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San Francisco

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by **Lauren Murrow** | photographs by **Margo Moritz**



The New Knitting Circle

“When I first started out, I was scared to do it in public,” says Lakegan Harris, a 41-year-old digital librarian. “I think a lot of men are shy about it—there’s a fair amount of closet knitters.” Of course, closeted behavior has no business in the Castro. So when Harris moved from Washington, D.C., to San Francisco three years ago, he started a Facebook group called SF Men Knit to dispel the notion that needlecraft is solely the pastime of mothers and grandmothers. The online group—which now counts 57 members—prompted a handful of the crafters to branch out into “a men’s-only stitch-and-bitch,” as Harris puts it, that meets every Sunday at Espressamente Illy in the Castro. The yarn-toting men congregate in the café’s sunny front seating area, regaling each other with stories of dating, relationships, and the previous night’s pursuits while stitching blankets, scarves, sweaters, hats, socks, and more. “Sometimes it gets a little rowdy in our corner,” laughs Harris. The sight of a bunch of burly men proudly clacking their knitting needles has become something of an attraction: Passersby often pause in front of the café’s large front window to snap a picture or flash a thumbs-up. But the knitters claim that their numbers have given them newfound confidence. Besides, Harris says, they’re equally intrigued by what’s happening outside: “In between rows, we’re usually craning our necks to see who’s parading down the Castro sidewalk.”

TOP ROW, FROM LEFT: **Lakegan Harris, Jeff Thomas, Edward Hosey, Max Gonzales**
BOTTOM ROW, FROM LEFT: **John F. Cahill, Mike Horwath, Andres P. Nevarez, Kyle Kunnecke**