

# For women who sew -- or those who wished they did

By LORAIN McCLISH

Students in Irene MacKinnon's sewing class in Farmington Community Center do a tremendous amount of innovating. They are bargain hunters and niggardly in their use of fabrics. They get a tremendous amount of pleasure telling that "an ensemble that looks as though it came out of a Park Avenue boutique was created for \$17.50."

The seamstresses took turns showing off their creations in the breakfast gathering called "Irene MacKinnon Presents," before winding up classes for the summer.

They showed towels from Kmart and a lace tablecloth purchased from an outlet with a hole in it, which they turned into elegant cover-ups.

Scraps from anything were converted into flowers for a comb or a throat decoration. Original designs were traced for embroidered trim to produce the ethnic look. Designs from anything were converted into stuffed appliques.

OPAL TURNBELL took a bow in this department. The stuffed applique poppies on her evening dress were centered with tiny black shining beads, turning a simple gown into one of tasteful richness.

June Brown made an exact dupli-



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cate of an extremely expensive three-piece suit for less than a third of its price tag.

Janice McCarthy centered tiny rosebuds on self-covered buttons which appear to be made of china.

Sella Rubinstein modeled "the blouse that grew." She had found a pattern she particularly liked and made a blouse from it. With some improvising, she used it again to produce a street-length dress, then a floor-length dinner gown.

Mary Foran, who took classes in the center on how to paint on fabric from Betty Jackson, showed her art work on several pieces she made herself.

Ann Ryman, who called herself "a beginner-beginner" tackled, and showed off, a complicated dress for square dancing.

Rhoda Haas and Frances Topolowski are both world travelers who purchase exotic materials from exotic countries. But they always make them up into simply-designed clothes so as not to take away from the beauty of the fabric.

THE WOMEN made their own spaghetti straps, toggle closings, loop buttons. They rolled their own chiffon hems, and have a trick or a simple or better or easier way to do all of it.

On one occasion, sewing classes stopped completely while they took a short course in learning how to make

fabric flowers out of any kind of material to be named.

More people than ever before are taking to their sewing machines these days to combat the high cost of the ready-made clothes. Manufactured clothes have gone up seven per cent in the last 12 months. Mrs. MacKinnon stated, "The cost of fabric is up too, but certainly not that much," she said.

All of the door prizes given away at the breakfast were hand-made: many of them were scarves of original designs by Mrs. MacKinnon.

But even those who walked away without a new scarf got a bonus by learning some new and different ways to wear and tie their own.



The softest of nubby materials in the brightest of white was used to fashion this versatile piece by Lois Levenson.



Lonnie Engrestson, as most of Mrs. MacKinnon's students, modeled several outfits they made this year. Here she shows a jaunty sports outfit—the slacks taken from a Simplicity pattern, the blouse from McCall's.



A lightweight all-weather outfit that smiles at the sun in bright yellow was created by Justine Noetzel. The hat pattern came from Butterick; the coat from Simplicity. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Staff photos by  
Harry Mauthe



Lisa Bauer turned a new damaged tablecloth into a beach cover-up, then offered it after the show as a door prize.



Long-time students in Mrs. MacKinnon's classes are Frances Topolowski (at left), Ruth Donovan and Sella Rubinstein. Ms. Donovan and Ms. Rubinstein both used Simplicity 7705 for their summer dresses.

## A master seamstress shares some secrets

By LORAIN McCLISH

While Irene MacKinnon's students modeled the fruits of their winter and spring labors this week, the teacher served as commentator.

Her introduction of each of the models included pattern number, cost of the entire outfit and a little about each student. But she also shared a host of sewing tips and hints for those who want to do it themselves.

Here are just a smattering of those she passed on:

- Don't waste your time making pants out of ultra suede, lined or unlined. They are just too warm to be comfortable.

- For perfect hand top stitching to be used as a trim, run a basting machine stitch over the lines to be top-stitched with thread that matches your material. Use that as a guide, counting off as many stitches as you wish (two or three generally) when you go over it by hand with your contrasting thread.

- When matching vertical stripes, you only have to see that the stripes match at the shoulders; everything else will fall into place.

- Mrs. MacKinnon recommends Vogue Pattern 8888 as the best all-around pants suit that allows for a lot

of flexibility to change to suit to your liking.

- Don't cut out a thing until you've adjusted the pattern to meet your exact measurements.

- If your pants pattern is going to give you a droop in the buttocks as is adjust this by taking a tuck in the pattern from the inside leg, tapering it to nothing on the outside leg.

- If your ready-made pants droop, make a shallow V seam, which absorbs the excess material, and it will appear as though the pants were cut Western-style. If this is done you will also have to drop the hem on the legs.

- The best, most reasonable, pattern for T-shirts, which offer six different versions, is Simplicity 8309.

- Use the scraps, left from your newly-cut outfit, to fashion a matching stole, scarf, sash or flower. (Mrs. MacKinnon asked her audience how many would like her to plan a workshop in making fabric flowers and got enough response to say she'd schedule one at the center.)

- Scotch guard cloth-covered buttons, the seats of all white or pastel colored pants, cuffs, cloth shoes, all needlepoint and crewel or embroidered items.

- Protect buttons that might tarnish

or discolor with clear nail polish.

- Best blazer pattern in the pattern books today is Vogue 9661.

- Line the hoods of jumpsuits, or jackets to match a blouse for a posh look.

- Use a decorative button with a loop of elastic, or a fancy belt buckle to slip your scarf into and hold it in place.

- Best sundress pattern today is Simplicity 8912. It is recommended as being very easy to shorten, or lengthen down to the ankles.

- Don't fool around with a tunnel belt if your material is too heavy; it just won't make it.

- Make a lettuce edging on knits by stretching your material as taut as it will go while running the edge through your machine with a zigzag stitch.

- Add a piece of grosgrain ribbon to the back of a fabric belt to prevent it from slipping.

- Put the seam of your scarf down the center of its back side. It will lay softer and flatter than if the seam runs up one side.

- Watch for the sales at Joanne's Fabrics. They will always have a bin of thread on sale at those times; then stock up.