

# Designs limited only by choice

# Personalize your luggage. Make it yourself

By MARTI BENEDETTI

Those people who like to travel no longer have to depend upon the durability of luggage made by Samsonite or American Tourister to handle their travel needs.

Anyone handy with a sewing machine can create luggage or a host of other travel accessories that not only express individuality but endure.

For under \$50, you can make a set of five pieces of luggage.

Materials and luggage sewing classes are available at The Nifty Needle in Meadowbrook Village Mall in Avon Township.

The entire set of luggage includes a garment bag, a tote bag, a cosmetic bag, a suitcase and a duffel bag. Each item can be customized (you choose the size, color and fabric) to the sewer's taste.

The most commonly used material

is a pre-quilted surray, a fabric that is used to make ski apparel. Also ideal material for luggage or accessories is corduroy or denim lined with unquilted surray. Cotton, duck, vinyls and ultrasuede hold up well in the form of luggage. Zippers should be heavy duty cotton or polyester with large teeth.

Fabrics chosen should be able to hold up under the rigorous treatment of airport luggage handlers and should be waterproof.

**WATERPROOF FABRICS** are chemically treated so that water will not penetrate them. Especially interesting are the family of fabrics made from nylon cire, a woven type of nylon. Many of these cires are stitched with a contrasting color of thread.

Pre-quilted surray, corduroy and cottons are recommended because they can be thrown into the washer and dryer, explained Marie Mangus, owner of The Nifty Needle.



"Luggage made out of pre-quilted fabric was invented by Virginia P. Allen, who wrote the book 'Pre-Quilted Crafts,'" Ms. Mangus said. "The book not only illustrates how to make luggage but goes into how to make bags for skis, ski boots or tennis rackets."

Travel accessories can run the whole gamut from a jewelry case to a shaving kit. These items make excellent gifts and bazaar trinkets because they make traveling so much more convenient. Some of them are best made from a waterproof fabric or they can be lined with plastic.

**LUGGAGE TAGS**, for instance, can be made in a few minutes by cutting two pieces of fabric and one piece of clear plastic and overcast stitching. A map carrier is made by measuring a car's sun visor to determine the size of the carrier. Applying pockets and two elastic straps so the carrier can slip over the visor can be done in no time. Use a snap or self-sticking tape to close it.

Ms. Allen's crafts book is filled with items to sew that are guaranteed to make travel a pleasure.

If you are an aspiring sewer who

needs some instruction to create travel luggage, Ms. Mangus is holding classes at her shop in January. The classes, which were held before the holidays and proved a success, taught students to make luggage and accessories to give as gifts or to use themselves. Classes are taught by Becky Magnus.

To make the luggage, students are instructed on how to proportion each piece of luggage to the desired size. Fabric is cut. The zipper is put in and monogramming and cording is put on. The luggage is then ready to be sewn together and completed—a task Ms. Mangus said is not difficult.

Ms. Mangus suggested that a zig-zag sewing machine be used since monogramming requires a zig-zag stitch. While sewing in the zipper is the most difficult step, students are instructed at length on how to put in a zipper.

men or women, have become a convenient way of traveling. Using them eliminates the need to fold garments, just hang them in the bag and go. While it takes more fabric to make them, they can be made in 1 1/2 hours.

Credit card cases, check book cases and cigarette cases are small but handy items to carry one's important documents. Quick and easy instructions on how to fashion your own are contained in Ms. Allen's book.

The book and a variety of fabrics specially made for durability can be found at The Nifty Needle. Pre-quilted fabric comes in black, green, red and navy. It costs \$5.25 per yard.

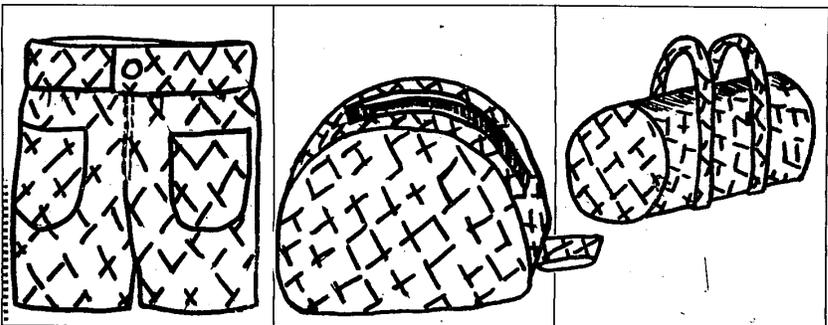
Ms. Mangus added that because the homemade luggage is soft, it can be squashed, rolled or molded to fit into today's compact cars. Often luggage will needlessly take up room in a car because its shape and harness make it difficult to situate in a small trunk.

GARMENT BAGS, ideal gifts for



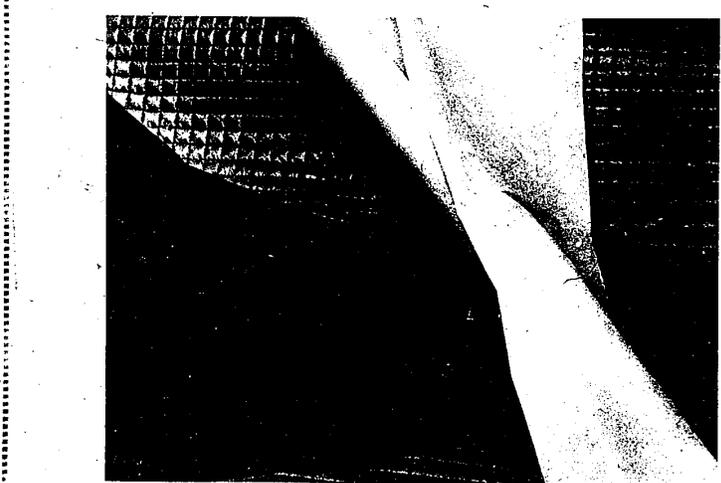
Wouldn't you like a set of luggage like this? It's guaranteed to come in any color, size and type of material you want since you're the one

who can make it on your home sewing machine. (Photos by Mindy Saunders)



Your luggage set needn't be limited to only large pieces. In just a short amount of time, the home sewer can make shoe slacks (left to

right), an overnight tote and a makeup bag plus many more accessories.



The most popular fabrics for making luggage are corduroy (left), pre-quilted fabric (bottom) or cire

nylon. Each type can be enhanced with different color thread for top stitching or for monograms.

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