

'78 fashions bring payoff for one family of savers

By LORRAINE McCLISH

When Helen Zebracki planned her marriage to Anthony Okrusky, she took a practical route, opting for a good wool suit to wear for the wedding ceremony instead of a long gown. It was a practical time, during the spring of 1942 and in a few weeks the young bridegroom would be leaving her for basic training.

Her light green, 100 percent light-weight wool two-piece suit with hand stitching and satin lining spent a good many of its years retired with the moth balls, but has been reactivated for use in the '70s with no alterations.

Louise Okrusky grew up knowing she came from a family of savers but never suspected the gold mine of fashion that was unearthed for her when she one day commiserated with her mother and Aunt Jane over the price of today's clothing.

"Both of them went into their storage closets for me and came up with some of the most beautiful things," she said. "I wore a green corduroy with some reptilian to the office one day, and everyone thought it was just a new fall suit."

The beauty of them all, she continued, "is in the natural fabrics, and the subtle tailoring—ously sleeves that were hand-set, lap-stitching that was done by hand. The linings are all original; there isn't a button hole that is frayed."

still bears its J. L. Hudson label, and she remembers she paid \$100 for the suit, quite a high price then.

Aunt Jane remembers she liked to shop in Saks and Himmehochs, her favorite stores, but doesn't remember the price she paid for two suits her niece is wearing now. One suit has a label that reads only "Brookshire."

Of all the clothes and accessories that were brought out for Louise to rummage through, jackets were the big find because some of the skirts were too short for today's use.

The jackets were all made with padded shoulders; one was collarless; one bore a crest, all in keeping with today's look.

"Their next assignment from me is to find me some beaded stuff, bags, maybe, something suitable for disco wear," said the rummager, "and no doubt they will."

AT LEAST two resale shops in the Detroit area specialize in clothes of the '40s. The proprietors of both shops told us that mixing yesterday's look with today's look makes for an eclectic, trendy way to go.

"Most of our clients are Americans," said Shirley Jeneaux, from Deja Vu, at 1432 Wyandotte East in Windsor, "who are looking for beaded bags or a real satin gown, or some old fur they can either use as is or revamp."

The U.S. visitors she spoke of are the fashion-minded, she explained, while the Canadian visitors to her shop are the practical.

"Where are you going to find a wool sweater now for \$3 to \$8?" she asked, "or a real gabardine suit, or even 100 percent wool in a suit that is probably hand-tailored? If you want quality in a natural fabric, a resale shop is your best bet."

Mary Jane Honner, owner of Fabulous Second Hands at 1437 Randolph in Detroit's Harmony Park, has been selling clothes of the '30s and '40s for seven years.

"We search out old stores, old warehouses, back stocks, for any one who wants to replace something of long ago," she said.

"If the clothes weren't put together well they wouldn't have lasted this long," she continued. "The only thing we have here that's synthetic is rayon; it was made very well."

Ms. Honner stocks "just about anything we can find that was made before the '50s," she said. Silk kimonos, silk hose, silk lingerie, collarless shirts, hombers and furs that range from small boas to coats with padded shoulders are all on her shelves.

Both of the women boast reasonable prices for hard to find, and many one of a kind items.



Farmington Observer staff reporter Louise Okrusky wears her mother's wedding suit in her routine about-town chores this fall. It was first worn in June, 1942. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

MRS. OKRUSKY's wedding suit



When Louise Okrusky's woolen suit was made in the '40s, the top of it was called an Eisenhower jacket, not very different from today's blouson. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)



The hunter green corduroy, with bat wing sleeves and crest on the jacket, was worn by the reporter's aunt, Jane Zebracki, in the early 1940s. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

Fashion Calendar

Monday, Oct. 23

Sussex House — Fashion by Leytons will be informally modeled throughout the luncheon hour at Sussex House, 19701 W. Twelve Mile, Southfield. For reservations call 559-3377.

Tuesday, Oct. 24

Jacobson's — See how sensational simple shaping can be with just the right hand-lucking, soft pleating, trapunto and smocking. Elegant silks, wool challis and jersey, charmeuse, georgette and jewel-toned 'ors are the trademark of the MGM collection that will be informally modeled from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the Birmingham store.

Women's American ORT — The Michigan Region will sponsor a fashion accessory workshop and continental breakfast in conjunction with Lord & Taylor in the Birdcage Restaurant at Twelve Oaks Mall.

Any person who has paid in full for an Operation Wingspread (\$25) since July 1 is eligible to participate in the 9:30 a.m. workshop. For further information regarding either Operation Wingspread or the accessory workshop call the ORT office at 335-9151.

The Eccentric would like your help in reporting fashion events that take place throughout Oakland County. The Fashion Calendar runs each Monday with A la Mode and includes news regarding fashion activities which will take place through the following Sunday.

For inclusion in the calendar, information should be submitted at the earliest possible date and no later than 10 days before the event to Jeanne Whitaker, The Eccentric, 1225 Bowers, Birmingham 4802. We regret that we are unable to accept notices over the telephone, but Mrs. Whitaker is available to answer questions Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at 644-1100, ext. 245.

Where It's At

By JUDY SOLOMON

Mail chauvinism

These handsome mailboxes made a terrific statement for your statements as well as for the entrance to your abode. Available in three different sizes, you may select from one of 26 (mostly bird or animal oriented) designs and your choice of either name or address is included in the price: \$51 to \$56, depending on size. (There is also a house wall-mounted style that is priced at \$26.) Christmas orders must be placed by Nov. 1.

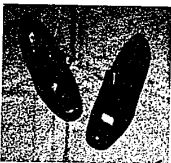
The Village Barn, 32760 Franklin Road, Franklin, 651-7877.



Italian feat

Speaking of male, gentlemen, take note! If you spend a lot of time on your feet, you'll probably want to give these shoes a standing ovation. Handmade in Italy from the softest Nappa leather, Baker-Benjes' shoes are sold exclusively at Sherman Shoes and owner, Larry Sherman, believes "There are no finer handsewn moccasins made." Priced at \$85, the shoes are in stock in two different styles. Another especially comfortable shoe comes from Jean Pier Clemente of Italy. Made from soft baby calfskin, the shoes (\$65) feature velour linings and are a copy of the much more expensive Martignoli shoe from Italy.

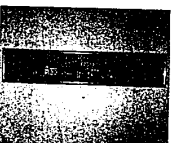
Sherman Shoes, 115 W. Maple, Birmingham, 646-8431 and Somerset Mall, Troy, 643-6433.



Homework

A stitch in time could make someone you know very happy on Christmas day. The Stitching Post has come up with a marvelous idea: a "This Is Your Life" personalized canvas. Just decide what items you want to be included (be they college, local or hometown buildings, family members pursuing their hobbies or anything else you can think of) and the shop will design the canvas accordingly.

The Stitching Post, 32710 Franklin Road, Franklin, 626-3090.



Tracking down

As I was walking past Wright Kay's windows in Birmingham the other day, these adorable picture frames literally stopped me in my tracks (some pun intended). They're colorful and unique and would be a good gift for a child, its parents or grandparents. Some are shaped like train cars (\$11); others like engines (\$12).

Wright Kay Jewelers, 180 S. Woodward, Birmingham, 642-2025; Twelve Oaks Mall, Novi, 348-0080 and Northland Center, Southfield, 569-2118.



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