

Men create garments, discover savings, relaxation of sewing

By Connie Sue Gaskill

"Men are going crazy sewing nowadays," according to a saleswoman, from a local store's sewing department.

Especially popular with men are jacket-making kits and no-snap fabrics that have garbadine finishes, she added.

Just like women, men are discovering the benefits and pleasures of sewing: savings, relaxation and the satisfaction gained from creating unique garments, she added.

"My wife and I hardly ever buy anything ready made," said Ray Steinert of the State Dept. of Education. "It's just too expensive—and less fun. Sewing became our family project."

Steinert took a clothing construction course at the South Eastern Nebraska Technical Community College. "Traveling a lot, every so often something will rip—and at these times it's to every man's advantage to know how to sew."

"In my clothing construction course we learned to alter patterns. Not long ago I made four different shirts from the same pattern—each with different necklines or cuffs," Steinert said.

A clerk in the sewing department of another local store said, "I can easily make myself a polyester dress for \$10. She recommended McCalls and Simplicity patterns for beginners and the budget conscious.

"Not only are they easier to construct, but less expensive than Vogue or Butterick," she said. She also suggested not using cotton materials because their price has skyrocketed. Persons should buy cotton blends instead, she added.

Buttons sometimes are a major expense, she

said. Many button manufacturers package only three on a card.

"You always need four," she said, "which is especially annoying if they are fad buttons that range to \$1.20 per card."

She was referring to small, handpainted buttons and the plastic ones molded into fruit shapes.

Most sewing clerks interviewed advised budget conscious seamsters to shop around. Compare fabric materials, consider the care that goes into them and know what you want before you begin shopping, they recommend.

"And when you do shop," one clerk said, "carefully follow the pattern guide to buy the correct amount of material. Shorter people will need less fabric than the pattern requires."

"If I could tell people one thing about sewing, it would be this," said Sharon Waldo, a sewing instructor at South Eastern Nebraska Technical Community College, "It's not something one learns over night—it takes practice. This seems like a hard concept for people to understand until they pick out a Vogue pattern, and then go home and cry in frustration over it."

"One must begin with the basic techniques," Waldo advised. "If he learns them thoroughly, he will find they will apply to any and all sewing."

In the past three years at the technical college, four or five men have enrolled in the sewing courses taught, Waldo said.

"However, even though not as many men as we'd like frequent our classes, sewing for men is very popular," she continued. "A gift of a jacket or a pair of trousers is a delight to any husband or boyfriend that has already shopped around and knows the prices."

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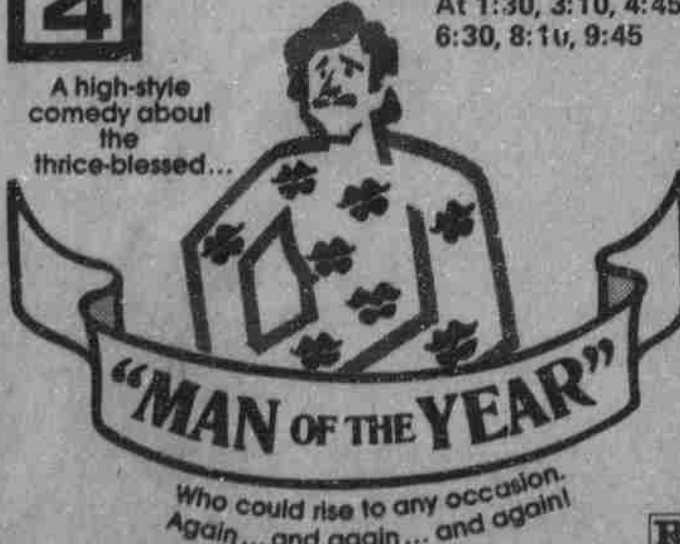


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