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Where It's Knit, Knit, Knit At the Old Ballgame

By [Peter Carlson](#)
Washington Post Staff Writer
Wednesday, May 16, 2007; Page C01

Down on the diamond, Cristian Guzman, the Nats' shortstop, slapped a sharp single into center field.

Up in the stands, Peggy Lister got so excited that she put down her crocheting needles so she could clap. Then Lister, 69, a retired medical secretary from Silver Spring, picked up her needles again and went back to crocheting the red, white and blue blanket that lay on her lap.

All around her, in section 518 of RFK Stadium on Monday night, women were knitting, crocheting and cross-stitching, working on sweaters, socks and, in the case of Terri Tubergen of Damascus, stitching a multicolored rug for a dollhouse. The "Stitch and Pitch" movement, which began in Seattle three years ago, had finally arrived in the nation's capitol.

"Stitch and Pitch" games, sponsored by the National NeedleArts Association, bring knitters to Major League Baseball games -- 23 of them this season. The events are designed to promote knitting, but they also have a profound effect on conversation in the grandstands. In most of RFK Stadium, the talk Monday night was of the Nats finally sweeping a series this season. But up in section 518, among stitchers, the conversation was . . . different.

For instance, Kunni Biener, 52, a lawyer from Damascus, was describing some of her more creative works of cross-stitching: "I did a voluptuous mermaid holding a hook. It said, 'Why Men



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Margaret Fischer, left, Lucy Keister and Mary Ann Gill, below, knit during Monday's Nats game as part of the National NeedleArts Association's "Stitch and Pitch" promotion, which is happening at 23 major league games this year. (Photos By Linda Davidson - The Washington Post)

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Fish.' I gave it to a friend of mine who fishes."

She also cross-stitched a tongue-in-cheek tribute to Lizzie Borden, the legendary -- though acquitted -- parricidal ax murderer, which included the famous poem about Borden, illustrated with stick-figure bodies and a bloody ax.

"I gave it to a lesbian couple as a wedding present," she said. (They were going to Borden's home town on their honeymoon.)

Downstairs, near a barbecue stand in the stadium's concrete walkways, Barbara Paley, the NeedleArts Association's marketing expert, was explaining the cosmic meaning of Stitch and Pitch.

"The rhythms of baseball and the rhythms of the needle arts fit together perfectly," she said. "They're both timeless. There's no time limit."

As she spoke, Ben Forbes and Jeff Hlywa stopped by to pick up the free goodie bags that the NeedleArts Association was giving to the Stitch and Pitchers. Forbes and Hlywa, both from Fredericksburg, are not Stitch and Pitchers. They are guys who accompanied Stitch and Pitchers to the ballgame, and they exhibited a typical male understanding of the finer points of needle artistry.

"My wife loves knitting," said Forbes, 35, a math teacher. "She's knitting -- um, I believe it's a sweater. Or maybe a nightgown."

"It's green," Hlywa said.

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