

Seamstresses share tips at fashion show

Irene MacKinnon's "Spring Fashion Extravaganza" gets under way at noon Friday in the Farmington Community Center.

The shows are now a tradition in the center, staged by Mrs. MacKinnon's students who model the clothes they have made during the spring sewing classes. The fashion show is preceded by lunch.

During the show, Mrs. MacKinnon gives a running commentary on her students' problems, successes and innovations in creating each outfit. Past audiences have described the events as an extension of the class, a workshop that passes on tips in sewing and dressing to achieve desired results.

Then, again following tradition, each show winds up with a raffle and the awarding of door prizes, most of which are hand-created fashion accessories.

Both beginners and returning students will be showing off their accomplishments after a seven-week sewing session.

"The beginners are all new students," Mrs. MacKinnon said, "and they were all able to complete a pair of slacks and a top or a jacket in that time."

"My advanced class fashioned a number of outfits. Pantsuits, dresses and a unique, hand-painted sari will be shown," she said.

By using a purchased pattern as a springboard, the expert seamstress encourages all students to develop their creativity.

"JUST BECAUSE the instructions are printed on the pattern in black and white does not mean that they're Gospel truth," she said. "You can take any pattern and fool around with it, just as long as you know what you're doing."

Mrs. MacKinnon stresses taking accurate measurements to know what you're doing, and sometimes students will be taking as many as 20 measurements from different parts of their bodies in altering for a perfect, custom-made fit.

She explains her method of teaching as something like modern math, where the principles behind the work do not have to be learned. It is the same method used by French couturiers, which emphasizes measuring and fitting above all.

Classes always begin with what she terms general instruction. This would involve making a scarf, a purse or a skirt without a pattern because her goal, she says, "is not just a sewing class, but a creative experience."

MRS. MACKINNON has been a teacher in the center since its inception 12 years ago. She has attracted students from throughout the metropolitan area to her classes.

She cannot remember the time when she didn't sew.

Her ultimate career as an expert in the art of clothing construction began at her grandmother's knee. Her major was home economics when she graduated from Marygrove College.

She is a fashion consultant and a former model who is generous with her knowledge of current fashion and sewing shortcuts that can transform an amateurish-looking garment into a Saks Fifth Avenue look-alike.

She shares this knowledge with her students and guests who come to her twice-a-year shows.

All of her shows are given as benefits for Farmington Community Center.

Tickets are \$8 each, available by calling the center, 477-8404.



Nancy Sallow (left) and Stella Murray model a spring outfit they created for a preview of Irene MacKinnon's "Spring Fashion Extravaganza." Ms. Sallow created the fabric flower for her dress and the band



around her hat to complete her costume, a concept encouraged in Mrs. MacKinnon's classes. (Staff photos by Randy Borst)

Pen and ink sketching classes start June 26

Pen and ink sketching expert Fran Nicolson invites novices to sketch their way through a long hot summer with classes in Farmington Community Center.

Six sessions from 1-3 p.m. begin on Thursday, June 26. Fee for the course is \$24 plus materials.

No previous art experience is re-

quired, the artist-teacher says, to successfully complete pre-outlined sketches each meeting while developing one of the many sketching techniques.

The Muccioli Gallery in downtown Detroit featured Mr. Nicolson's work in a one-woman show throughout the month of May. She is the recipient of numerous awards for her work.

Center lists summer offerings for youth

A variety of summer classes scheduled to start in Farmington Community Center have been designed specifically for those 3-18 years old. Among the summer lineup are opportunities for dance, art, dramatics, music, golf, sewing and crafts classes. There is also offerings to attend riding and farm day camps.

Betty Paine, executive director of the center, said, "The program has been carefully organized to offer summer fun that is also a learning experience."

"And we are proud of the high calibre of instructors chosen to guide the youngsters."

Barbara Burgess' ballet classes meet Mondays and Wednesdays beginning June 30 for an eight-session course with sections geared for those from 4-10. She offers ballet and jazz workshops that are set to begin Aug. 18.

Shirley St. Mary sets toes a-tapping Tuesdays and Thursdays, starting July 1 in her dance-tap classes for boys and girls. Her workshop is offered starting Aug. 19 for those who will be performing during the Michigan State Fair.

DRAMATICS and Play Production classes explore all aspects of theatre: acting, costuming, props, make-up, scenery and performance.

Youngsters in grades four-six meet Tuesdays and Thursdays, beginning June 24 to get ready for Taffy Jones' original play, "Peas."

Young actors will learn how to audition, characterize a part, and in the interim gain self confidence. The completed production is set for July 18.

For aspiring musicians, Kelly-Kirby Kindergarten Piano classes for those 5-7 begins June 30 when instructor Susan Nuckolls leads the young musicians in the introduction to the piano.

"Creative Mornings for Tot's" is a constructive preschool experience for those from 3-5. It is designed to stimulate expression and creativity via story time, arts, crafts, movement and dance.

Ms. Burgess instructs this happy mixture of learning beginning June 24 for eight sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

SALLY SAWYER, creative dramatics teacher for Farmington's ArtStart, leads a new addition to the summer lineup. Her "Puppetry for Eight Year-olds and Up" is designed to teach students to create their own puppet heads and costumes.

The class meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays be-

ginning June 17. Students will make up their own stories and learn to perform on a puppet stage.

Two sessions called "Adventures in Art" are scheduled by Terri Nicklaus for those from first through fourth grade and for those from fifth through eighth grades. Youngsters will explore a variety of media while learning to enjoy the creative experience.

The youngest golfers, those from 8-18, will have special instruction suited to their expertise on Tuesdays and Thursdays beginning June 17. Classes are held at Top-of-the-Tee Golf Range, on Orchard Lake and 14 Mile roads.

For group rates, golfers must register with Farmington Community Center. The instructor is Dave Zielinski, a class A PGA member and 1977 "Player of the Year."

STUDY OF the guitar is led by Ben Creech on Wednesdays beginning June 25. Students will learn the fundamentals of music and how they apply them to the guitar.

Beth Curtis, an expert baton twirler and former majorette captain, guides beginners and intermediate twirlers in classes Mondays and Wednesdays, starting June 23.

Students are from 8-16 years' old, divided into age groups, for learning basic twirls and majorette routines as well as posture, poise and coordination.

Lorraine Fenster produces young seamstresses from 9 years old and up in eight sessions beginning June 23. In addition to learning basic hand sewing and the use of a sewing machine, students will learn new ways with accessories.

Betty Vincent will teach macramé to youngsters from 9-12 years on Wednesdays beginning June 18.

All the wonders and delights of farming, animal care, gardening and riding await the those between 5-12 at Upland Hills Farm Day Camp with the guidance of staff members who are all educators with broad agricultural training and experience.

Sessions are offered in segments of two, four, six or eight weeks between June 30 and Aug. 22. Group rates include bus transportation from the center.

Group rates and transportation also apply to those who sign up for two English Riding Day Camps sponsored by the center in cooperation with Haverhill Farms and Rochester Hills Riding Day Camp.

Registration is necessary for all summer classes offered by calling the center, 477-8404.

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