

# MONTHLY MESSAGGERO

*Conveying the most important messages between the DIY, fashion and independent arts communities and yours*

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## Faythe Levine: The Godmother of D.I.Y.

**CM:** What advice would you give someone wanting to follow their dreams of crafting, fashioning, styling and creating as a business?

My main advice would be to keep moving forward no matter what. Put yourself out there online and get people familiar with your work and name!

**CM:** As small business owners we at the NPCM are very interested in hearing success stories. Please share some of your memories of making it and some of the highs and lows along the way.

There was never a point that I realize I had "made it" because I still struggle every day to get my work done and pay the bills. I think that the idea of "making it" can really create a vision of some sort of end point where you get to sit back and watch others work for you. I think that people who work really hard and push forward with what they are doing, finishing what they start will start to feel within themselves that they are "making it" and then you may start to see others acknowledge it around you too. When I began to get requests for interviews about what I was working on it sort of miffed me, but now I realize people are just curious about the process and end result. I just like to stress that the light at the end of the tunnel is never as close as it seems, but it's always worth the struggle and hard work if you have passion behind what you are doing.

**CM:** Can you tell us what attracted you to crafting and design?

Like a lot of people within the DIY art and craft community I've always made stuff since I was a kid, so I've never had any other way of living my life. Finding a creative commu-

nity that I fit in however was a "hallelujah" moment for me!

How do you summarize the life of one of the most prominent figures in the D.I.Y. movement? Rather than risk failure and not do her justice, we decided to turn to Wikipedia. Here is what they say about Faythe:



Faythe Levine (Born 1977, [Minneapolis, Minnesota](#)) is a photographer, businesswoman, and prominent figure in the [D.I.Y. Ethic](#) indie craft movement. She grew up in [Seattle](#) and currently lives in [Milwaukee](#).

In 2002 she co-owned Flying Fish Gallery with Artist, Filmmaker, and Musician Brent Goodsell.

In 2004 she founded a popular Midwest craft fair called [Art vs. Craft](#). This led to her producing and directing a documentary called [Handmade Nation: The Rise of D.I.Y. Art, Craft, and Design](#), set for release in 2008. An illustrated companion book will be released with the movie published by Princeton Architectural Press.

Also in 2004, she began making her signature piece and most successful craft project: the Messenger Owl. The hand-cut and machine-sewn plush owl with a card in the back pocket was featured in [HGTV's "That's Clever"](#), and became so popular that Levine couldn't keep up with demand.

In 2005, she opened Paper Boat Boutique & Gallery in Milwaukee, Wisconsin with business partner Kimberly Kisiolek.

She plays the [musical saw](#) for the band [Wooden Robot](#).

**CM:** Do you think that DIY ethics and crafting have taken on new meaning in the last few years? How do you feel about being part of that change?

I guess DIY ethics and crafting may have taken on new meaning in the last few years. It may of changed for some people and for others it means the same thing- DIY and craft can take on a number of different definitions and that is what makes them awesome because you can make them what you want them to be to you personally.

**CM:** What was your first craft? Gods eyes probably, making holiday ornaments out of homemade play-dough with my mom... later I was a friendship bracelet and lanyard fanatic.

**CM:** What is your favorite craft tool? Scissors and thread and felt

**CM:** What piece of clothing can't you live without? Frye boots & scarves

**CM:** Favorite movie? City of Lost Children

**CM:** What is your favorite piece of furniture you have in your home? My 1960's metal kids kitchen set I use to keep our linen's in.

**CM:** What have you been listening to lately? Any favorite tunes to create to? I'm a huge music nerd- my taste goes from totally obscure tracks to top 40 jams.

*Want to know more? This story is continued on page 3.....*

Dear Ma-  
I have resolved that this will be the year that I will be more creative and more dedicated to trying to make things for myself. I am hoping to spawn a new hobby while also allowing me to keep my mind off the sweets I am skipping as part of my other resolution to lose weight. Help the only thing I know how to do so far is crochet.

Sincerely,  
Carrie Creative

Cara Carrie-Ma loves your enthusiasm and dedication and can't wait to help you achieve your goals. There is certainly a cornucopia of options for those wanting to be creative, enhance their wardrobes and become more popular to their creativity and quality loving friends. A search of the internet gave me my first good idea based on some simple observations on your note. Ma understands that: 1) it is winter, 2) you have food on the brain, and 3) there is no better way to get creative than to really use your hands, so when she found Lady Linoleum's Monster Crochet (<http://monstercrochet.blogspot.com>) blog and her pie-ret creations she knew she hit pay dirt! Here is what Lady Linoleum has to say about these warm looking, food inspired hats:



The Pecan and Cranberry Pie-rets were crocheted with an F hook and some of my Cascade 220 stash. An F hook combined with this light worsted yarn creates a very tight fabric. This is exactly the effect I was attempting to achieve as I was aiming for structure, not drape. My chal-



lenge during the design process for both of these Pie-rets was creating a perfectly shaped circle while using a popcorn stitch pattern. Needless to say, frogging ensued before I came up with the correct increase to stitch ratio. I am happy with the results.

## ASK MA FIOSA

M a m m a F i o s a , known more widely as Ma Fiosa, has served as consigliere to the North Park Craft Mafia in all our crafty n e e d s . Lucky for you, now you don't have to be made to get counsel.



The Pumpkin Pie-ret was also crocheted with an F hook. However, I chose to use [Lamb's Pride worsted](#) for this one. Don't think I would choose this yarn again for this type of project. The FO ended up being too heavy for my taste. I will use Cascade 220 going forward should I ever decide to crochet another dessert-themed hat!

Other sites to inspire you include:  
[www.bigasscrafts.com](http://www.bigasscrafts.com)  
[www.craftster.org](http://www.craftster.org)  
[www.craftychica.com](http://www.craftychica.com)

MA WISHES YOU A HAPPY AND CREATIVE 2009!

\*\*\*Photos and instructions from Lady Linoleum's blog, Monster Crochet.

**No question is too stupid or too complicated—Ma loves giving crafty counsel. Write her today at [AskMa@sandiegonorhcraftmafia.com](mailto:AskMa@sandiegonorhcraftmafia.com) or see the back of his newsletter for further methods of contact.**

## MADAME CRAFTINA

# WHAT DOES THE NEW YEAR HOLD?

With the beginning of a new year, it is only natural to wonder what it has in store for you. MC tells us what the stars have to say about that topic.

**Capricorn (Dec.22–Jan.19):** Happy Birthday Capricorns! 2009 is upon us and I'm sure you are ready to plan your goals for the coming year. Your persistence, determination and hard work always result in success and your wisdom and loyalty give you a great reputation. Keep it up goats!

**Aquarius (Jan.20-Feb.18):** There is plenty in store for you water carriers in this newly minted year. Your intrigues with magic and mystery will be the key to unlocking the door to new friendships, independence and a creative flow of energy. Enjoy it!

**Pisces (Feb.19-Mar.20):** Though you Pisces swim in the waters, you have a tendency to keep your heads in the clouds. Don't worry, this is what keeps you so versatile in the arts and sensitive to love and intuitions. Hold on to those unusual talents and don't let anyone try to convince you to be any other way.

**Aries (Mar.20-Apr.20):** With this New Year comes a new beginning. You rams tend to be rebellious and impulsive, which doesn't always result in the way you intend. Use your courageous, enthusiastic nature this year to learn from last year's trials and make this year's dreams become reality.

**Taurus (Apr.20-May20):** As always, Taureans are ruled by love and creativity, yet you can be very greedy people. Build up something new in 2009 that benefits the many friends and family that are drawn to you.

**Gemini (May21-June20):** Having fun is the way of life for the twins and always has been. Your youthful childishness makes people love to be around you. Add some consistence to your life this year by setting a goal and accomplishing it. You're a versatile character—you can do it!

**Cancer (June21-July22):** Crabs are intensely loving, emotional and cautious and their whole heart and soul goes into everything they do! This year try to let things go a little bit, you may find yourself slightly less exhausted and that is OK!

**Leo (July23-Aug.22):** Lions love fun, playfulness and child-like activities. Also because of their nurturing hospitality and appreciation for romance and love affairs, 2009 may be the year for Leos to start a family. Be prepared!

**Virgo (Aug.23-Sep.22):** Health, responsibility, daily routines and self-perfection keep virgins on their toes and working hard. Find a moment this year to fly by the seat of your pants! Spend a day in your pajamas and see what happens.

**Libra (Sep.23-Oct.22):** Libras' good manners, sophistication and refinement make you a pleasure to be around and your tact and self-control make you nearly drama free! Need some excitement? Throw those scales off this year; they will balance themselves out in the end.

**Scorpio (Oct.23-Nov.21):** This year may bring you Scorpions the reformation and change you've been anticipating but don't let your passion for secrets and taboos blind the reality of revolution.

**YOU GOTTA HAVE FAYTHE** (continued from page one)

**CM:** We read in another interview that you call those of us who craft and make art "makers". Could you talk a little about that qualification and your thoughts on how the makers in your life have inspired you?

I like the term "makers" because it is loose in definition. People are so caught up in defining everything and I'm more interested in the fact that people are feeling empowered to create and do something on their own. Much less concerned with defining what is art and craft. I am continually inspired and motivated by all types of creative people that I know personally and from online- we live in such a depressing time with so much terrible news being thrown at us every day and good art is my saving grace from the ugliness out there.

**CM:** In that same interview you talk at

length about making your own scene, finding like-minded people and just going for it. Can you talk about the skills you have developed in order to recognize the opportunities and potential for success? How do you recommend others who seek to emulate you earn the needed skills?

I think I found the ability within myself to connect people who can benefit from one another. Networking is something that has always come naturally to me, wanting to connect and stay in touch with people. I think that I honed in on that trait and just figured out how to use it within my career as an organizer and curator. The main piece of advice I can give to people who are interested in increasing their communication and networking skills is to write people who inspire you (don't always expect an email back), and to not procrastinate-

waiting a month to follow up on an email is too long. We are used to instant responses these days and I think 2-3 days tops to respond to an email is the most anyone should ever wait to follow up with something.

**We recognize that your time in the public eye probably makes you crave privacy but we're curious, is there something that you wish more people recognized about you?**

Huh, no one has ever asked me that before....

Um, I don't know, I'm a pretty regular lady.

**What other projects do you have coming up and when can we expect to see them?**

Maybe a new book, keep an eye out for the film, and .....???

**CRAFTY BLACK BOOK:**

**HI MA! LOOK, I'M ON TV**

Did you make a resolution to be more creative in 2009? Let us help you. Join us on a **weekly** basis on San Diego **CW6's San Diego Living** show. Various members of your own Craft Mafia will be sharing ideas and inspiration with a regular **Friday** spot on one of our town's best morning shows. (OK, maybe a few Thursdays could come up.)



**CRAFTY CONSPIRACY**

Consider yourself crafty or want to learn to be? Join the NPCM at **Filter Coffee House** on **Tuesday, January 27 from 7 to 9 PM** for an interactive, **how-to craft night**. Bring your own project to work on, or join in on the group project for the evening. Check our website for a supplies list and more information.

**SUNDAY, CRAFTY SUNDAY**

Join the San Diego North Park Craft Mafia from noon to 5PM for Sunday Crafty Sunday. SCS events feature both Mafia members and other local artists and designers offering their DIY wares for sale. 2009's first SCS will take place on **February 1st** at the **Filter Coffee House** in time for your Valentine's Day gift needs!

**MA MANGIA**

With the holiday season just a memory, we are left with the regret of the minor (OK, major) splurging we did over the holidays. Now that the new year is upon us, we focus on getting back into shape. There is still hope for those who love great flavor but want to watch their waistline. Try this Italian classic to fill you up, keep you warm *and* keep you to your resolutions. Once again Ma M has gone straight to the Famiglia De Palo for the most delicious of authentic Italian recipes. Like all De Palo recipes, this one has been passed down from generation to generation of De Palos, making stops along the way on tables from southern Italy to Brooklyn to North Park. *Mangia!*

- You will need:
- 4 quarts of the stock of your choosing**
  - 4 carrots**
  - 1 cabbage**
  - 1 bunch of fresh spinach**
  - 2 lbs of Italian sausage**
  - 2 tomatoes, peeled & diced**
  - 2 stalks of celery**
  - 2 onions, diced**
  - 2 cups either green beans or peas**
  - 2 cloves of garlic, minced**
  - 1/2 teaspoon of cloves**
  - 1/4 cup of parsley**
  - Dash of each: basil, salt, pepper**
  - 1 can cooked white beans and/or**
  - 1/4 pound small shell pasta**



Bring stock to a boil and add all the vegetables. Mix in all the seasonings.

Brown sausage and add to soup. Simmer for 1 hour. Add beans and/or pasta and cook for an additional 15 minutes.

Serve with grated parmesan cheese. This soup is even better the day after it is prepared.

For a vegetarian option, just prepare the recipe without the sausage.

\*\*\*\*These and other delicious and authentic recipes can be found in *Ricetti de la Famiglia De Palo: Sharing An Italian Family's Traditions From the Kitchen*.



## WHO IS KEEPING SAN DIEGO CRAFTY?

**Teresa Salazar** of *Velvet Klaw*  
[www.velvetklaw.com](http://www.velvetklaw.com)

**Svea Komori-Ang** of *Belle Pepper Couture*  
[www.bellepeppercouture.com](http://www.bellepeppercouture.com)

**Penni Hawkins** of *p-starr products*  
[www.p-starr.com](http://www.p-starr.com)

**Sarah Sweeney** of *PYP Arts and Designs*  
[www.pydesigns.com](http://www.pydesigns.com)

**Amy Smock** of *Designs de Luna*  
[www.designsdeluna.com](http://www.designsdeluna.com)

**Meagan Rae Longtin** of *Meagan Rae Designs*  
[www.meaganraedesigns.com](http://www.meaganraedesigns.com)

**Karen Jorgenson** of *Altered Provisions*  
[www.alteredprovisions.com](http://www.alteredprovisions.com)

**Stefanie Histed** of *Made with Luv*  
[www.madewithluv.com](http://www.madewithluv.com)

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**THE SAN DIEGO NORTH PARK CRAFT MAFIA WAS FOUNDED IN SEPTEMBER 2007 AND IS DEDICATED TO CRAFTING, FASHIONING, STYLING AND CREATING THEIR SAN DIEGO.**

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## 9 Reasons Why Handmade Products & Activities Should Shine in 2009

### *Thoughts from Sarah*

I recently came across a blog called *PoppyTalk* with a side page called *101 Reasons to Buy Handmade*. Inspired by the 101 contributions from far and wide, I thought it might be fun to select nine to inspire you to make and/or buy handmade in this fresh, new year. For the complete list, you can visit [poppytalks101reasonstobuyhandmade.blogspot.com](http://poppytalks101reasonstobuyhandmade.blogspot.com).

13. When you give a handmade gift it's more like writing a letter to someone than giving them a newspaper gift-certificate.
18. You are supporting local artisans and craftspeople and not large big box stores.
19. It guarantees that no one will give the same gift as you!
20. The items are much more fashion forward....there is no "wait-time" for large businesses to design and then mass-produce. One indie designer can list something \*today\* that he/she made \*today.\* (So it wasn't designed and planned last Christmas...for this Christmas)
48. You make two people happy. (buyer and seller)
68. Connection and transparency. It is lovely to know where, how and by who something was made. I'm a born collector (and occasional documenter of said collections) and I love the personal aspect. I particularly love getting little bios with handmade things.
93. Avoid the malls! No crowds, no traffic, no sea of same, same, same, no depressing crush of commercialism.
94. As wonderful as the cyber world is, it is virtual, untouchable. In some ways it connects, in other ways it creates a disconnect—it can be all image and no substance. Handmade is a terrific balance to this tendency. Actual objects that are made by hand have a visceral connection to the real world and to real individuals. They connect and root us in the tangible world in a life-affirming way.
96. It's just simply delightful.