

TEXTILES AND APPAREL NEWSLETTER

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Announcing

New Cornell CD-ROM Features American Dresses

If you need to date an artifact for appraisal or historical value, the new CD-ROM from Cornell University, *American Dresses 1780 to 1900: Identification and Significance of 148 Extant Dresses*, is invaluable.

The unique 810-page encyclopedic reference, including more than 300 photographs and illustrations, can be used by museum curators, dealers, and collectors to help with appraisals, acquisitions, storage and other aspects of clothing collections. Theatre costume designers and others who reproduce historic costumes as well as anyone wanting to learn about family history from artifacts will find this a useful reference.

The format, ideally suited to CD-ROM, allows the user to experience the investigative process. A wealth of supporting topics include a guide to fabric and textile identification, a handbook for garment handling and basic conservation practices, and sources for further information. These supplement the main text and illustrations.

Developed by Elsie Frost McMurry, professor emerita with the College of Human Ecology at Cornell, this scholarly study, with wide popular appeal, presents a chronological framework for a detailed, systematic body of reliable information.

The research sample is based on systematic comparison of 148 extant day dresses drawn from 17 collections located along the U.S. eastern seaboard. Studied on-site in large urban museums, regional historical society collections, university study collections and private collections, each dress was examined in its entirety, measured, sketched and described, ensuring a sequential coverage of the same components for each.

The author's degrees are from Michigan State University and Columbia University. An educator and consultant, she was acting head of the then Department of Textiles and Clothing, College of Human Ecology at Cornell. From 1950 to 1972 and 1982 to 1988 she was director and curator of the Costume Collection at Cornell, a unique study resource for students in a broad range of disciplines. Known for her exhibitions, lectures and workshops she is a member of the Costume Society of America.

The CD-ROM is available for \$49.95 including S&H within the U.S. from the Cornell University Resource Center, 7 BTP, Ithaca, NY 14850. Specify PC or MAC. New Yorkers: add 8% sales tax or provide exemption. If outside the U.S. please prepay in U.S. dollars and add 35% for shipping.

ENGAGING YOUTH

LivingSoft Workshop in NYC in June

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

LivingSoft will conduct workshops on Dress Shop and Sewing Made Easy computer programs in New York City, June 27-30, 2001. Discounts may be available for bringing a laptop, printer, or another sewer. Participants are especially encouraged to bring along an interested young person. For details, check their website <<http://www.livingsoft.com/wsnv2.asp>> Register online at <<http://www.livingsoft.com>> or call 800-626-1262.

Grab and Go Workshop

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

Hands-on science workshops will be offered at the Grab and Go with Science Conference on April 25-26 on Cornell campus. I will lead *Things that Fly* and *Beyond Tie Dyeing*. *Things that Fly* participants will make a kite, rocket, parachute, airplane, and glider, while exploring the principles of flight and the materials to make these airborne objects. *Beyond Tie Dyeing* will engage participants in five different resist dyeing techniques. Grab and Go is linked to the Strengthening 4-H Club Conference, April 26-27. Watch for information at your county office.

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CONCERNING CONSUMERS

A Taxing Controversy

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

Do you drive to another county or order from out-of-state catalog companies to avoid paying sales tax? Did you know that most E-commerce purchases are exempt from taxes? Have you thought what that means to your local businesses and community?

Sales tax is collected in 45 states. Residents in those states are supposed to pay sales tax even if they order from out-of-state firms. Most of these states also have "use taxes," which individuals are legally bound to send to the capital when they buy goods from out of state. That's news to most folks and aside from big-ticket items such as cars and boats, which require registration, taxes on such purchases are not collected.

So just how many dollars are we talking about? A 1999 study suggests that governments could lose \$5 billion annually from their inability to collect taxes on mail orders and an additional \$10 billion annually by 2003 on internet purchases.

This tax loophole has existed since the first mail-order houses insisted that they should not be responsible for collecting taxes for states in which they had no physical presence. Companies pleaded that complicated tax codes made accurate collection impossible. Including local tax authorities, the U.S. has 7,500 separate tax jurisdictions. A 1967 Supreme Court decision agreed that "a welter of complicated obligations" constituted a burden.

Some argue that such accounting is easy with today's technology. If online companies can keep track of every customer's buying preferences, why can't they set up a system that takes into account a few thousand tax rules? Target demonstrated that they can. In the early part of 2000, Target collected appropriate sales tax for all. Finding it was alone in upholding its civic duty, Target discontinued the practice and now collects only from Minnesota residents. Wal-Mart had a similar experience and now collects sales tax in only four states.

Many citizens are urging Congress to act to change this situation. They say that the shortfall in uncollected sales tax results in reduced public services or increased rates of other taxes. Small neighborhood businesses, which dutifully collect sales taxes, are losing business to the online retailers who are virtually exempt.

This controversy is certain to grow as E-commerce grows. Whether you are a mall walker, a catalog viewer, or an online shopper, the sales tax issue affects you.

-US News & World Report, December 18, 2000

SUPPORTING INDUSTRY

Apparel Industry Outreach

FRAN KOZEN

The Apparel Industry Outreach Program receives frequent requests for assistance from designers, small businesses, and from people who might want to become design entrepreneurs. We are currently developing materials for a new course, *Designers as Entrepreneurs*, which will provide in-depth coverage of issues critical to design entrepreneurs, such as:

- types of entrepreneurship (freelance, business ownership, intrapreneurship within a company)
- intellectual property law (copyright, trademark, patenting, licensing)
- product development and taking a product commercial
- sourcing of materials and labor for production stages
- product lifecycle and brand or line development
- mass customization, or ways to customize products while producing in large quantities
- distribution options, such as retail, wholesale, trade shows, using sales representatives, e-commerce
- social responsibility in business.

The course is being developed first as a course for Cornell students and will be adapted for use with small businesses through the Apparel Industry Outreach Program. To bring students more directly in touch with real world experience, a web-based interactive textbook is being developed to include video clips of discussions with design professionals and entrepreneurs and case studies of real design businesses. We are currently conducting these videotaped interviews. From them, we will select video and audio clips for inclusion in the electronic textbook.

If you are aware of a design entrepreneur (apparel, sewn products, home furnishings, graphics, and toys) or someone else in your county who might have a particular expertise in one of the bulleted topics above, please let us know (Suzanne Loker at sl135@cornell.edu and Fran Kozen at fhk2@cornell.edu). We won't be able to interview everyone, but you might identify someone who fills a gap in our course content. Thank you for your help.



The newly released green ketchup, Heinz Blastin' Green EZ Squirt, uses Blue No. 1 and Yellow No. 5 dyes. Both tend to stain nylon, silk, and wool. Red ketchup doesn't.

ENHANCING SAFETY

Be Seen, Be Safe

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

Most athletic wear now comes with fashionable trims and decorative designs made from reflective materials. 3M Scotchlite Reflective material is 1,500 times brighter than white fabric and is available as trims, transfer films, pipings, ribbons, and patches. Quantum Reflective Technologies Inc. has a full apparel line featuring illumiNITE technology, a proprietary manufacturing process for converting miniature glass spheres into highly reflective materials. When embedded in fabric, it reflects the entire silhouette of the wearer to the source of oncoming light. Available illumiNITE products include vests, jackets, pullovers, tights, mittens, hats, and umbrellas. As Susan Haider, sales and marketing manager for 3M Safety and Security Systems Division explains, "Being visible is very important to athletes-its almost a performance feature. They can get a better workout when they're not worrying about safety."

-*Bobbin, May 2000*
-3 M Scotchlite publications

EPA Programs Emphasize Reading Labels

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has launched a truck-side ad campaign to raise consumer awareness of the hazards of pesticide use in urban areas. The campaign also promotes the services of the National Pesticide Telecommunications Network (NPTN). Ads on trucks advocate, "Read the Label First!" and provide a phone number for NPTN. The National Pesticide Telecommunication Network is a comprehensive hotline providing pesticide safety information, and is also a source of general pesticide information. NPTN can be contacted toll free at 1-800-858-7378 (PEST) or at: <http://www.ace.orst.edu/info/nptn> Additional information about EPA's "Read the Label First!" message is available at: <http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/labeling/campaign/htm>.

EPA is also recruiting groups to participate in a pilot program entitled the Pesticide Audio Technology Initiative, which will develop educational kits for use in schools. The program has three primary objectives:

- teach children the importance of reading the label before using a pesticide or household cleaner
- reduce children's exposure to harmful chemicals
- foster partnerships among EPA, state and local agencies, industry, and other stakeholders.

For further information, contact Drew Burnett at Tel: 202-564-0448 or E-mail: burnett.andrew@epamail.epa.gov or Amy Breedlove at Tel: 703-308-9069 or E-mail: breedlove.amy@epamail.epa.gov

GATHERING RESOURCES

Knitting Made Easy: Interactive CD-ROM by Coats BETH DAVIS

Knitting is a skill people learn in a variety of ways, self-taught or from a skilled knitter, singly or in groups. They might teach themselves by studying an instruction manual at home. Some learn by observing others and imitating their actions, as in a mentor/student relationship. Others prefer taking a group class with a teacher, where social interactions enhance the instruction. Coats Corporation has released an interactive learning CD called "Knitting Made Easy" to add to this list of teaching methods. An interactive CD is an educational tool that requires a basic familiarity with computers. Those who enjoy teaching themselves a new skill may find this a superior method of learning. I taught myself to knit from a leaflet and now teach knitting classes at a local shop, and was curious to see how an interactive CD compared with these two methods and whether it could be a useful learning tool.

The "Knitting Made Easy" CD has four parts – live video of hands manipulating yarn and needles, coordinated line drawings of the procedures, "voice over" explaining each step in the process, and written instructions supporting the visual and oral material. Lessons can be repeated until mastered and additional information and vocabulary is available for each lesson.

To knit successfully, a student must master the mechanics of knitting, learn to manipulate stitches to create fabric and read and understand commercial patterns. The mechanics of holding needles and yarn, the first hurdle for any student, is clearly demonstrated here with the video of a front view of hands holding the yarn and creating the stitch, alongside a clear line drawing of the process. You can stop the video at any point and study the hand formations and interpretive drawings on the frozen frame. The accompanying verbal instructions are clear and simple, and the written descriptions add a helpful backup. This lesson can be repeated indefinitely until you are sick of it and can do it in your sleep! With some patience and persistence, anyone can master the basic mechanics of knitting. Unfortunately, the lesson is restricted to the English method of holding yarn in the right hand, a disadvantage to those who wish to learn the European style of holding yarn in their left hand.

The second stage in learning to knit is manipulating stitches to create fabric surfaces and shape. I find the greatest weakness in the CD presentation in this category. The sections cover shaping (increasing and decreasing), binding off, color patterns (stranding and intarsia), lace, cables and finishing. These subjects are not covered sufficiently to provide a level of accomplishment on the part of the knitter. This is especially

evident in the finishing section, where techniques are demonstrated but appropriate applications are not discussed. In addition, many stitch manipulation techniques have been updated in the current knitting literature, but this program illustrates out-dated techniques no longer used by good knitters. One will need to get more information from books or knitting classes on these various aspects of knitting.

The third stage in learning to knit is reading and understanding the language of commercial patterns. This part of the "Knitting Made Easy" CD is very good, as the knitting terminology, abbreviations and pattern sentence structure are presented progressively with each lesson. By the time you reach the section on reading patterns, you are familiar enough with basic theory of shape and fit to make it easy to interpret the intent of the instructions. Also, the program explains how different publishers use different symbols to represent the same stitches. This is valuable information for beginning knitters who often struggle with unfamiliar notations and can be easily frustrated by the wide variety of pattern symbols and abbreviations.

The CD provides a complete glossary and index, both very useful. The short FAQ is a bit limiting in its advice (use our Coats & Clark yarn only!) but worth a quick review. There is an illustrated list of supplies and their uses, though stores carry a huge and differing variety of notions, and you will benefit by spending time at a local yarn shop and asking questions. The collection of patterns, graded by difficulty, is fun and appealing to both adults and younger students. Lastly, a web site address <www.support.coatsandclark.com> and an 800 number for the Consumer Service Department of Coats & Clark are provided for technical support. The "Knitting Made Easy" program includes a CD-ROM, a set of size 8 knitting needles and a skein of Red Heart acrylic yarn.

In conclusion, I find this interactive CD surprisingly easy to use, with good coverage of basic knitting skills and commercial pattern interpretation, but as noted above, some weakness in its attempt to cover too many areas of specialized knitting skills and the use of out-dated knitting techniques. Of greater benefit would be the inclusion of instruction for European style knitting. The use of video in combination with line drawings, oral and written text provides an interactive CD with a unique advantage over usual publications. As the computer CD learning experience is most like that of self-teaching from a manual or book, it will probably appeal to those who learn well in this manner. It is difficult to recommend this approach to those who prefer a group class or individual instruction. However, with this CD as a beginning, a person can successfully start the process of learning to knit, and will greatly benefit by additional material found in books, in group classes and by talking to other knitters.