

Malls & Mainstreets



Doggone it: That's Katie Mulcahy in her Halloween doggy disguise.

Create your own costume

Halloween is less than a month away. So if you want to buy the perfect costume or make one yourself, it's time to get cracking.

And here's a prediction, based on what I've seen and heard in stores: Expect a lot of Tele-tubbies and Scream ghosts to come a-collin' Oct. 31.

My 3-year-old daughter, Katie, has told me in no uncertain terms what she wants to be - Blue, the pale blue puppy with the royal blue spots from the Nickelodeon television show, "Blue's Clues."

I searched a bunch of stores, but couldn't find a Blue costume anywhere.

No problem, I thought. I'll just make one out of a pale blue sweat suit.

That's what I did last year, when Katie was a Dalmatian. I got a white hooded sweat suit, safety-pinned socks to it for ears and a tail, and stuck black construction paper spots all over it with two-sided tape.

Why didn't I just buy her a Dalmatian costume last year? Because my mom always sewed my Halloween costumes when I was a kid, and I wanted to do the same for Katie's first time trick-or-treating.

Only, I never learned how to sew, which is why I went the sweat suit and safety pin route.

The Dalmatian costume turned out cute and the best part was that after Halloween was over, Katie could still use the sweat suit. All I had to do was remove the decorations.

I would have gone the same route this year, but I couldn't find a pale blue sweat suit anywhere. In the end, I bought two pairs of pale blue, zip-up, Dr. Denton blanket sleeper pajamas from Mollie's (girls' sizes 4 to 14, \$9.99 to \$11.99 depending on the size).

One of the sleepers will be the body of Katie's Blue costume. I intentionally bought it two sizes too big so that she can wear multiple layers of clothing underneath it, to keep warm while trick-or-treating.

I cut the arms and legs off the other pair of pajamas and, using Katie's sweat suit hood as a pattern, made a hood with a Velcro closure out of the middle part of the pj's. It only took me a couple of hours to cut out and sew the hood together by hand, and it was surprisingly easy. Out of the cut-off legs, I made a pair of ears and out of some of the remaining pajama material, I made a tail. For the finishing touch, I added some blue felt spots.

You could do the same sort of thing for any stuffed animal type of costume - make it out of a hooded sweat suit or blanket sleeper pajamas about the same price you'd pay for a store-bought or sewn-from-scratch costume.

At Sears, I found hooded sweat jackets for \$14.99 in girls sizes 4-7 in pink (a bunny?), green (a dinosaur?), dark purple (Barney?), and white, and in boys sizes 7-20 for \$15.99 in royal blue, dark blue, black, red and maroon. Matching sweat pants were about \$7.98. Felt rectangles were 20 cents each at Jo-Ann Fabrics.

Costume patterns ranged from about \$2-\$10 at Jo-Ann Fabrics and you usually call for at least three yards of fabric, which can be \$2.99 to \$10.99 a yard. That doesn't include the cost of things like zippers and decorations.

Not counting any discount specials, ready-made costumes range from about \$13.99 to \$17.99 at the Blair-Off Card Shop, \$11.99 to \$29.99 at Jo-Ann Fabrics, and \$14.99 to \$39.99 at Spencer Gifts.



Worth it: Worth's navy beaded silk tank (\$395) and satin crepe long slim skirt (\$295).

BY LINDA BACHNICK
STAFF WRITER

When Katie Prior sold her downtown Birmingham boutique two years ago, she was pregnant with her third child and needed a break from the retail biz. Her friends thought otherwise, however. They hated to lose her style and merchandising savvy, her eye for fashion and her dedication to customer service and satisfaction. Gail Colwell, former executive director of The Community House, soon introduced Prior to Bloomfield Hills native Caroline Davis, founder and president of The Worth Collection, a direct sales company specializing in women's quality ready-to-wear.

"Once I met Caroline, I was hooked on the Worth concept," says Prior. "I told my husband that being a Worth sales associate would allow me to 'dabble' in retail. He laughed, knowing I would make a huge commitment to the business."

But for Prior, the Worth in-home approach to clothing sales offers the best of both worlds. She shows the designer apparel four times a year, choosing weeks that work within her schedule. When the collection arrives at her home, she merchandises it, just as she would in a retail shop. But the sales approach is much more laid-back and more personal. Invitations

are sent to friends, former customers and referrals. Appointments are scheduled and each client is given individual attention by Prior and her sister and partner, Susan Martin. The two women know their merchandise mix - the color combinations, fabrics, fit, proportion and the accessories that complete each outfit. They are true wardrobe consultants and they believe in the quality and contemporary styling of their product line.

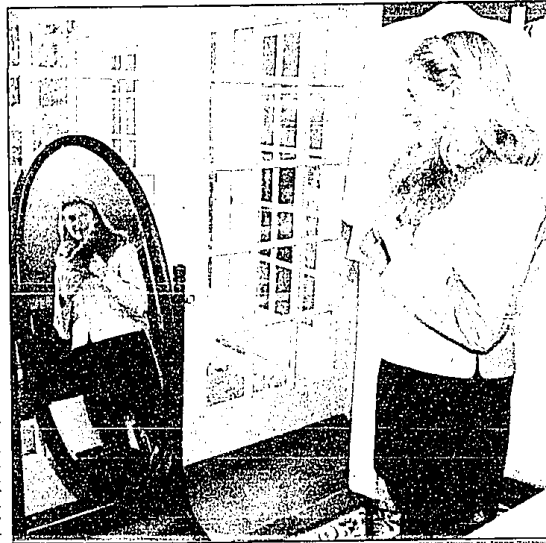
"Caroline Davis has brought The Worth Collection into the '90s and beyond," says Prior. "It's less traditional and more fashion-forward than Carlisle, a company also founded by Davis." Prior is constantly amazed by the superior fit and wearability of the clothing. Her customers return season after season, adding pieces to their Worth wardrobe. And there seems to be no resistance to the prices, which are comparable to Ellen Tracy or Dana Buchman. "This fall, we offer everything from a feather boa (\$125), the hottest new accessory, to a wool and cashmere coat (\$1,200)," says Prior. Though department stores are



filled with grays this fall, expect to find a rainbow of colors in The Worth Collection, from camel and chocolate to cherry red and blue violet. Emily Miller of Birmingham chose a parrot green leather jacket that will easily become a signature piece. And if she decides to add the green dyed-fox fur collar - wow!

Worth ... a closer look

Fall fashion from The Worth Collection



Mirrored image: Emily Miller admires her parrot green leather jacket from The Worth Collection.

For more information on the next showing of The Worth Collection, call 1-800-WORTHOK.

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HOLIDAY '98 - THE WORTH COLLECTION

- 1. Sparkle and Shine.** From silvery eye shadows to the shimmering gown - sparkles are everywhere this season. Worth's gown of choice - a dazzling black or white crepe dress that blends sparkles for subtle drama.
- 2. Crown Time.** A red silk crepe boat neck skimmer is sure to put you in celebration mode. The fitted gown falls to the ankle with a shucking peek of fuchsia at the deep slit.
- 3. Bending Not Forgotten.** Worth's selection is a silk georgette chocolate and turquoise floral print tank with outline bending. Pair the headed top with a chocolate silk chameleon easy pant.
- 4. The Finishing Touch.** A simple bronze or black silk chiffon cocoon wrap - the updated shrug that falls elegantly over the back and shoulders.
- 5. From Work to Play.** The one-outfit-wonder - a black marble silk chameleon double-breasted jacket embroidered with silver threads. It takes center stage for day, and comes alive for evening shine at the after-work holiday galloping.

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

News of special events for shoppers is included in this calendar. Send information to: Malls & Mainstreets, c/o Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 East Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009; or fax (248) 644-1314. Deadline: Wednesday 5 p.m. for publication on Sunday.

SUNDAY, OCT. 4

PAINTER OF LIGHT
Artist Thomas Kinkadee brings his "Celebration of Light" museum tour to the Westin Hotel in the Renaissance Center 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Seating is limited. Call for tickets: Avenue Gallery, 167 N. Old Woodward Ave., Birmingham; (248) 594-7600.

BEADAZZLED
View pieces from internationally known LeVian Jewelry at a trunk show at Parisian, Laurel Park Place, Livonia. 12-6 p.m.

SALON/GALLERY
Figaro salon presents Sundays at Figaro and the opening of "The Eclectic Collection," an exhibit and sale of photographs by artist Jeffrey M. Lindblom. Enjoy Michigan wines, cheeses, apple cider and more. 2-5 p.m. 265 N. Old Woodward, Birmingham.

MONDAY, OCT. 5

COLD REMEDIES
Solomon & Son presents a trunk show of Vericci outdoor wear, 12-6 p.m. See shearlings, leather and cashmere coats for men and women. 6905 Orchard Lake Road on The Boardwalk, West Bloomfield.

SENIOR SWING
Westland Shopping Center hosts a Senior Citizen Dance in its lower auditorium, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Coffee and refreshments will be served at 12:30 p.m. 35000 West Warren, Westland.

THURSDAY, OCT. 8

FAMOUS FOODIE
Mark Bittman, nationally known cooking authority and columnist for the New York Times, discusses and signs copies of his new cookbook, *How To Cook Every-thing*, at Borders Books and Music, 30995 Orchard Lake Rd., Farmington Hills. 7:30 p.m.

FRIDAY, OCT. 9

RETAIL ROUNDUP
Great Lakes Crossing hosts a job fair at the Pontiac Silverdome today, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., and tomorrow, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Up to 150 Great Lakes merchants will have booths. The mall will be hiring 2,500 employees for its Nov. 12 opening.

SUNDAY, OCT. 11

FALL FROCKS
The Ladies auxiliary of the Knights of Columbus Council #4764 in Lake Orion presents a mother-daughter fall fashion show and luncheon with door prizes and raffles. \$15/adults, \$7.50/ages 12 and under. 2-4 p.m. 1400 Orion Road; (810) 790-6299.