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Fashion design student knits her way to success

By JOAN KORINEK

Margaret Warner's wardrobe consists of only two store-bought sweaters. That's because the rest of her sweaters she has designed, knitted and created — herself.

The 33-year-old graduate student in fashion design at UNL takes out her knitting needles and yarn and begins to knit as we talk. Because, she said, it keeps her hands busy. Although she has a knitting machine, Warner said, she prefers the needles because she can knit anytime she has five or 10 minutes of spare time.

Warner said her interest in fashion design stems from her childhood.

"Barbie never really had enough clothes," she said, laughing, "so I started sewing."

Later when she was in high school, Warner's aunt taught her how to knit. Little did she know that someday it would be her area of study.

Warner's knitting and designing talents have not gone unrecognized. This year, she won best of show at the Fashion Group of Kansas City's annual fashion show and last year she placed second. In addition, she was the only student winner in the Association of College Professors of Textiles and Clothing show in 1982.

This year's winner — a long, white sweater with pastel colors and shells on it — originally was made for someone else. But the person was not happy with it so Warner got it back, she said. She got the sweater back one week before the show and reworked it, putting the final touches on it 10 minutes before it was sent off to Kansas City, she said.

Warner said winning these awards has given her encouragement to pursue her interests. In addition, her fam-

ily and Robert Hillestad, UNL professor of clothing, textiles and design, have been supportive, she said.

Because sweaters are not sized, they fit a wide range of bodies, she said, smiling.

The less constructed a garment is, the better, and the least constructed thing is a cocoon, she said. Thus, the "cocoon" idea was born. Both this year's and last year's prize winners are based on the "cocoon" concept, she said.

But just where does she get ideas for all these sweaters?

"I get some of my inspirations from furs," she said.

While some ideas come like flashes, others float around in her head for a long time, she said. For example, one idea has been floating around for about a year and has yet to surface. Her "cocoon" idea came to her in about three weeks — which Warner said is fast for an idea.

On vacation one year, Warner said, she began looking at trees with moss on them, a basic observance which turned into the basis for a sweater idea.

Once she gets an idea, it goes straight from her head to the knitting needles, she said. There are no intermediate steps. The sweaters kind of shape themselves.

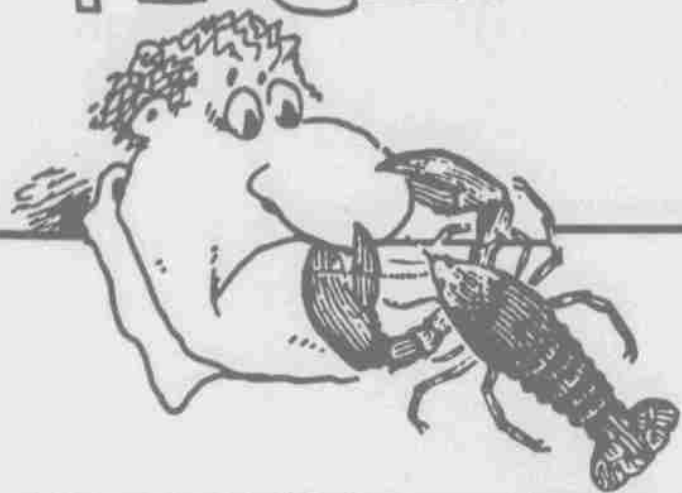
Material is an important element of each garment. Warner said she likes to use natural fibers and bright colors, especially purple.

But, she likes to try knitting with different things. In addition to yarn, she has used jewelry, lace, beads and shells in some sweaters. Last summer, she dyed a T-shirt, cut it up and then knitted it.

Warner said because she finds very few yarns in Lincoln, she looks in Omaha or orders yarn from a yarn company.

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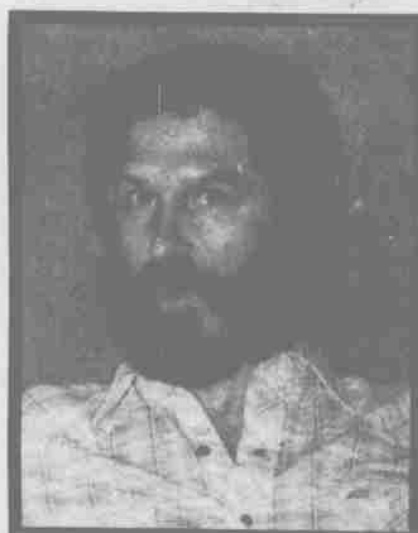
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