

## **Congratulations Business of the Month ...**

### **Long Tail Knits located at 9838 Valley View Road**

#### **Written by Owner, Jeanine Hausch**

It started with a dream...an idea to take a hobby and turn it into a business, a place where I can help others. The following mission statement says it best:

“To create an environment where knitting, crocheting and other related arts can be developed, nurtured and appreciated in the fiber arts community by providing materials, skills and confidence to our customers so they can attain their individual personal goals.”

Long Tail Knits has become just that, and a whole lot more. In the spring of 2015 I started to think about opening my own shop. With my background in a manufacturing facility where I had access to all facets of managing a company, I had the experience and people skills to start my own business. I knew what I wanted and it took a while to find the right place and location. It had to be local to accommodate the knitting group that I belonged to. I asked them what they would like to see in a local yarn shop. Some were things I hadn't thought of and others, well, maybe later they will come into play at the store.

With the love and support of my husband Bob, I started searching and found what I thought would be the best location and space to start my business. It had the layout I thought would work best to display yarns, needles, hooks, notions etc., great natural lighting and a location near the highways for easy access from Cleveland, Akron and all points east and west. Macedonia is called the Crossroads of Northeast Ohio and it is true. 20 minutes to anywhere. This would be perfect for knitters, crocheters, lacers and anyone else involved in fiber arts. So I set out to see what all was needed to open a business.

My friend, Laura Sparano, Director of the Nordon Hills Chamber of Commerce really helped in getting things organized and headed in the right direction. Business plan, mission statement, financial plan for the next 5 years, lawyer, accountant, fixtures etc. - I needed to seriously decide what was best for me. The entire thing was mine – paint and carpet colors, type of service counter, glass display case, cubbies, hanging pegs, mannequins for the samples, table for working on projects. Every time I turned around, there was one more thing I had to decide.

First things first, get the space, wait get the lawyer, think of a name for the store, fill out all the forms that needed to be submitted to the state for licensing the business. From the time I decided to open a yarn shop to filling the shelves with product, it took less than 6 months. Pretty quick. I met with a yarn representative in August and in October starting ordering the products I would need for the store. Two weeks before the store opened, I had a space that was freshly painted in a very nice shade of blue and new carpeting on the floor. All I had to do was fill it with display cases and product. Someone said that I couldn't do it. I said “Watch me.” On November 21, 2015 I opened for my first day of business.

## Long Tail Knits The Making of a Yarn Shop

I had lawn chairs because the chairs I was going to use needed new seat cushions and they had not come in yet from the manufacturer. I had an old dining room table that was collecting dust in the basement. It is over 100" with both leaves and perfect for working on. I have an area in the store that is "the community center" where business cards from local small businesses hang on a cork board. If anyone has a need for a service, chances are there is a card for a local resource. We offer water, coffee, tea and hot chocolate for anyone who wants to sit a while and refresh themselves. It is a home away from home for some and for others it is an escape, a happy place to relax and forget about the hectic daily routine of life. I tell all my customers that if you are in the area or in between errands, bring your project and take a break here. Sit at the big table and have a cup of coffee or tea. Take a look around and get lost in all the colors and textures in the store. It's a different world in here and I hope it is a happy one for all who visit.

I approached a local alpaca farm to see if they would be interested in having a bit of space in the store for their products. Before I could get the question out of my mouth I had a very excited "Yes" in response. Whistler's Glen Alpaca and Black Walnut Alpaca farms have become a fixture in the shop. Kathy (WGA) and Jeri (BWA) have taught us the fine art of spinning fibers into yarn. I never thought this would be a direction I would go, but I am very thankful that it has. It has opened the yarn shop to spinners and weavers in the area. Spinning is not a lost art and neither is weaving. They go hand in hand and the alpaca farms have the necessary materials for these groups. It is always preferable to touch and feel the raw fibers before purchasing. The colors and fibers are eye catching; you just don't get that on a computer screen.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Yarn Discovery Tour takes place September 6 – September 24 and this year I get to participate. There are 15 yarn shops from the area that partake. The premise is you buy a passport for \$5.00 containing the names, addresses and business hours of all the stores. When you spend a minimum of \$10.00, you get a stamp in your passport for that store. You will be entered into the drawing for that store's prize basket. If you visit 5 stores, you will also be entered into an additional drawing as well as at the 10 and 15 stores levels. You are not required to visit all the stores. You can visit the tour website for all the details: [www.yarndiscoverytour.com](http://www.yarndiscoverytour.com). Long Tail Knits will be holding workshops and other classes throughout the tour. Go to <http://longtailknits.com/upcoming-events> for these special events.

I had been in business for almost 6 months when the Nordonia Hills Chamber of Commerce nominated Long Tail Knits as its 2016 Small Business of the Year. I was glad I was sitting down when I received the phone call. To say I was overwhelmed is an understatement. I was at a loss for words, which as many of you know, is something that doesn't happen very often. My first call was to my husband and then to my parents. I made the announcement to those who came out for our Thursday night open group. I have been fortunate and thankful for all the love and support from family, friends and customers who have made my dream come true.