

TEXTILES AND APPAREL NEWSLETTER

Contents

Announcing

2003 Inservice in the Mail 1

Engaging Youth

Make it With Wool Winners 2

Feedback from Counties 2

Concerning Consumers

Dye Magnets — What's the Big Attraction? 2

Exploring Fabrics/Fibers

Ah, Shucks — A New Generic Fiber 3

Supporting Industry

Mass Customized Wedding Dresses On-Line? 3

Textile Technology

Useful Resources on Pesticide Topics 4

Textiles in the News 4

Announcing

2003 Inservice-in-the-Mail

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

Looking for new materials for 4-H leaders? Thinking about offering a sewing class for adults? Needing a handy reference for basic clothing construction? This self-study inservice offers you the chance to obtain and explore a book that can help with your clothing programs and — you don't have to leave your office or even thread your sewing machine.

Participants will be supplied a copy of the 129-page *Easy Guide to Sewing T-Shirt & Tops* by Marcy Tilton. Study packets of five questions each will be mailed on March 1 and April 1. Participants will have one month to locate and return the answers. Those who complete both study packets by May 15 keep the book at no cost; those who complete one packet will be charged \$10; and those who return no answers will be charged the list price of \$20. Limit one entry per county.

Complete the enclosed registration form and return to Charlotte Coffman, Cornell University, MVR 239, Ithaca, NY 14853-4401 or email the same information to cwc4@cornell.edu by February 28, 2003.

~~~~~

\**Easy Guide to Sewing T-Shirt & Tops* is one title in a series published by Taunton Press. Watch upcoming issues of TXA News for a review of these titles by Beth Davis.

## ENGAGING YOUTH

### 2002 NYS Make It With Wool Winners

JEAN BONHOTAL, 4-H Volunteer, Oswego County  
JOANNE BALDINI, 4-H Educator, Tompkins County

The New York State Make it Yourself with Wool Contest was held November 3, 2002 at the CCE - Tompkins County office in Ithaca NY. These winners will represent NY at the national contest in Washington, DC.

#### Pre-teens

Cassie Storm, Brian Kelchlin, Daniel Fancher, and Will Fancher

#### Juniors, ages 13-16

Gwendolyn Barr, Brooktondale, NY - Cape  
(Alternate) Alexandra Goncarovs, Trumansburg, NY - Civil War era dress

#### Seniors, ages 17-24

Venda Mae Trutt, Ithaca, NY - Coat  
(Alternate) Andrea Kelchlin, Howes Cave, NY - 1950's dress

#### Adults, age 25 years and older

Susan Barr, Brooktondale, NY - Skirt and cape

#### Made For Others

Catherine Wakeman, Dryden, NY - Sweater

Congratulations to all who participated! In addition, special thanks are extended to those who helped organize, publicize, or judge the event and to all who donated prizes.

### Valuable Feedback from Counties

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

#### Textile Arts & Science Pilot Testing

Congratulations to Kim Romeo and Margaret DiLella of Monroe County and Linda Earley of Columbia County for being the first to return their evaluation forms for the Textile Arts pilot experiences. We look forward to hearing from the other participants. Watch for a summary of what we learn in a future TXA News issue.

#### Free Stuff for Evaluating the In-Touch Science Website

Are you willing to tell us what you think about the In-Touch Science website? Here's what you do:

- Go online to <http://www.intouch.cornell.edu> and explore the site
- Click on [Helpful Hints](#) in the index at the left of your screen
- Note announcement [Make Our Site Better!](#) at the right of your screen
- Click on [Take the Survey](#) and answer the questions (2-minute questionnaire)

Thanks for your help . . . and don't forget to select your FREE In-Touch Science supplies.

## CONCERNING CONSUMERS

### Dye Magnets — What's the Big Attraction?

BETH DAVIS

You've just spent a year creating an heirloom quilt. You carefully washed all the fabrics before cutting, piecing and quilting, but now it's time to do a final wash of the finished quilt. Should you be worried about color running at this point? Will the turkey red run into the vintage white? How stable is that indigo blue fabric in the border? And what about the double pink? Is it double trouble? If this is a concern, you might consider the following solution to reduce the threat of bleeding dyes before and after completion of your project.

"Dye Magnets" are a new product recommended for solving this problem. They come in two forms: one a reusable cloth, and the other a disposable sheet, similar to fabric softener sheets. When added to a load of laundry, either white or dark or mixed, the purpose of the "dye magnet" is to grab all the loose dye molecules released in the wash water, thus preventing the excess dyes from migrating back onto both the original or neighboring fabrics, where they can sit on the surface ready to wreak havoc in the next washing. If there is bleeding, the "dye magnet" signals the problem by absorbing the excess dye and turning color. With this in mind, washing the fabrics in a load with the "dye magnet" before making the quilt should reduce the risk of bleeding in a final wash of the finished piece. Washing the final project using a "dye magnet" provides extra insurance against additional rogue dye molecules.

However, the product does not claim to "set" the dye, and in some fabrics, this may be an ongoing problem. If you have a fabric that has shown signs of excess bleeding in the first washing, you might want to compare the amount of color absorbed by a new "dye magnet" in subsequent washings. This would indicate whether the fabric is reliably colorfast or not. Some fabrics may require additional treatment to reach the point where they no longer bleed.

"Dye magnets" are of use to anyone using fabrics, yarns and dyes where bleeding is a concern. Indeed, reference to the use of this product can be found on various internet textile arts chat lines, including weaving, knitting, sewing, embroidery and quilting sites. The product can be found in the laundry section of grocery stores and fabric shops.



Demand for industrial starch and other corn chemicals in the US will grow to nearly nine billion pounds in 2004, valued at over \$3 billion.

—The Fredonia Group, 2002

## EXPLORING FABRICS/FIBERS

### Ah, Shucks – A New Generic Fiber

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

You have probably seen the corny headlines:

- An Amaizeing New Fiber
- A New Fabric Stalks a Market Share
- A New Fiber Is Popping Hot

After all, who can resist crafting catchy titles to introduce a silky textile fiber made from CORN? Aren't you all ears?

In early 2002, the Federal Trade Commission approved Polylactic Acid (PLA) as a new generic fiber. PLA fibers are manufactured from polylactic acid or poly lactate derived from naturally occurring sugars, such as those in corn or sugar beets. The trade name is NatureWorks and the manufacturer is Cargill Dow. Kanebo, Ltd. uses the trademark Corn Fiber, registered only in Japan.

The process to create NatureWorks fibers allows the company to "harvest" the carbon that plants remove from the air during photosynthesis. Carbon is stored in plant starches, which can be broken down into natural plant sugars. The carbon and other elements in these sugars are used to make a series of polymers, called polylactide. The development and manufacture of PLA relies on basic fermentation and distillation, followed by polymerization. Cargill Dow has a PLA manufacturing facility in Blair, NE, with the capacity to produce up to 300 million pounds of PLA per year.

The selling features of this non-petroleum synthetic fiber include:

- Renewable
- Biodegradeable – decomposes in 2-3 years when buried in soil (not as rapid as cellulose)
- Physical properties equivalent to conventional synthetic fibers
- Silky luster and smooth hand
- Wrinkle resistant
- Dyes and screen prints well
- Performs well in flammability tests – rated as slow burning with Limited Oxygen Index of 24-26 percent

PLA can be used for woven, knitted, and nonwoven fabrics for apparel, household items, and commercial uses. Kanebo, Ltd. has successfully blended this corn-based fiber with cotton, rayon, and wool, and produced garments ranging from t-shirts to wedding dresses. PLA is also recommended for upholstery fabrics, sheets, curtains, food packaging, disposable diapers, trash bags, and horticultural products such as weed prevention bags, plant mats, and animal-resistant covers.

Drawbacks include the fabric's sensitivity to heat and salt water. Care labels for garments made from NatureWorks advise: Do not iron, Do not steam-iron, and Do not tumble dry. The fabric should be printed with water-based inks rather

than plastisols. Due to its deterioration in salt water, obviously, the product should not be used for swimwear.

Resources:

1. FTC Announces New Fiber Generic, FiberNews, February, 2002  
[http://www.fibersource.com/Info/More\\_News/pla-020402.htm](http://www.fibersource.com/Info/More_News/pla-020402.htm)
2. New Performance Options from Nature, Green Design: Life Without Fossil Fuels.  
<http://www.merchandisemart.com/neocom/proceedings/w301.htm>
3. FTC Awards Generic Fiber designation to Cargill Dow, INDA's e-Filter Newsletter, 3:3, March, 2002
4. Ecological Fiber Made from Corn, Kanebo Ltd  
<http://www.kanebotx.com/english/new/con-f.htm>
5. Amaizeing New Fabric Made Of . . .Corn?, Screen Printing Magazine  
<http://www.screenweb.com/garment/cont/maize990707.htm>

## SUPPORTING INDUSTRY

### Mass-Customized Wedding Dresses On-Line?

FRAN KOZEN

Internet retailers offer an increasing array of mass-customized garments such as jeans, chinos, or shirts. Mass-customized garments fall between custom made and ready to wear in terms of cost and consumer design input. Consumers select a design and can modify fit, style details such as sleeve, collar, or pocket, or fabric from a limited set of options. Is it possible to find mass-customized wedding gowns to save the cost of custom made but allow more personalized design details than ready to wear?

Rita Choy, a student of Suzanne Loker's, conducted an extensive search of bridal web sites in 2001 to find out. She identified four types of bridal web sites: marketing, browsing, advice, and customizing. Marketing sites advertise a brand or retail chain to draw customers to their physical stores. Browsing sites typically offer pictures of an inventory of wedding dresses, allowing pre-selection before visiting a retail store. Advice sites offer wedding planning information of all types, including dress styles and fit. Customizing sites allow customers an opportunity to be involved in dress design, but typically advertise customized services at store locations. Some take on-line orders for custom-made gowns. What Rita did not find were sites offering mass-customized dresses.

Rita then conducted research to gauge interest in purchasing mass-customized wedding gowns on the Internet. She designed a web site that allowed women to select from a list of design features to customize a wedding gown. Her work with 100 young women confirmed a high overall interest in involvement with the design of their wedding dress. Women who readily used technology and already were comfortable

with computers and the Internet were particularly interested in purchasing a gown this way. Rita concluded there could be a potential market for this type of design. The bridal industry has yet to explore this market, nearly two years after Rita conducted her research.

While you are waiting for the industry to offer mass-customized wedding gowns, there are hundreds of web sites corresponding to the four types Rita described for you to browse. Take a look at [www.willowsandivy.com](http://www.willowsandivy.com) for an example of a traditional customizing site that makes its own designs to order and at [www.fairyfashion.com](http://www.fairyfashion.com) and [www.serafina.net](http://www.serafina.net) for sites that will customize some parts of gowns made from set designs. If you are interested in sewing a gown, consult [www.sewbridal.com](http://www.sewbridal.com) (McCall's patterns) or [www.butterick.com/bhc/pages/articles/features/romantic/Romantic.htm](http://www.butterick.com/bhc/pages/articles/features/romantic/Romantic.htm) for plenty of advice on styles, fabrics, and sewing.

## TEXTILE TECHNOLOGY

### Useful Resources on Pesticide Topics

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

#### Online Pesticide Information Expanded

The New York State Pesticide Information Retrieval System (NYSPIRS) <<http://pmep.cce.cornell.edu/pims/>>, has added a third database to help you keep up-to-date on pesticide products registered for use in New York. The three databases are:

- NYS PIMS Current Products – Information about pesticide products currently registered in NYS
- NYS PIMS Archived Products – Information about pesticide products that are no longer registered in NYS.
- NYR PIRS – Specialized data searches for NYS pesticide products that are registered with the EPA.

#### Home Safe Home Poster in Spanish and English

EPA now offers two versions of its 8 1/2"x11" poster on pest control and pesticide safety tips for the home, entitled "Home Safe Home." Refer to EPA Publication No. 735-H-01-006 (English) and 735-H-01-006(S) (Spanish). Request copies directly from the Agency's National Service Center for Environment Publications (NSCEP) by phone at 1-800-490-9198 or by mail at: USEPA, NSCEP, Bldg. 5, 11029 Kenwood Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45242. The Office of Pesticide Program's Communication Services Branch (CSB) also has a limited number of copies available. You may contact CSB at 703-305-5017.

### Textiles in the News

FRAN KOZEN

#### Go Tagless

You may have seen the Hanes commercial for tagless T-shirts aired during the Super Bowl. What's the big deal? The Hanes slogan is "Hanes comfort. It's a beautiful thing". The company found in recent surveys that two out of three men consider T-shirt tags to be scratchy and annoying, and close to half of them rip or cut the tags out. Ripping can tear the T-shirt or the neckline stitching. Cutting does not always fully remove the irritation. So, the obvious solution was to retire the tag. Hanes is now heat-labeling laundry and fiber information directly onto the inside of the T-shirt. Visit [www.GoTagless.com](http://www.GoTagless.com) for a coupon, a contest, and suggestions for what to do with your old tags (e.g.: luggage tags for people named Hanes).

#### Bamboo Grass Paper Cloth

The latest Japanese fabric innovation is yarn made by wrapping bamboo grass paper around a polyester core. The firm Sun Trade says the grass has anti-bacterial properties to combat body odor and blocks UV rays as well. They have developed golf apparel using the yarns. They say it has also been used for tennis apparel and hospital gowns as well. We'll have to wait until it comes to the US to see if it is softer than bamboo placemats and shades!

| EXTENSION FACULTY AND STAFF                    |          |                              |
|------------------------------------------------|----------|------------------------------|
|                                                | Phone    | E-mail                       |
| <b>Charlotte Coffman</b>                       | 255-2009 | cwc4@cornell.edu             |
| -Textiles and Apparel, Youth and Safety Issues |          |                              |
| <b>Susan Darling</b>                           | 255-1943 | sd247@cornell.edu            |
| - Water Quality, Septic Systems, Home*A*Syst   |          |                              |
| <b>Fran Kozen</b>                              | 255-0465 | fhk2@cornell.edu             |
| -Textiles and Apparel, Industry Outreach       |          |                              |
| <b>Ann Lemley</b>                              | 255-3151 | atl2@cornell.edu             |
| -Department Chair, Water Quality, DEL          |          |                              |
| <b>Suzanne Loker</b>                           | 255-6204 | sl135@cornell.edu            |
| -Textiles and Apparel, Industry Outreach       |          |                              |
| <b>Elizabeth Davis</b>                         | 255-3427 | ed55@cornell.edu             |
| -Youth Programs, Workshop Coordinator          |          |                              |
| <b>Paula Smith</b>                             | 255-3196 | pjs15@cornell.edu            |
| -TXA News Production Manager                   |          |                              |
| -TXA Loan Library                              |          | txa_extn-mailbox@cornell.edu |

*Reference to commercial products and services is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended, nor endorsement implied.*