

TEXTILES AND APPAREL NEWSLETTER

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Announcing

The Department of Textiles & Apparel welcomes Van Dyk Lewis as the newest Apparel Design faculty member. He comes to Ithaca from England where he attended Middlesex Polytechnic and the University of Central England.

Van Dyk has extensive teaching experience and a definite approach for working with students. He encourages them to express their personality and to strive for fresh interpretations with every design. Once comfortable with their own work as artists, he then directs their attention to industrial trends and the reality of the marketplace. The first Cornell students to benefit from his expertise will enroll this fall in TXA 401, Fashion Presentation: Portfolio Development. Later, Van Dyk will also teach pattern making and drawing courses.

Van Dyk's thesis research took him to Jamaica where he studied the cultural influences on the clothing of peoples of African heritage. He hopes to continue this area of study, perhaps linking general consumer preferences to clothing purchases.

Above all, Dr. Van Dyk Lewis is a designer. He is excited about the opportunity to combine his personal ideas with European aesthetics and American functionality. We are excited to welcome him to Cornell and to work with him.

GATHERING RESOURCES

American Sewing Guild

The American Sewing Guild is a national non-profit organization dedicated to people who believe sewing is a rewarding and creative activity. Members enjoy discounts for sewing-related materials, a newsletter, regional and national meetings, and the special camaraderie of sharing with other sewers. The American Sewing Guild (ASG) recently declared its independence from the Home Sewing Association (formerly known as the American Home Sewing Association) and established a separate ASG headquarters in Houston, TX.

The American Sewing Guild's quarterly newsletter is called *Notions*. It contains practical articles about fibers, sewing techniques, book reviews, product previews, and industry news. For example, a recent issue included an article on the properties of linen, instructions for recycling neckties, and reviews of five books, including the CCE-produced *Simple Gifts*.

ASG also sponsors regional meetings and national conferences. Regional meetings focus on building and supporting local chapters. The 2001 national meeting was held in Birmingham, Alabama, and featured workshops, seminars, lectures, exhibits, fashion shows, and tours. The 2002 national meeting will take place in Philadelphia.

At this year's national meeting, ASG introduced the Certified Sewing Instructor (CSI) program. Applicants completed a one-day workshop to demonstrate competency in teaching beginning sewing courses. As certified instructors, some are recruited to conduct classes at Jo-Ann Stores, Hancock Fabrics, and Rag Shops. Others offer private sewing lessons or open their own sewing school. In any case, the CSI program provides credibility for those who want to earn an income from their sewing skills.

Membership dues are \$35 per year and should be sent to American Sewing Guild, 9660 Hillcroft, Suite 516, Houston, TX 77096 or Fax to: 713-729-3000. The form and other information can be obtained online at www.asg.org. Questions may be addressed to the ASG by tel: 713-729-3000 or by email: info@asg.org.

American Sewing Guild in New York

—Chapters—

Albany Chapter ASG

Kathy Levy, 21 Tattersall Lane, Colonie, NY 12205,

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Joan Reilly, 5389 Village Station, Williamsville, NY 14221-2887, Tel: (716) 689-3763

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Syracuse Chapter ASG

Susan Bray, 2408 Sourwood Dr., Phoenix, NY 13135-9519, Tel: (315) 695-4564, Email: suebray@twcny.rr.com

—Upcoming Event—

Sandra Betzina: Ending Fit Frustrations and Behind the Scenes in Ready-to-Wear.

Date: Saturday, September 29, 2001, 9:00 am-4:00 pm

Location: Thruway Marriott Motel, Henrietta, NY.

Cost: Members: \$50*; non-members: \$60* (includes lunch), *deduct \$10 if payment received by 9/8/01

Contact: Linda Ims 716-671-1101 or Landdimse@aol.com

EXPLORING FIBERS

Pashmina

LAURA CUTTER*

Pashmina is a popular new fashion fiber. Products made from pashmina are some of the finest and warmest in the world. Pashmina comes from the soft, warm undercoat of the Himalayan mountain goat (*Capri hircus*), also the source of cashmere. The goats will produce the undercoat only at high altitudes, so most are found in China, Nepal, Tibet and India. The goats are combed twice a year for their wool; the fine hair of the neck and belly is separated from the coarser wool. The hair is then woven to create wonderfully warm, lightweight products, like scarves and shawls. Three goats are needed to create one small scarf.

Pashmina and cashmere are distinguished by the diameter of the fiber. A fiber with a diameter of 18 microns or less may be labeled cashmere. Pashmina is 13-15 microns in diameter, finer than human hair. So, in essence, pashmina is the finest cashmere fibers. Pashmina fibers are often short lengths, making them difficult to spin on commercial equipment, so most are hand spun. They are used for fine woven fabrics rather than knits often made from cashmere fibers.

The demand for pashmina has skyrocketed. With increased demand comes controversy. Some activists claim that rather than be combed for their wool, the goats are slaughtered. Others claim that though the goats may not be killed during production, they are brutally exploited and eventually killed. The concern is that Himalayan goats will follow the path of the chiru, an endangered Tibetan antelope. The chiru's hair was used to make shatoosh products, which are even finer than pashmina. It is now illegal to buy or sell shatoosh products because the animals are killed for their hair. A decade ago there were 1 million chiru, today there are less than 75,000.

Pashmina products are fairly expensive, but high quality cashmere will last a lifetime. For a shawl, the prices range from \$300-\$500. If you are looking for pashmina, check out the hundreds of companies on the internet that sell it for less than you would pay in a store. Most of them guarantee their product and will take returns if you are not satisfied. Be aware that most pashmina is blended with silk or a coarser cashmere fiber. The ratio of pashmina to silk varies, but it is usually around 70:30 or 80:20. Silk is added, not so much to keep costs down, but to add durability, drape and luster.

You can care for your pashmina products at home. To clean them, hand wash with wool wash and lukewarm water. Do not leave the article soaking for more than 15 minutes. Move the pashmina around in the water, rinse and dry *in* a towel. Then dry it flat; this takes about 30 minutes. You can press pashmina by placing a protective layer of cloth between the pashmina and the iron. For persistent stains, do not scrub; take pashmina to the dry cleaners.

Pashmina's popularity, though new in the United States, has a long history in Europe and Asia. Pashmina blankets were often a part of a young woman's dowry. Shawls and scarves were treasured heirlooms. In fact, so treasured was this product, that Asian countries kept the fiber a secret until the 18th century, preferring to trade 'rougher' cashmere. The first contact the rest of the world had with pashmina was possibly in the form of a gift to the Egyptian court. The Emperor Napoleon was once given a pashmina shawl, which he then gave to his beloved Empress, Josephine.

Resources

1. http://www.anandcreations.com/shawls_page.htm
2. <http://ask.yahoo.com/ask/19991213.html>
3. <http://www.businessweek.com/1998/52/b3610169.htm>
4. http://www.cpcas.com/world_markets.html
5. <http://www.us.CashmereCompany.com>
6. <http://utah.citysearch.com/feature/32824/>
7. <http://www.fabrics.net>
8. <http://www.new-agri.co.uk>
9. <http://www.nusantawarehouse.com/pages/pashmina.htm>
10. http://www.purelypashmina.com/about_pashmina.htm
11. <http://www.thealtnet.com>
12. <http://www.wishesandthings.com.au/webcontent23.asp>

* *Laura Cutter is a summer student working with extension programs.*



The average household washes about 50 pounds of laundry per week.

—Soap and Detergent Association, 2001

CONCERNING CONSUMERS

Carpet Improvements

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

Did you know that of all floor coverings, carpet is chosen by 75 percent of purchasers? SpillNet and FiberLoc, two new products by DuPont, may make carpet even more popular.

SpillNet is a thin layer of spun-bonded fabric placed between the carpet and the cushion or pad. Spilled liquids can't pass through the barrier to the cushion but moisture vapor can move from the cushion to the carpet surface. This keeps spills on the surface for easier removal and prevents mold and mildew in the cushion. SpillNet also has an antimicrobial agent to neutralize odor-causing bacteria. One carpet company executive noted, "SpillNet is like an insurance policy — especially for customers with pets."

FiberLoc is a nylon fiber whose unique lobed shape (reminiscent of puzzle pieces) interlocks with itself to strengthen and stabilize carpet tufts. DuPont claims that after wear-testing that simulated five years of foot traffic, the fiber showed little deterioration. Such news is welcome by consumers who replace their carpeting every 10-12 years, primarily because it has lost its texture, looking crushed, flat, and worn.

FiberLoc is found in StainMaster carpets manufactured by Shaw Industries, Mohawk Carpet, and Globaltex.

Resources:

1. Carpet Smart, DuPont Magazine 95(3): 26-27. 2001.
2. <http://www.stainmaster.com>

Fabric Care History

1849: In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, a patent is filed for the design of the first manual washing machine. The "new fangled gadget" was a big hit in California, where it cleaned the clothes of the gold rush miners. With all of the dust and dirt they stirred up, San Francisco established the first commercial laundry company.

In the mid 1800s in Paris, France, M. Jolly-Bellin, an owner of a textile dye works, accidentally discovered dry cleaning by knocking over a turpentine and oil lamp. The chemical mixture spilled on a piece of fabric that had been stained with greas, and Jolly-Bellin noticed that the stain quickly evaporated. He capitalized on this discovery by opening "Jolly-Bellins," the first commercial dry cleaning company.

— from Tide® Neighbor-to-Neighbor newsletter,
available at <<http://www.tide.com>>

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