



This interview with Dean Robinson is an excerpt from the original December 1996 **Chain Link** newsletter article on men crocheters written by Gwen Blakley Kinsler. The full article also profiled Michael Estomo, Jimmy Consolo, and Bill Elmore.

## Yes, There Are Men Crocheters! by Gwen Blakley Kinsler

**Dean Robinson** is Director of the Potomac Craftsmen Gallery in Alexandria, VA. I first met him when he stopped by our CGOA booth at "Stitches" and he consequently offered classes at our 3rd Annual Crochet Conference. Dean has knitted and crocheted for years and teaches techniques that he has developed. As one of five men members of his local Knitting Guild, Dean says he thinks the women in the group go out of their way to make him feel comfortable. One disadvantage Dean has found is that when he designs garments for women, he can't try them on himself. He finds his Guild friends very willing to help him out when he needs to check shape or size on a garment.

Trying to find some commonality in the men who love to crochet, I asked Dean for a profile of the men crocheters he knows. He says the ages and social status is varied, but all of them try to do the "extraordinary. It is just the kind of person they are," he says. "They use crochet as a mind stretcher. They may have stress in their day jobs and have to concentrate heavily. When they come home, they crochet to relax. It is pleasurable and finishing a project gives them a sense of accomplishment." He feels men set immediate goals and finish their projects for a specific purpose, such as a wedding or family gift.

Dean feels that men rapidly learn the techniques of any kind of needlework because they look at the mechanical aspects of the stitches. "They quickly learn how it works and then feel freer to see what they can do with the stitches from a mechanical/how to point of view," Dean says.

Recently, Dean's gallery featured the crochet art of Reginald Teemer. He uses antique brooches, fabrics and plumes to enhance the crocheted haute couture cloche hats he makes. "Even though he is a double minority (a black man), he doesn't let this hinder where his creativity is taking him!", says Dean.