

Antique clothing stars in show

Story: CORINNE ABATT
Photos: DICK KELLEY

Even though she's a mother of adult children, Ms. Shepherd's friends tease her about still playing dress up.

She doesn't mind the teasing because, in one sense, she knows it's true.

A charming lady who grew up in Kentucky, Ms. Shepherd has turned a love of vintage clothes into a business.

Four years ago she and two friends, Doris White of Royal Oak and Jody Yeats of Birmingham, formed an antique business. Each developed a specialty—Ms. Yeats, sterling and coin silver; Ms. White, primitives; and Ms. Shepherd concentrated on clothes, in spite of a few skeptic expressions from her partners.

Maintaining an inventory of clothes and accessories from the 19th century through the 50s keeps her on the go, from auctions and estate sales to flea

markets and garage sales.

THE BEST of her vintage clothes will be included in an antique show and sale Jan. 20-21 at Glen Oaks Golf and Country Club, 30580 Thirteen Mile in Farmington.

Not only does Ms. Shepherd sell the clothes she finds, she wears them, and remarked that her friends never know what to expect when they invite her to a party.

As she stood in the living room of her townhouse in a black crushed velvet skirt, black pumps with narrow heels and seamed stockings with the black heel showing, she said "my particular favorite style is the 30s. It was such an elegant look." What pleases her both from the standpoint of a collector and a dealer is that the craze for vintage clothes has blossomed since she went into business.

"A lot of young girls like the clothes of the 40s and 50s. Many of them buy from me, and of course, people like the Muzzle Loaders who meet at Green-

field Village are always looking for clothes from the 1800s. Theatrical groups are regular clients, too."

To compliment the clothes, dresses, skirts and suits for both men and women, Ms. Shepherd has hats, gloves, purses, lingerie (when she can find it), jewelry, buttons and buckles.

Some of the appeal for buyers, in addition to liking the styles, is that the clothes of former years were basically well-made, particularly those with designer labels.

A SHORT CHIFFON evening dress from the 20s, intricately beaded, has many small details to make the beaded belt and tie down the back hang just right. While chiffon is often too fragile to keep over the years, this one, in good repair, is still very much together.

Ms. Shepherd turned slowly to show the easy flow of the crushed velvet skirt she was wearing.

"I bought this at an auction in Paducah. Nobody was bidding against me. In fact, they were all laughing at me and I said 'go ahead and laugh.'"

For evening, she wears a floor length black velvet evening coat, the kind girls in the 40s had to have for formal dances.

"I just love it," she said. "Not only is it practical, nice and warm, but it looks lovely over a long dress."

One lower level room in the Shepherd home is used to house a large part of the inventory and it's like walking into the costume department of a the-

ater or a small, cozy historical museum.

The cotton 'day dresses' of the 30s all have white collars and cuffs, some lace, some in off white complimentary fabric. A bride's dress from the 30s is off-white satin, lavishly trimmed with lace. It has a long train the kind that probably took flower girls to handle.

The hangers of tuxes and tails interest as many young women as men, and one small vest, particularly, has attracted the young women who like that look, which is making a comeback.

Ms. Shepherd, who was a medical technician for most of her working years, said this new career may take more time and not always prove as economically dependable, but she plans to stay with it.

"I just love it, I'm having so much fun," she said recalling the trip she and her partner, Ms. Yeats made to California last summer.

They loaded a van with antiques and clothes and stopped to sell at flea markets along the way.

They sold in a major flea market in Pasadena and went on to a huge one in Los Angeles. In practically all instances, their reception from buyers was rewarding.

"Sometimes they were buying our things, literally, as we took them out of the van," she said.

Hours for the free Glen Oaks show are noon to 10 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 20 and noon to 7 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 21.

Home buyers survival is topic for seminar

The Home Buyers Survival seminar, offered by Farmington Community Center this term, will be instructed by David Cornwell and John Vital.

Both Realtors Million Dollar Club members who bring a wealth of real estate expertise to the seminar. Their related experience in residential construction and insurance is aimed to provide valuable insights into the housing market for buyers and sellers alike.

Particular attention will be paid to procedures that make a sales transaction trouble free and equitable for all parties.

The six-session class begins Tuesday, Jan. 30, and runs from 7:30-9:30 p.m.

"My interest in offering the course is the direct result of my strong personal feeling that many individuals, particularly young couples, are in need of information and education related to the purchase and sale of a home," Cornwell said.

"Property values being what they are today, everyone should take advantage of this class," he continued.

Registrations for all classes offered by the center are being taken now by calling the center, 477-8404.

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