

HANDCRAFTS MONTHLY



JANUARY AT A GLANCE

- JANUARY 8** - Last day to provide feedback on workshops
- JANUARY 11** - Second Monday Gathering at Sewing World
- JANUARY 28** - Fourth Thursday Gathering at the Legion



JANUARY GATHERINGS

JANUARY 11

10:00 AM to noon, Sewing World
136 71 Ave. SE in the upstairs classroom.

If you wish, bring along a snack to share. Remember to park in the rear of the store. Please thank them for their support when you shop.

JANUARY 28

1:00 to 3:00 PM, Royal Canadian Legion, 606 38 Ave NE.

The Legion provides this venue to us free. Please, no outside food or beverages as these are available from their snack bar. Consider a food bank donation as a thank you.

NEWS FROM HANDCRAFTS COMMITTEE

PRODUCT LINE REPORTS

This month find feedback on Wearable Accessories from Glenda Sweetland and Janice Meeking, Purses & Bags from Leslie Buckle and Book Bags from Ellen Monaghan. Also check the [HANDCRAFTS](#) page for these updates and other product line reports. Last reports to come in February.

Over the coming year, regular feedback on the state of our inventory will be provided to help guide your decision making about what to make next.

WORKSHOPS & DEMOS FEEDBACK

Participate in the planning of the 2016 Handcrafts Workshops & Demos Calendar by telling us what you are interested in via [THIS FEEDBACK FORM](#).

The plan is to post the 2016 Calendar in mid January so please reply before January 8.

NEW CUSTODIAN NEEDED

Eveline will still be making her wonderful jewelry but will step down as custodian. If this interests you, or if you need more info about what is involved in being a custodian, send a note to message@ujamaagrandmas.com with the subject line CUSTODIAN and someone will contact you. If you are interested, let's talk.

A Product Custodian (PC) does the following:

- Regularly attends gatherings
- Advises members re what does and doesn't sell
- Provides guidelines and safety reminders for products as appropriate
- Stores, gathers, organizes and prices products
- Maintains inventory of product
- Manages product during and after the sale
- Manages inventory & dispersal of unsold items
- Arranges pricing committee and set up helpers
- Initiates workshops/demos for product line

ACCESSORIES

Scarves, cowls, shawls and shawlettes

In summary, 58% of these products sold. Shawls and shawlettes continued to be best sellers with 80% and 65% selling respectively. They are typically the higher priced items in this category. 57% of scarves sold and 49% of cowls. While overall percentages sold may appear modest, the number of items sold is comparable to previous years.

Accessories are fashion driven which makes it difficult to keep on top of trends. What sold well one year does not necessarily sell well the next. For example, chunky cowls sold well the previous two years but this year the finer, asymmetrical shawlette/scarves out sold them with no carry over. There continued to be a market for the special one-of-a-kind items with great design in quality fibres. Knitwear must be soft and be visually appealing to sell well.

I believe the product was well priced this year and we continued to highlight items that were made with "luxury fibres". There was also a good range of pricing to meet everyone's pocketbook.

Showcasing some items seemed to work. For example, some shawls that were carried over were set aside and called "Reader Shawls" - cosy reading wraps for bed or by the fire. By removing them from the mix and suggesting how to use them, all but two were sold!

Applying catchy names to items also helps to sell them. We will highlight Reader Shawls again next year and perhaps name them after a favourite novel or author.

As always, there needs to be joy in creating your pieces, so continue to knit what you love to knit and love what you knit keeping current trends in mind.

Glenda Sweetland

Heads and fingers, knees and toes

The total pre-sale inventory in this very diverse product line was 485 items of which 51% sold. As with shawls and cowls, it is exciting and often surprising to see what the trendy items will be each year.

We tested the market the past couple of years with a few premium items priced over \$100. We are happy to have a few of these items each year, but selling them in just two days remains a challenge for us.

Shrugs were a big seller this year (84% sold), with mittens and fingerless gloves not far behind at 76%. Boot toppers were still popular (58% sold) as were slippers, especially the felted styles. A variety of headbands, especially the unembellished variety, were sold. There was a larger selection of sweaters and vests

this year, and 50% of them sold.

In categories where we had a large post-sale inventory (e.g. 114 hats), items were selected to pass on to local charities, leaving us with 143 items as a base for next year.

Janice Meeking

PURSES & BAGS - Leslie Buckle

Purses sold very well at the beginning of the sale (It seems some people come specifically looking for purses) but slowed over the sale. Overall, approximately 79% of the purses were sold. For the first time, a higher proportion of fabric purses sold than felted purses (82% compared to 75%). The overall quality was excellent.

Fabric purses: We noticed that tote bags, no matter how nicely made, won't sell for much more than \$20 or \$25, whereas purses can go for much higher (up to about \$65), particularly those with attractive hardware, charms, and striking fabric or embellishments.

Felted purses: Our customers are becoming more discriminating: while virtually all felted purses have closures, and many more were lined this year, some customers requested interior pockets - not necessarily zippered, but to create sections within the bag. Perhaps we can get help from some sewers for our linings!

Colour is important. For example, using the same pattern, we sold two grey purses last year but none when the colour was camel, despite the fact they were lined! So we have to be careful about 'using up' donated wool - make sure we like the colour. That being said, bright colours as well as more muted colours sold equally. Fair-isle designs, where a variety of colours are knitted in as opposed to being added as embellishments after felting, sold extremely well. The lower-priced purses (\$20 to \$30 range) sell very well, but we also found that people will pay a high price for a unique, well-made purse. Almost all the unsold items were in the mid range (\$31-\$40).

BOOK BAGS - Ellen Monaghan

This year 166 book bags were on hand, up from previous years when we typically had 120 to 125. At the end of the sale, 121 book bags had been sold. This is a great indicator to us regards how many we can realistically sell at the two day event.

ETC

Watch through the year as PCs continue to provide current info about what products have come in, what may be in great supply vs. what may be lacking. Make what you like to make but let sale history and inventory guide you for maximum results.