

RI Sewing Network

March 2021 Newsletter

RISN Meetings

NO MEETINGS
Spring 2021

GREENWICH CLUB
5426 Post Road
East Greenwich, RI
02818

First Tuesday of the
Month
@ 7:00 pm



DIRECTIONS TO GREENWICH CLUB

From the South: Take 95 North to exit 8A (Rt. 2 Warwick/E. Greenwich). Stay on Rt.2, go to the traffic light at the Showcase Cinema, take a left onto Division Street (Rt. 401), follow to 2nd traffic light, and take right onto Post Road/Rt. 1. The Greenwich Club, 5426 Post Road, is on your left.

From the North: Take 95 South to exit 9 (Rt. 4 South). Take the first exit which will bring you to Rt. 401 (E. Greenwich/Division St.). At the end of the exit ramp facing straight, take a right turn onto Division Street. **Continue to follow above directions once on Division Street.**

EVERYTHING VINTAGE

Happy 2021! It's hard to believe how little has changed in a year, and yet so much has occurred. Who would have imagined that we would still be isolating 12 months after this all began? RISN was confident that by March we would be back together at the Greenwich Club, sharing our holiday sewing works and hearing all about custom 3D body forms. And I'd be thinking to myself, "can I sneak a body form into my sewing room without hubby noticing...?" Unfortunately, we are going to have to wait a bit longer to be together. Think FALL and cross your fingers, toes, and few sewing needles while you're at it!

While we can't see Ann Taylor and Ben Greslick in person and hear their presentation "Body Scanning to Make Dress Forms", Ann sent along some details on their business and one member shared their personal experience working with their custom body form. Truly intriguing. Enjoy the contribution.

Thank you to so many RISN members that have come forward and contributed to this month's newsletter theme, Vintage. You are going to love the stories, pictures, and variety of topics that were sent in. I want to give a special THANKS to Rory for her inspiration for the Vintage theme and her outstanding article. She also provided me *lifesaving* formatting assistance for this newsletter.

Our Facebook page was busy over the holiday months. For those that don't spend a lot of time on FB, I copied a few of the recent posts over.

The "THEME" for April is Weddings and May is Sewing Treasures. Weddings? Did you ever make/alter a wedding gown, bridesmaids gown, ring bearer garment, ring pillow, men's suite/tux, make a special outfit for the occasion? Sewing Treasures – it's whatever you want it to be! Such as, something you can't part with, something that was ripped out countless times to achieve perfection, etc. Please send me your photos and a few comments or stories by March 15 for the April newsletter and April 15 for the May newsletter.

Happy Sewing!

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1. Membership Information for 2020/2021

THANK YOU to those passing along a good word about RISN. We have a few new members and hope to continue to grow as we head into next year. See the last page of the newsletter for details and a member application.

2. 2021 Meetings

Keep the faith! Let's stay optimistic and plan for in person meetings beginning in September 2021.

3. Custom Forms by 3dprintme

Anna Taylor shares her story on how she and Ben Greslick started their Custom Dress Forms / 3D printing business. Be sure to check out the website for pictures and fun and interesting facts.

“Let me tell you how I got started making dress forms. Before I was able to take the dress form class that Diane teaches, I took a 1 day workshop for making a duct tape dummy. We did the standard method...wear a t-shirt with a bra over it, wrap, cut, stuff. I brought it home and set it in a dining room chair. It was not good. The waist was uneven, the bust all wrong, it just wasn't accurate. Soon after, my friend Ben came over and saw the form. After looking at it for a few minutes he goes “I don't want to offend you, but the bust is all wrong”. I laughed and we started brainstorming a better way. Now, he's an IT engineer and I'm also in IT, so we're pretty nerdy and into tech. He'd been dabbling in 3-D printing and suggested we try scanning and printing my body double. So, using the camera from an X-box connect and a laptop, Ben scanned me in my living room and through a lot of trial and error, we were able to scan and print an incredibly accurate form. Around this time, I finally got a chance to take Diane's Form and Draping class, so I got a feel for how those forms were finished. I took the 3-D printed form, used a spray adhesive and needle and thread and applied a layer of firm cotton batting. Then covered it in a jersey stocking and mounted it on a stand. Comparing it to the form made with foam, it's more accurate, but because it's a hard plastic, you can't pin directly into it. In that way, it's like the commercial dress forms, you can pin horizontally or vertically, but you can't stab pins in.”

We've put together a website that has some pictures and more about the scanning process. Stop by the FAQ for answers to many questions and check out the link for details on what to wear.

[3D Print Me Website](#)
[Helpful FAQ's](#)
[What to WEAR!](#)

Custom Forms – A personal experience

Shared by Barbara Hendricks, Owner *Master the Art of Sewing*

I had the pleasure of working with Anna Taylor and Ben Greslick last September and October, as they produced custom forms for several interested sewists, as Master the Art of Sewing was getting off the ground. Perhaps people who sew and do not have custom sized forms would be better able to “fit” their garments when taking remote garment making classes, (which we had decided was the safest way to provide sewing instruction in September of 2020).

I first met Anna in the URI Master Seamstress Custom Dress Form class. One day, walking into class with our partially completed custom forms, I noticed Anna arriving with one form under each arm. Sure enough, she had a second body double, but it was made of a sleek material. It was the result of a 3 dimensional scanning and printing procedure she and her friend Ben had used to make Anna’s second form - very intriguing.

Fast forward...Summer of 2020....We decided we would offer the custom dress forms to everyone on the contact list at that time. Although the interest level was not high, several customers stepped up to participate and purchased custom dress forms, as did I; I bought the custom pants form.



Joyce was excited to come back into sewing in a big way after retiring last spring, so she jumped at the chance to have a custom dress form. She sent me a message in December, after taking “Classic Tailoring” and the serger classes. Joyce said: “This is the best purchase I have made all year!”

From the
Muslin
to the
Jacket



As for the pants form, I have used it in the Athletic Leisurewear class, and I am planning to use it in the Jeans Construction class as I work with stretch denim. The form is also helpful as I alter some of my commercially produced pants for a better fit.



4. Everything Vintage

The Delights and Challenges of Sewing Vintage Garments

by Rory Contin

I had been dancing and sewing for years before I discovered vintage ballroom dancing and began my foray into making authentic vintage ball gowns. Generally, vintage dancing refers to the dances and ballroom etiquette associated with the Regency period (1811 - 1820), the mid Victorian period (1851 – 1875), the late Victorian period (1875 – 1901), the Ragtime period (late 1890s – 1918), and the Roaring 20s (1920s). Longways Set, Waltz, Polka, Quadrille, Schottische, Mazurka, The Castle Walk, Turkey Trot, Grizzly Bear, Tango, Charleston Lindy, and many other dances can be on the ball program depending on the period.

Ballroom etiquette includes the proper way to use a dance card, how and when to engage a dance partner, expanding your circle of dance acquaintances, escorting the lady on and off the dance floor, and being an amiable dance partner. While ballroom etiquette evolved through these historic periods, balls were always special occasions held in seasonally decorated assembly halls or ballrooms, and with formal dress, live music, courteous dancing, elegant refreshments, and plenty of time to interact with friends and newcomers. The only thing more fun than dancing at a vintage ball is dancing at one in period costume.



Dance Cards

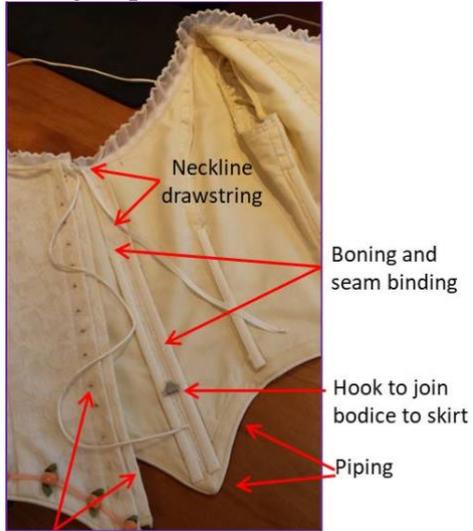


Betty Ball Gown c. 1856-60
Harriet's Patterns

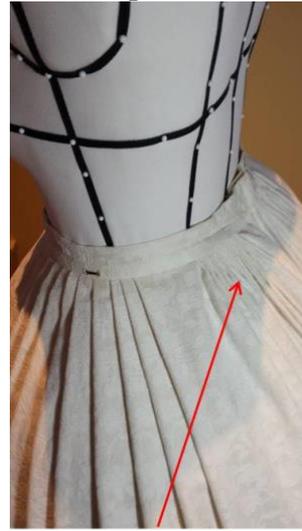
I made my first vintage ball gown for a Victorian harvest ball. I used the Betty Ball Gown pattern by [Harriet's Patterns](#). Although the simplest of Harriet's Civil War era ball gown patterns, it was a challenging first venture into vintage sewing. Typically, vintage patterns do not provide the detailed step-by-step graphic instructions included with modern patterns. Fortunately, though, costume historian and designer, Harriet Engler, generously spent several hours instructing me, by phone, on the finer points of making this gown. We discussed the

best way to line the bodice and skirt, options for the bodice closure, the hidden neckline drawstring, how to pleat the 180" skirt circumference down to a 28" waist, cartridge pleats, where to use piping and bias tape, boning, and many other important

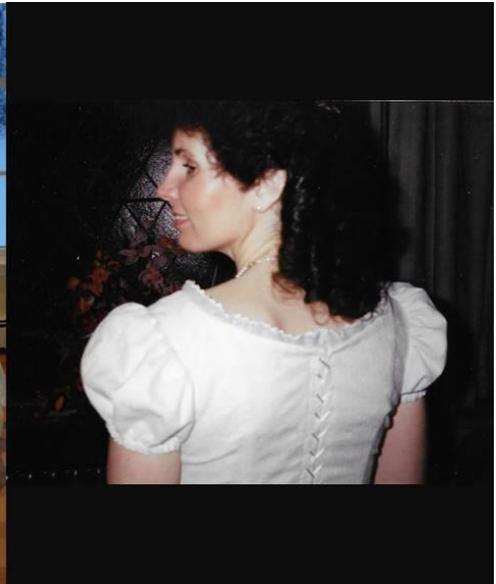
details. It was quite an immersion and absolutely fascinating. I made the gown in white cotton jacquard with satin bow and rosebud decorations in peach.



Placket and eyelets for silk cord lacing



Cartridge pleats create bustle effect





1914 Ladies Home Journal Dress
with Surplice Blouse Pattern
from Past Patterns

For a Ragtime ball commemorating the voyage of the Titanic, I made a 1914 gown from an original Ladies Home Journal pattern available from [Past Patterns](#). Although it appears to be a skirt and tunic, the garment is a dress with skirt, blouse, and peplum joined at the waistband. The peplum tails really caught my eye, and I thought this dress would be perfect for Ragtime evening wear if I used elegant fabrics. I chose a textured fabric in gold for the skirt and a silky fabric in burgundy, gold, and green paisley—a popular motif in the period—for the blouse and peplum. I added a slit to the skirt back, allowing more ease of movement for dancing, and a fabric belt. The skirt is shaped with two back darts and a long dart on each side. There is a hook-and-eye closure at the back waist and covered

buttons from the back neckline to just above the waist. I've worn the gown with and without a feather boa attached to the sleeves and peplum.



Long side dart for
shaping the skirt



1911 – 1914 Ladies Home Journal
Tea Gown Two-Piece Skirt Pattern
from Past Patterns

The 1911 – 1914 Ladies Home Journal Tea Gown pattern available from [Past Patterns](#) seemed the perfect dress pattern for both afternoon and evening Ragtime events. I made this gown with a textured silky fabric in pale mauve and rosebud trim. The gown opens on the left side of the front pleated panel. The pattern included a shawl drapery, which I made in a mauve lace. However, since the shawl somewhat restricted my arm movements, I made it detachable for dancing.



Front opening



Gown back with
gathered shawl drapery





1920s Flapper Slip-On Evening Dress
Pattern from Past Patterns

Next, I made a slip-on Roaring Twenties evening dress with dropped waist and tiers of circular flounces. As the name implies, the dress slips over the head and hangs straight down from the shoulders. I shortened the dropped waist for a more flattering fit. The flounce hems are hand rolled. I made the dress in a textured silky iridescent purple fabric.



It is such a delight to glimpse the past through sewing and fashion history while enhancing your sewing skills and expressing your creativity. Of course, searching for just the right fabrics, trims, and other costume embellishments is part of the fun. And then there are all the underpinnings. Now that is a story for another time. A Regency gown will be my next vintage sewing project. How about you? Will you try your hand at making an authentic vintage garment for some special occasion? I can guarantee no one else will have a dress like yours!



All my vintage gowns were made using my 1953 Singer Featherweight



Patterns

- [Amazon Dry Goods](#)
- [Harriet's Patterns](#)
- [Laughing Moon Mercantile](#)
- [Past Patterns](#)
- [Reconstructing History](#)
- [Vena Cava Design](#)

Vintage Dancing

- [Kingston English Country Dance](#) (RI)
- [The Commonwealth Vintage Dancers](#) (MA)
- [Vintage Dance Groups](#) (and other information)
- [Vintage Dance Society](#) (CT)
- [Vintage Dance Video](#)
- [Vintage Victorian](#) (MA)

Vintage Sewing Artifacts – Barbara Hendricks

“The RISN newsletter call for information on vintage sewing artifacts made me investigate my favorite piece of furniture a little more, my inherited Singer sewing machine, patented Jan. 04, 1887. It was my Memere’s machine, and before that, it was her mother’s machine, possibly her grandmother’s. It’s definitely the first machine I remember sitting at! No electricity needed. One of the 4 side drawers contains a fold out wooden “puzzle box” which holds many accessories. The box is unique in that it does not have hardware, but folds to close. It was patented in 1889.

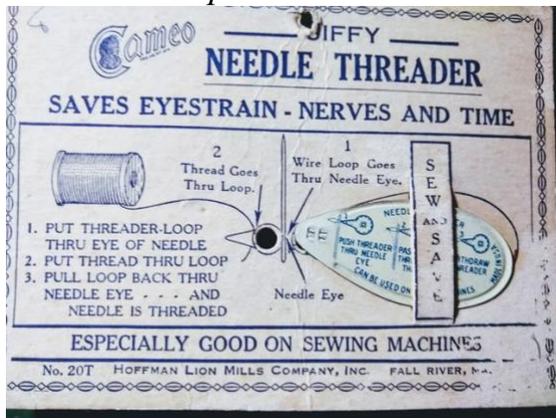
I am so grateful to my Mem for inspiring me with her beautiful fiber arts creations.”



Rowena Burke shares more vintage memories.....

“This is my grandmother in her hiking dress in 1920 or 21. The dress was sewn by either her sister or her mother. I wish I had this dress!”

The Jiffy Needle Threader was my great aunt Emma’s. She lived in upstate NY”





The Vogue coat pattern is 1955 and the bathrobe is 1965. Both belonged to the late State Senator June N. Gibbs of Middletown. She was tall. She was my good friend and neighbor. Her daughter Elizabeth shared them with me.

Denise Carlson – Family treasures to cherish

The vest was made by my paternal great-grandmother circa 1940's for my grandmother. She gave it to my aunt. My aunt gave it to me around 15 years ago. The wool that was used is wool from my grandmother's parent's farm in Canada. My grandmother disliked being a farmer and said she would never marry one--and she did not!



These are comforters (there is no batting in them as the inner and back of the comforters are sheets). I do call them quilts.



My paternal aunt's quilt, the fan quilt, was made by my paternal grandmother circa 1920's. My aunt just recently passed it down to me. There are tears in the quilt which at some point I need to repair. To think then she used cardboard for a pattern. Today, this same type of quilt can be made using specific rulers to make this much easier to make.

My quilt was made by her also. I believe she gave this to me around the age of 15 or 16. I love her scrap quilts. Every time I sew either garments or quilts, I can feel her presence. If she were alive today, we would have a blast sewing together.



Is it Vintage? Or is it Retro?

Susan Berlam digs through her stash

My 95 year old aunt gave me a dress she made in the early 70s just before she passed away in 2020. She didn't enjoy sewing all that much, but her work was beautiful. The thought of sewing without fusible interfacing and a serger brings chills to my spine!



When I was working, I used to love to make (and dream about making) many of the commercial *Retro* patterns. I did manage to get a few done.



Is there anything more Retro / Vintage than this? This fur stole belonged to my husband's grandmother.



If ONLY there was enough time in the day to make all of these beautiful garments....



A few Vintage tools to recall

Friends and Featherweights. Aren't we blessed?

Susan shares, *"I was over the moon when my friend let me purchase this rare free arm featherweight (Model 222) from her."*



“My friend’s dad was in the Navy and stationed in Japan in 1960 and bought this treasure for her mom. Here’s the original certificates.”



Below are photos of some very old sewing tools in our cabinets....
 What to do with them?? Sit and admire, I guess.



Sterling Silver Seam Gauge c. 1890
 Rory Contin



5. Facebook Sharing

There was so much activity on the FB page over the holidays. This is just a few of many great posts.

From Denise Carlson -

Today, to honor [Black History Month](#), we're featuring couture designer Ann Lowe. If you're a fan of vintage gowns and dresses, you may recognize her as the designer of Jacqueline Kennedy's wedding gown, which she wasn't credited for at the time. Ann Lowe was born into a family of seamstresses in 1898, and she learned the art of sewing from her mother and grandmother, who was a formerly enslaved dressmaker. When Ann was 16, her mother died, and she took over the family trade. In 1917, Ann received formal training at a sewing school in New York, where she was the only Black student. As Ann was a uniquely talented designer and seamstress, she found success designing debutante gowns, and those debutante's frequently returned to Ann's business to have their wedding gowns designed. In 1928, Ann returned to New York, where she created designs for the creme-de-la-creme of society, including in 1950, she opened a standalone couture shop on Lexington Avenue, 'Ann Lowe's Gowns.' in 1953, Ann was chosen to design the gowns for Jacqueline Kennedy's entire wedding party, including Jacqueline's famous wedding gown. Ann was an incredibly intelligent and forward-thinking designer, and today, her designs are preserved at several museums, including the National Museum of African American Culture and History, the Museum at FIT, and the Metropolitan Costume Institute. For more information on Ann Lowe, check out this article from FIT: <https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/1898-1981-ann-lowe/>



Rosemary O’Koren is sewing for her new granddaughter and keeping the seasons alive on her FAB pillow!



So, I wonder.... will March be a lucky four leaf clover or a Guinness?

RISN Website

Also check the RISN website [HERE](#) for updates news and events as well.

6. Sell or Buy

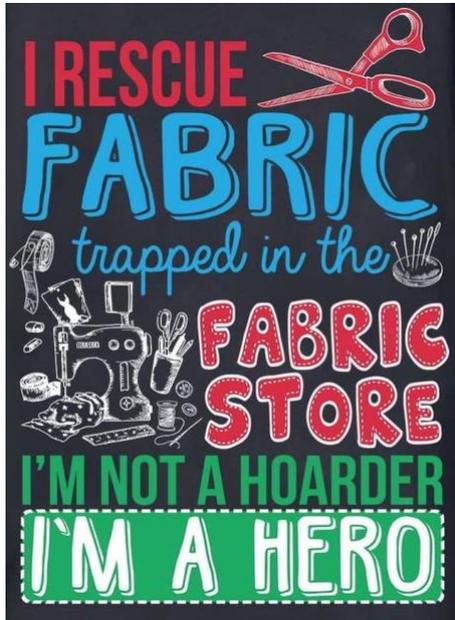
Urge to Purge? Members who have sewing/craft items for sale are invited to set up a table at our meetings. You need to bring home what you do not sell. We do not have the space to store extra fabric, etc. Do you have a sewing/craft related business? Why not consider showcasing/selling your items at a meeting? Please limit your selling space to one table. You can also post your sale items or what you might be looking to obtain on our Facebook page.

Services and Products

Scissors and Knife Sharpening

If you would like to get your knives and scissors sharpened, download the order form and bring your items to the meeting or contact Chef's Culinary Edge directly to have your scissors sharpened at your convenience. Scissor Service Sheet 1 (pdf)[Download](#). The website is [HERE](#) and the e-mail is chefsculinaryedge@gmail.com

7. Chuckle of the Month



THANKS for the laugh,
Donna Gablinske!

8. Tutorial of the Month

I've been seeing so many interesting tutorials available throughout the pandemic, though I haven't had a chance to try many. I'm thinking of trying to learn a new sewing skill this year (there are so many skills I could improve on!). One of my thoughts is handbag or wallet sewing. I have seen a lot of activity on FB for [Sallie Tomato](#), a supplier of handbag and wallet kits, fabrics, patterns, etc. They have a large variety of free tutorials to spark your interest. Talk to me in December to see if I ever got around to making one for myself.

2020-2021 MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Your completed application with a check made out to RI Sewing Network or RISN should be mailed directly to:

Ann Pericolo
10 Cherry Street
Wrentham, MA 02093

Membership includes six issues of our newsletter plus discounts to meetings and other events as well as email news.

Due to the pandemic and the fact that several meetings last session were cancelled, all 2019-2020 Premiere and Annual members have been extended membership through Spring 2021. No payment required!!

New members will be asked to pay an Annual \$10 registration fee for the 2020-2021 season which includes the emails notifications, newsletter, and access to the private Facebook group. For each in-person meeting, a \$5 fee will be collected at the door from new members. The nonmember fee for meetings is \$7 per meeting.

The Registration form is below and on our website:

www.rhodeislandsewingnetwork.com

RISN Membership Application 2020-2021

Last Name: _____

First Name: _____

Email: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Street

City/Town

State

Zip

Preferred Telephone Contact: _____

Please select your membership category.

Annual (\$10) _____