

Sewers needle inflationary prices

By ELEANOR S. WRIGHT

Housefrons can achieve an up-to-date look for \$15. Young matrons can extend their wardrobes to sophistication under \$40. Style-conscious matrons learn the techniques to disguise their figures and look their best for as little as \$8. Big women can look stately under \$20. All women can have a wardrobe extending from dawn till dark without spending more than \$100.

How? By learning to sew. Women's clothes from lounge wear to evening gowns were modeled by Irene MacKinnon's 30 beginning, intermediate and advanced students at a luncheon last week at the Farmington Community Center. Most had one or two lessons yet to go in the fall eight weeks of classes which she gives.

Narrating the show and explaining pattern adaptation for each model's creation, Irene, herself, was gowned in a bright red polyester evening dress, draped at the neckline, which she "made for the occasion" in three hours and for \$3.

"She is," say Pat Friedman, Lillian Obad and Vera Sklar, all residents of the Woodstream Farms Subdivision and members of the beginners class. "The most patient teacher imaginable. She doesn't care how many questions you ask (even the dumb ones) and she does give you the confidence to make whatever you want to make, even if you are sure you are not quite ready for it."

BOTH PAT AND LILLIAN are rank beginners, owners for about 12 years each of sewing machines on which they have successfully repaired rips and seams but "nothing fit to wear." Vera's only class occurred "a long time ago in junior high school" but she confesses to having self-taught herself a lot over the years because, for one thing, she really likes to sew. From the clothes she modeled (five outfits) she is something more than the rank beginner.

"The money you can save by sewing is unreal," Vera adds as do all the women who sew or want to sew in the face of today's escalating clothing costs (not being one of the highest inflationary cities in the United States).

"From just having learned a little," Lillians says, "Pat and I are convinced when we go shopping (they became friends through their 11 year old daughters for whom both hope to sew) that we can now make 'anything' we see."

"When you see what the others are doing you want to go on and become a really good seamstress," adds Pat, whose largest too-too to date has been cutting two right sleeves for her yet-to-be finished suit jacket, "but I know I will never do that again because I have had the chance to do everything for myself under Irene and you learn best by doing rather than being shown."

All three of the women will continue their lessons, forging ahead in more complicated skills in Irene's winter classes.

FIGURE MEASURING and pattern fitting were the very first skills the women learned in their sewing classes. As Irene pointed out in her commentary, "Often we mix and match patterns to achieve the right lines for the individual or borrow a sleeve or skirt we know looks well on us from another pattern and combine it with the lines we find on newer styles."

"No one is a perfect size though we buy patterns to bust and hip measurements. We learn how to adjust to the figure problems that every individual has."

Some of the tips which Irene conveyed as she pointed with pride to the



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garments modeled by her students include:

- "Never cut a short sleeve so that it ends directly opposite the center of your bust line. It should be a little bit higher (very flattering on matronly figures) or a little lower. The eye follows a horizontal line and such a direct line would add two inches to broaden your appearance — and none of us wants that!"

- "Long sleeves should end at the wrist bone."

- "Never cut a jacket to end at the broadest point of your hips."

- "To disguise a long neck, use a high neckline. If you have a short neck, you can better wear the open or low cut designs."

- "In pleating a skirt, sew your pleats just low enough to keep the skirt line straight; if you go too far, the skirt tends to cup inward."

- "Gabardine is a very difficult fabric with which to work because it ravel's so badly. A trick I have learned is to mix a little Elmers glue and water, dip in a finger, then run it along the cut seam to hold it while I sew and until I can bind it."

- "Never top stitch a belt by going up one side, across, then down the other. It will pucker. You are going against the grain one way. Sew down grain and always in the same direction."

- "Be sure you shrink all of your fabrics before you begin to cut or you may find your finished garment as much as one inch off at the seam lines. They will wonder if you suddenly gained weight!"

- "Check the markings on wool to determine if it is sanforized, naturalized, pre-shrunk or says shrinking is less than two percent. Dry cleaners offer a shrinking service at \$1 a yard today (when I started it was 25 cents a yard). You also can shrink wool at a do-it-yourself dry cleaning establishment or use a steam iron. Never hang it in a shower!"

- "I do not like iron-on interfacing except for use in very small trim features. I find it tends to come off after several washings."

- "Many patterns today are designed without bust darts. If your pattern gaps under the arm as you are fitting it, put darts in. They should be at the center of the bust."

- "What decides your skirt length in today's changing hemlines? What looks good on you. Skirt lengths are a very personal thing!"

- "To wlay an awkward moment, if you are traveling or attending a special event for which you cannot decide whether to wear a long or short skirt (and invariably I am always in the wrong thing), I have learned to make a long skirt of matching fabric for a dressy street-length dress. I carry the separate skirt with me and if I walk in a short dress and everyone else has on long skirts, I rush to the ladies' room and put the long skirt over my dress (or vice versa)."

- "Along with the tricks to the trade which come from Irene's long experience in teaching (and she was the first person to teach classes at Farmington's Community Center when it opened), Irene admits to not letting anyone in her classes go home with left-over fabric."

- "We make purses to match our outfits," she says. "Sometimes we cover pumps with fabric to match a dress. We make matching roses, ties or belts to change the look of an outfit."

- "For women who desire to gain expertise, for women who want to learn to sew her students say "You can't miss. She is just the greatest teacher. We have so much fun learning together."

IRENE MacKINNON will be forming new classes for beginners, intermediates and advanced students in January. She teaches three days a week and has both morning and afternoon sessions. For information call the Farmington Community Center, 477-6904. When you join the class, she will give you her home phone number so that whoever hits a snag when working on a garment at home, can call her for immediate help.



Betty Mallon shows off her remodeled ranch seal jacket. (Staff photos by Allen Schlossberg.)



Lillian Obad models her disco outfit.



Vera Sklar displays the reversible blouse and skirt she made in class.

Arthritis—it is a pain

By SHIRLEE IDEN

Once Margot Ott thought she might spend the rest of her life in a wheelchair.

"That was eight years ago, when the Southfield homemaker was struck with rheumatoid arthritis.

"It's under control now," she said. "But it was difficult to accept when it happened. It came on gradually over a period of months. I had never



MARGOT OTT

been sick in my life except for childhood diseases.

"Things became very severe. My hands were in splints and walking became a problem. I feel arthritis is a most misunderstood disease."

Today, Mrs. Ott understands a great deal more about this disease which is a pain in the neck, knee, back or many other areas for millions of people. She is the director of public relations for the Michigan Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation, located in Southfield.

"There are more than 100 different forms of arthritis and more than 1 million suffer from it in Michigan," she said. "Rheumatoid arthritis is America's most crippling disease."

People who believe arthritis is purely a disease of the elderly and they don't have to worry for a long time are not aware that some 250,000 children in this country are victims of the disease.

"THERE ARE 12,000 Michigan children afflicted right now. The earliest diagnosis of arthritis ever made was on a three-week-old baby," she said.

Arthritis is a disease of connective tissues and can cause blindness and affect lungs, spleen, liver, kidney or heart.

"It can be an agonizing thing and many people would rather face a fatal disease like cancer than a lifetime of pain from arthritis," she said.

Mrs. Ott stresses that although it is a terrible disease, it is not hopeless.

"There aren't any miracles with arthritis," she said. "Not with drugs or with diets, but arthritis victims are bilked out of more than money than any other group. There has been almost a billion dollars spent on worthless stuff."

Arthritis has been known to inhale strange gasses, drink lemon juice, rub their aching joints with bee venom or other faddish notions in a search for an end of pain.

Mrs. Ott confesses that she wore copper bracelets and drank gallons of alfalfa tea herself.

"People should go to a qualified doctor and get their disease under control," she said. "A good physician will not say go home and take two aspirins. There are drugs, exercises and treatments that can bring relief."

STRIDES HAVE been made in reconstructive surgery for arthritis and there are new drugs.

"The newest drug is good, it's anti-inflammatory and patients only have to take two pills a day instead of 12 to 20 aspirins," she said.

"It is expensive, about 40 cents a pill and does have some side effects. But it helps and we're happy about it."

"It's not an amazing breakthrough and not a miracle cure, new drugs comes out all the time."

She added certain drugs work better on certain patients.

The Arthritis Foundation tries to serve as a clearing house for information and help patients cope with their disease. For several years, they have sponsored monthly Mutual Support meetings for education and an exchange of information. They are held in a Southfield Church, St. David's and are open to the public.

"Now we are attempting to bring together parents who must cope with arthritic children," she said. "More than 50 of them gathered in a first meeting in Southfield last month. When we get enough people together, we will divide into county groups."

"Being able to talk one-to-one about these problems is invaluable," she said. "It's a matter of sharing the problem."

For more information call Mrs. Ott at 561-9066.

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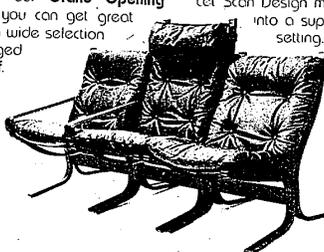
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