharini was discovered, the dance floor was taken over by cabaret girls, singing and swinging to musical numbers from the show made famous by Liza Minnelli — talk about “putting down the knitting, the book, and the broom!” While Mark was spinning off his pennies, Jason could be found babysitting the smoothest Cosmopolitans mixed by human hands. They say there are photographs of knitters in the Maharini, but the desert (and the sea!) never gives up its secrets...



Tepanyaki! It's Japanese for "frying pan". Not an Asian Ihop, but a Japanese steakhouse sort of affair, replete with kimonoed faux-geishas and a nervous Filipino grill master. Although Chef-san fumbled the eggs and the salt shaker, his product was tasty and plentiful! Chris, Heloise, Jason, Angella, and Mark feasted upon filet mignon, calamari, jumbo shrimp, scallops, and lobster tail: not some dainty dietetic dishes fit for the three little maids! We were fed and feted like Angin-san at Toranaga's court. What a treat!



Ports of call: Costa Maya, Mexico; Santo Tomas, Guatemala; Belize City, Belize; Cozumel, Mexico. Gwen, Rosalyn, and Mary Ann had booked shore excursions, while Angella, Heloise, Jason, Chris, and Mark chose to stick closer to the shore and explore on their own, mostly to find bargains then to scope out a comfortable spot for people watching and sipping tropical drinks. All the knitters learned to haggle with the merchants in search of interesting local items, especially in Guatemala, where the sellers were especially fierce. Cozumel, on the other hand, required comfortable shoes and determination. Jason, Heloise, and Mark were avid Bingo-players (always just one square from that illusive cover-all, sigh) and as such had been issued a long strip of coupons for the Cozumel shops in



order to claim their "free gifts" of semi-precious stones. The search for these microscopic treasures was a ploy of course to lure cruisers into the shops to purchase jewelry with stones less microscopic which carried prices of equal size. To make the decisions easier, shopkeepers usually offered free shots of tequila or margaritas. In the balminess of Cozumel, bottled water was the cocktail of choice — at least while collecting freebies. Rosalyn, Mary Ann and Gwen were also beating the sidewalk in search of bargains. The knitters met up with each other from time to time in various shops along the magnificent mile.



Feet on fire, it was time for something stouter than Evian, food, and some chairs. Carlo's and Charlie's. Two words: rowdy fun. Jason, Mark, and Heloise were led to their table. Loud, boisterous, outrageous. Good food too. Then came the balloon hats. The group emerged from the Restaurant just in time to meet Gwen, Mary Ann, and Rosalyn on the sidewalk. Cameras out, ladies! Here comes your LYSO wearing a silly Dr. Seuss hat and carrying a 36" tall Long Island iced tea! A day well spent! Now, off to the Biergarten for a helmet.



Sea days were for knitting classes. We were a small group, so scheduling classes was a leisurely affair, and meeting places were agreed upon by general consensus. We would gather for knitting where nothing else was planned. This provided a variety of venues and vistas, but never without an international audience of fellow knitting passengers inquiring about our projects and whom they were intended for.

Then there were the countless numbers of sympathetic fiber fans who wished they could, who had once done, or whose relatives did knit. "Wie süß", a portly German commented, "how sweet", having spotted Mark stitching away on his grey Boku garter stitch scarf and sipping a mimosa. The first day out: the Estonian lace scarf, a good introduction to lace knitting, featuring scads of yarn-overs and the knitted cast-on. Different yarns and different gauges gave this beautiful pattern many personalities. It was wonderful seeing them taking shape. Throughout the cruise, knitters found time to continue their projects after visiting ports, before breakfast, or after dinner. The last day of the



cruise was also at sea: two classes. Malabrigo Loafers in the morning, Intarsia in the afternoon. Short rows, bobbins, and circs, oh my! The whole group met for Malabrigo Loafers, a catch-up on Estonian lace, and mimosas in the Galaxy Lounge. The veil was lifted on the mysterious "wrap & turn", missing yarn-overs were recovered, and short-row toes were shaped. After lunch, off to a busy public place to dangle and twist the bobbins: the Raffles Court buffet, out on the deck. A knitter in public is always fascinating to passers-by, but even more so is a group of knitters with a host of spools hanging off their work. "Oh my God! I've never seen that before." "Are you knitting?" Of course Jason's favorite question: "Where did you get those the trip was a scarf in the main color.



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Melancholy mood: packing the suitcases, finding room for the shopping bags, padding the breakables. By midnight, we would be sailing up the Mississippi River, and by 8:00am, the ship would be docked and moored back at the cruise terminal where another herd of eager cruisers waited in that same serpentine line to be sanitized and handed a glass of bubbly by a bespectacled Mardi Gras hostess.

Our mini-group of knitters had fun together for an entire week: eating, drinking, visiting, laughing, joking, exploring new places, meeting new people, and knitting, knitting, knitting! Planning for the next knitting cruise will begin shortly. We'll provide complete details as soon as they're blocked out, including class offerings, instructors, as well as the cruise line, home port, and ports of call.

## St. Jude's Sweater



Congratulations to Charlene Berger who won the beautiful Rowan Summer Tweed/Scottish Tweed vest at the raffle drawing on March 20th. Your monetary contributions totaled \$500.00 to be sent to Memphis in April. If you missed the raffle ticket sale, it's still not too late for you or your organization to contribute!

## Vermilion Bay Holy Week Schedule

Mo., Apr. 6-Wed., Apr. 8: usual schedule

Maundy Thursday, Apr. 9: 10am-4pm  
(no Knit Café!)

Good Friday, Apr. 10: Closed.

Saturday, Apr. 11: 10am-4pm

*VBVC wishes you all Happy Easter!*



**CLASSES IN APRIL**

**Crocheted Market Bag:** Sat., April 4, 10am-noon  
**Corrugated Ruff-Scarf:** Sat., April 4, 1pm-3pm  
**Tulip Toes Infant Shoes:** Sat., April 18, 10am-noon  
**Seamless Yoked Sweater:** Sat., April 35, 10am-noon



www.ravelry.com

Meet Other Knitters!  
Join Our Group!

The Vermilion Bay  
Yarn Company



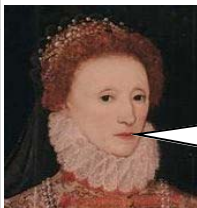
**GO GREEN!**

Perfect for visits to the farmer's market as well as your favorite grocery store! Come to VBYC and learn how to crochet an easy Market Bag. Perfect for beginners, but practical and useful for everyone! Made of washable cotton, this grocery net is an eco-friendly replacement to plastic bags!



**WHAT IN THE @#\$% IS A RUFF?**

It's a big ruffled collar. Today, we see them mostly as part of the vesture of British choristers, but they've been fashionable for centuries. At VBYC this month, get a head-start on Christmas gift knitting by creating a fabulous ruff with draw-strings, which, when untied, becomes a trendy ribbed scarf. Made of Chunky Yarn, it's a quick knit for fiber friends short on time, but long on fashion!



Get thee forthwith unto VBYC, that thou mayest knit a ruff far finer than our own!

**Indisposed?  
We Ship!**

**Top-Down and Seamless!**

Here's another top-down infant/toddler jacket! Fun to knit and suitable for little people on cool spring mornings. Make it as is, for little girls — with frills and decorations, or make it plain for little boys. Your choice!



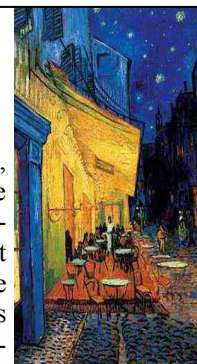
**Tulip Toes!**

It's Spring, and every infant and toddler needs a fine new pair of tulip shoes. Slip your little one's feet into two super-soft spring tulips, and he/she will be ready to tip toe! Make a pair with Rowan Handknit Cotton, Milk Cotton, or Cotton Glace!



**Strippers And Beer!**

Got your attention, didn't we? Well, we may not stage a risqué striptease, but we do enjoy the company of friends and knitting and crocheting together here at VBYC! The Vermilion Bay Yarn Company hosts Knit Café each Tuesday and Thursday night from 6pm till 8pm. The shop offers drinks and deli items from Fresh Market, participants may add to the buffet with their favorite potluck items. Although the shop provides food and drinks, **THERE IS NEVER A CHARGE TO ATTEND KNIT CAFÉ!** Pack up your projects, and come to VBYC for bi-weekly Knit Café!



**SALE!**

Knit Picks Closeout: **50%** off metal Options tips, cables, and DPN's!

Sock Yarn Blow-out: **20%** off Lana Grossa Meilenweit

Kaffe Fassett Colorscape: **\$15.00/hank**



Addi-Clicks: the long-awaited Addi interchangeable circles are here! This amazing set of excellent Addi points is available only at VBYC at an unbeatable price! Pick up your set today!

**New from Della Q**

**New from Bettz**

New spring fabric project pouches from Della Q, and Della's Chloe and Daphne bags on their way! Also, more Bettz bags, more needle cases! Come pick out your favorites before they're gone!

**When are Y'all open?**

The Vermilion Bay Yarn Company is open Mon. Noon-6pm, Tues. 10am-8pm, Wed. 10am-6pm, Thurs. 10am-8pm, Fri. 10am-6pm, and Sat. 10am-4pm. Knit Café Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6pm-8pm.