

THE COSTUME SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA

# THE CLOTHES PRESS

CSNS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2007, NO. 88

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR:

**April 14, 2007 is the Annual General Meeting of the Costume Society of Nova Scotia.** It would be good to see you there! This will be an exciting full-day event. The morning is the business of the Annual General Meeting, followed by a pot-luck lunch and an afternoon of guest speakers. *"Eco & Old Lace"* is our theme -- see Page 3 for details. Bring along your favourite costume 'somethings' to share (we all have them!) -- there will be space set aside for display.

**Nominations are currently open for the 2007-08 Board of Directors.** Your society is comprised of people with diverse and fascinating backgrounds who share a passion for costume. Should you - or someone you know - be a "fit" to join the Board of Directors, please do -- new voices are always welcome!

Many thanks to members of the current Board:

**Sally Erskine Doucette**, who has worn up to three hats this year (full marks for dedication!). Sally edited the Society newsletter; coordinated the monthly programs in Halifax, and continued on as Chair - but only "Acting" this time (whew!) A special thanks, Sally, for your energy and commitment. **Anita Campbell**, Treasurer, Desktop Publisher for *The Clothes Press*, mail collector, and CSNS supporter extraordinaire; **Laura Legere**, Minute Secretary, Publicity and hat collector; **Linda Badcock**, Membership -- our Board member from The Rock ( technology can be a wonderful thing!); **Meg Carignan**, Yahoo moderator and hostess/coordinator of a terrific weekend program at Sherbrooke Village; and Members at Large, **Steve McLean and Faith Wallace**.

And, of course, our **Annapolis Regional Committee: Leona Seguin-Straker, Valerie Davis, Mildred Hawes** -- programming with gusto from the Fundy Shore. We applaud your efforts and look forward to seeing what the next year brings.

Hoping to see you on April 14<sup>th</sup>. It will be a great day -- greater still if you can be there.

*Karen Pinsent, Acting Chair*

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS:

TUESDAY, MARCH 6 (NOTE DATE CHANGE)  
7:30 PM, MARITIME MUSEUM OF THE ATLANTIC  
**"Woad to Westwood" :An illustrated lecture of fashion history from an economic and social perspective.** Dr. Micheal Collins, Saint Mary's University (formerly of University of East Anglia, UK)

SATURDAY, APRIL 14  
10AM TO 4 PM, PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF NOVA SCOTIA  
**Annual General Meeting** See page 3 for details



*Sylvia and Sheila Yeoman posing for their ambrotype at Sherbrooke Village at the Costume weekend last Fall.*

**MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR:**

As another winter dissolves into spring light and new energy, now is the time to put those winter dreams into action. And we'd love to hear about all of them with articles and photos for future issues of *The Clothes Press*.

This issue is chock full of great news about "costume" in Nova Scotia. On the education side, Anita attended a Personal Dress Form workshop and tells us about this unique experience inside duct tape (p.2). The Annapolis crowd took a break from winter events long enough to share their latest re-enactment exercise (p.2). The February program in Halifax was a treat. The project team that created winter costumes for Ross Farm came 'to the city' and thrilled us with their woolens and furs, suitable for travel in a 'one horse open sleigh' (p.6-7). CSNS's ever popular show and tell is featured in photos on p.7, an event combined this year with our Christmas party. And on the local costume front, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University is in the spot light for the Dress Nova Scotia column (p.4), with three projects. Look for their annual wearable art show in March or April (date unavailable at printing time). Make sure you check p.3 for details of the upcoming Annual General Meeting. The Dalhousie University Costume Studies program is hosting an open house from 4-8pm on April 14, immediately following our Annual General Meeting, and that sounds like a great way to make a fabulous Costume Day of it!

*Sally E. Erskine Doucette, Editor*

**Yet Another Use of Duct Tape: Making a Personal Dress Form**

*by Anita Campbell*

Making a Personal Dress Form, a two day workshop offered by NSCAD Continuing Education last November, is not for the feeble hearted. Not only do you have to strip to your underwear for a stranger, who then wraps you up in duct tape, you have no choice but to face full-on the outcome of this weird experience, your true and unadulterated body shape! The workshop is given by Anne Pickard: NSCAD fashion technician, textile artist, designer, handygirl <http://handygirlsguide.blogspot.com/>, and television star on CBC's Living East. With a CV like this you are correct in thinking that she's an excellent, efficient and very entertaining instructor.

What the process consists of is stripping down to your panties and a t-shirt, and having someone wrap you up in duct tape from your neck to your thighs. You get to wrap someone in turn. Once you have been cut out of the tape, which now is a hollow mold of your form, the stuffing begins. This is hard work; it takes a good part of a day to push batting



*Anne Pickard draping a dress form.*

*photo by Anita Campbell*

into all the nooks and crannies. But finally you'll have a 3-D form of yourself, ready to mount on a base or hang.

Making a duct tape dress form isn't something you should do by yourself, even if it were possible. Being wrapped in duct tape cuts oxygen off from a large part of your body, and can be dangerous, so I strongly suggest taking one of Anne's classes. Her Draping class, which includes making the form, is filled for NSCAD's winter term but will probably be offered again. It is very popular, so if you want to get in sign up as soon as registration begins.

**Annapolis Royal Receives an Historic Visitor**

*Submitted by Valerie Davis*



*photo by Valerie Davis*

There was a special guest in town for the Annapolis Royal Heritage Weekend, February 16 to 18<sup>th</sup>. The guest was Charlotte Perkins, a resident of the town from 1878 to 1964. She made several appearances during her visit from the past, where she entertained her listeners with memories of her life as a young girl growing up in Annapolis Royal. Charlotte was portrayed by Costume Society member Corinne Frantell.

## COSTUME SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

APRIL 14, 2007

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Location           | NS Archives and Records Management, 6016 University Avenue, Halifax |
| 9:30 – 10:00 a.m.  | Registration and Membership Renewal                                 |
| 10:00 – 12:00 noon | Annual General Meeting *  |
| 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.  | Pot Luck Lunch**  |

#### AFTERNOON PROGRAMMING

#### *“Eco & Old Lace”*

|                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. | Ginny Bell – <i>Vintage Lace Collection</i>        |
| 2:30 – 3:00 p.m. | Display of costume collectibles ***                |
| 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. | Anne Pickard – <i>Sustainability &amp; Textile</i> |

#### **Our Guest Speakers:**

"**Anne Pickard** teaches at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University. The relationship between the textiles industry and the environment is a focus, and Anne challenges her students to construct new designs using recycled clothing. (See Page 2 for Anita Campbell's report on making a personal dress form in Anne's workshop class.)

**Ginny Bell's** began a life-long love of antique and vintage clothing as a child when she would dress from her grandmother's closet to make herself look older. Ginny opened her first shop in 1980 and from 1987-2001 *Vintage Vogue* operated in Mahone Bay. Her personal collection is now housed in the old school house in Martin's River where she welcomes visitors by appointment.

\* Send in your nominations for the Board of Directors.

Copies of Minutes from 2005 Annual General Meeting will be available on April 14. If you would like a copy prior, let us know.

Contact us: [costumesociety@ednet.ns.ca](mailto:costumesociety@ednet.ns.ca)

\*\* Bring something along, join in and 'break bread'.

\*\*\* Share your favourite costume 'something(s)'. Bring it/them along for 'collectibles appreciation' during afternoon break!!!

### IN MEMORIAM: ANN COPELAND

Many of us knew that Ann was battling cancer. Sadly, she passed away on December 21, 2006. Ann is fondly remembered for her great love of Hallowe'en. She focused tremendous energy on creating elaborate costumes, complete with detailed make-up. Ann was always generous with her knowledge of gorey make-up and enjoyed sharing techniques with anyone who was interested, from children to Hallowe'en public. She is sorely missed for her enthusiasm and as Editor of The Clothes Press.

## DRESS NOVA SCOTIA:

### Spotlight on Nova Scotia College of Art and Design University

by Sally E. Erskine Doucette

Recent news articles show that NSCAD is making a significant contribution to the clothing industry on several fronts. "Smart" textiles that are responsive to sound, movement, sunlight and touch will be developed with the assistance of a grant valued over \$1million from the Atlantic Innovation Fund (AIF). The Chronicle Herald reported that the work will be led by professor Robin E. Muller, chair of the division of craft, NSCAD and Sarah Bonnemaïson of Dalhousie University's School of Architecture. *The Chronicle Herald* reports that they will be "combining traditional textile techniques such as weaving, printing and embroidery with materials such as photovoltaic cells, electroluminescent wire and memory shape alloys."

*The Chronicle Herald* also covered 'Fashion EAST', a new event that combines fashion and music that was held at the East Coast Music Awards in Halifax in February. Nine student designers were given the opportunity to dress performers of local music and show off some of their creations. The \$125 a plate fundraiser benefits NSCAD's fashion department as well as the East Coast Music Association. Gary Markle, an instructor in the fashion department, acted as art director for FashionEASTa. According to Markle, the event revives memories of the vibrant garment trade that existed in Halifax 100 years ago. Students gain experience working with a professional production team and come away with an understanding of the expectations for a professional level show. Watch for this show next year to see rising stars in the hot local fashion and music scenes!

And if that isn't enough, "Ethical Fashion" also gets a boost from NSCAD. According to The Commoner (King's School of Journalism newspaper), NSCAD students are taught to pursue and consider ethical alternatives. Instructor Gary Marckle explores new fabrics and their effect on the environment and the economy in a fashion drawing class. Marckle is proposing a class on sustainable studio practice in textiles that would get students "to research and apply alternatives to common textile practices, like dying or scrap fabrics." We look forward to hearing more about this. Perhaps they will send a contingent to the next Ethical Fashion show in Paris.

*July 07*  
*Coming Soon to the*  
*Randall House Museum*  
*Wolfville NS*



## THE PERFECT HAT

*Starring*

HATS OF MANY TYPES AND PURPOSES

*Don't Miss this Exciting Exhibit*

### Meg's Quiz Question:

In Tailor's parlance, what is a Goose?

- a buttonhole knife
- the slab of beeswax used to treat the surface of irons
- a large iron
- an awl

*Answer: see next issue*

## UPCOMING EXHIBITS AND EVENTS:

### FRAMEWORK

Opening Thursday, April 12, 2007 at 6pm

Rachel Ryan's traditional quilting and tapestry weaving techniques from a contemporary mindset . Nova Scotia Centre for Craft and Design, Mary E. Black Gallery, 1061 Marginal Road, Halifax.

### DALHOUSIE COSTUME STUDIES OPEN HOUSE

Tentative date April 14, 2007, from 4-8 pm at City Centre Atlantic, Dresden Road, Halifax

Each year students enrolled in the Costume Studies program at Dalhousie University open the doors to the public and show off the creations they've made over the year. Attending the open house after the CSNS AGM would be a fitting way to complete a day devoted to costume.

### NSCAD WEARABLE ART SHOW

Spring 2007, date unavailable at this time

Fashion students stage a fashion show as a fundraiser for AIDS

### BEYOND THE SILHOUETTE:

#### FASHION & THE WOMEN OF HISTORIC KINGSTON

July 22, 2007 to April 08, 2008 at Agnes Etherington Art Centre, Kingston, Ontario

Elaine MacKay, curator of the exhibit, states "They have a terrific collection that spans the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I have chosen about twenty pieces from the Regency to the 1930's. We are also placing the garments within an historical context with as much information about the donating families as possible and a survey of the history of Kingston."

## CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS AND SYMPOSIUM:

### BEHIND THE SCENES: EXPLORING COSTUME IN WILLIAMSTOWN

Saturday, April 14, 2007, Williamstown, Massachusetts. Sponsored by Costume Society of America, Northeastern Region (I). For more information check their web site at-

[http://www.costumesocietyamerica.com/RegionI/event\\_workshop\\_sym.htm](http://www.costumesocietyamerica.com/RegionI/event_workshop_sym.htm)

### "FAIRES, FIESTAS AND EXPOSITIONS: COSTUME AS CULTURAL EXCHANGE" CSA NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM, SAN DIEGO MAY 29 TO JUNE 3, 2007

Information is available at <http://www.costumesocietyamerica.com/natsym.htm>

### NEOCRAFT CONFERENCE

November 23-25, 2007, Halifax, NS.

This conference has been designed with the objective of further developing critical thinking, theory and history in relation to the crafts. Please direct any queries to Dr. Sandra Alföldy, NSCAD University, [salfoldy@nscad.ca](mailto:salfoldy@nscad.ca) or [salfol@yahoo.com](mailto:salfol@yahoo.com)

## CONSERVATION SUPPLIES

The CSNS maintains a small inventory of conservation supplies suited to textile care. These are available for purchase by CSNS members .

Contact:

[costumesociety@ednet.ns.ca](mailto:costumesociety@ednet.ns.ca)

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## LIBRARY RESOURCES

The Costume Society of Nova Scotia donated its library collection to the Costume Studies Program at Dalhousie University. This costume reference library is available to members of CSNS by contacting

Dianne Kristoffe @

494-2178 or-

[dianne.kristoffe@dal.ca](mailto:dianne.kristoffe@dal.ca)

The library collection is housed within the Costume Studies accommodations at 1515 Dresden Row, Suite 202 in the City Centre Atlantic. Please allow time for scheduling visits as the room is used for classes also. Books, journals and videos of Costume Studies fashion shows are available.

## WINTER COSTUME PROGRAM AT ROSS FARM MUSEUM: A MIRACLE PRODUCTION

by Sally E. Erskine Doucette



*Gail Larder modelling a new winter cap.*

*photo by Sally Erskine Doucette*

*A Program presented to the Costume Society of Nova Scotia, February 12, 2007  
Deborah Trask, Museum Consultant  
Lisa Wolfe, Director  
Joyce Hiltz, Site Supervisor, Period Clothing  
Gail Larder, Heritage Interpreter, Period Clothing  
Ross Farm Museum is operated by the New Ross District Museum Society*

Organizations that decide to embark on historically accurate costume programs for interpretive staff are in for a surprise. What may be most impressive about the new Winter Costumes for interpreters at Ross Farm is that they were made at all. Lisa Wolfe, Director of the Ross Farm Museum, commented that it became a "huge, huge project", quite unexpectedly.

Before the project could even proceed, Wolfe had to assemble an eclectic band of funding sources and donors. These included the NS Tourism Product and Development Initiative, Service Canada's Job Career Placement program, the Municipality of Chester, and Rideau Brown Furriers. Each organization had their own guidelines and time constraints. The result was a compressed period during which specific work had to be completed. A tough juggling act.

It seems like such an ordinary request to make period clothing for staff of a museum, until the project begins. The first step is research to create patterns that represent the time and place in question. Significant historical research, by qualified historical research consultants is involved. Often there are difficulties with research resources that make it necessary to adjust project definitions and assumptions. It may be necessary to extend the time period and to consider what was worn in other locations during this period because visual and documentary references are few and far between.

Such is the case with the Ross Farm Museum Winter Costume Project. Re-creating clothing worn on a typical inland Nova Scotian farm in 1820 was too limited a reference point. Deborah Trask, Museum Consultant, expanded the time period to include the '20s and '30s in order to locate useful images and descriptions in the 'before photography' era. Also, many of the existing images were of interior scenes, and this wasn't helpful in determining how to dress outdoor workers and travelers. References used for the Winter Costumes include diaries, paintings, illustrations from Sam Slick, a print showing an outdoor scene at Dalhousie University based on 1837, a painting of Dorset peasants, and descriptions from Susannah Moody and Catherine Parr Trail in Upper Canada in the 1830s, among others.

This was the era of the "one-horse-open-sleigh", with fur hats, collars and blankets, and heavy wool coats and mittens. This kind of research takes time and experience. The research net was cast wide, and then a decision was made to be "practical and logical". Basically, a layered approach was taken, not that different from what we do today if we turn the furnace down a few degrees or spend time outside.

Then comes the question of costume construction. The two women who actually stitched the costumes commented that it should have been a five year project. Joyce Hiltz and Gail Larder work at Ross farm and are responsible for the Historical Sewing Program, in addition to their other duties as Interpreters. It is important to note that they are part-time employees. In spite of this constraint, quiet pride and delight is obvious on their faces and in the way they so carefully held the beautifully hand stitched great coats, quilted petticoats, and fur hats. It is apparent that to Gail and Joyce it was an intense pleasure to physically and technically create a set of clothing for the men and women who make up the 22 staff members at Ross Farm.



*Joyce Hiltz modelling her winter costume.*

*photo by Sally E. Erskine Doucette*

Some of the funders didn't immediately grasp that people were needed to sew the costumes, in addition to purchasing the materials for the costumes, let alone that they had to be experienced seamstresses and skilled tailors, knowledgeable in the finer points of 19thc sewing techniques. Add to this, necessary adjustments for current safety requirements legislated for employees, and the warmth and comfort expectations of 21st century workers, and you have an idea of the challenges faced by this talented team.

In the end, the project gives Nova Scotians a wonderful image of early 19thc farm life that helps to frame how we see our ancestors. (Try to imagine how settlers survived winter dressed in wool, linen, cotton and fur - imagine life before all those synthetic, puffy winter jackets.) The Ross Farm Winter Costumes are a valuable addition to our heritage resources in Nova Scotia and we thank the people who worked on this project, and shared it with members of the Costume Society. A job well done!

**CSNS CHRISTMAS POTLUCK AND SHOW& TELL  
DECEMBER 2006**



*Estelle, Karen and Sheila enjoy the evening of good food and fun.*

*photo by Jenny Stewart*



*Estelle Lalonde shows off some of the favourite shoes from her extensive vintage collection*

*photo by Jenny Stewart*

## THE COSTUME SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA

c/o Federation of Nova Scotian Heritage  
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### THE COSTUME SOCIETY OF NOVA SCOTIA

The Society encourages interest in the history, development and conservation of Nova Scotian costume and personal adornment, and offers learning opportunities through workshops and hands-on programming. The Society's membership is diverse, including collectors, museum professionals, designers, costumers, reenactors, researchers, historians, and students.

CSNS was founded in 1981 and celebrated its 25th Anniversary in 2006. CSNS is a member of the Costume Society of America, the Federation of Nova Scotia Heritage, and the Dartmouth Heritage Museum.

The Costume Society meets @ 730pm on the second Monday of each month at the *Maritime Museum of the Atlantic* on Lower Water Street in Halifax. A heart-felt Thank You goes out to the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic for generously providing us with a place to call "Home"!

#### CSNS Board of Directors:

|                 |                             |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| Acting Chair    | Karen Pinsent               |
| Past Chair      | Sally E. Erskine Doucette   |
| Vice-Chair      | (vacant)                    |
| Secretary       | Laura Legere                |
| Treasurer       | Anita Campbell              |
| Member at Large | Steve McLean, Faith Wallace |

#### Annapolis Regional Committee Executive:

|                     |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Chair               | Leona Seguin-Straker |
| Secretary/Treasurer | Valerie Davies       |

#### Standing Committees:

|                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Membership Committee  | Linda Babcock          |
| Programs- Halifax     | Sally Erskine Doucette |
| Programs - Annapolis  | Mildred Hawes          |
| Yahoo Group Moderator | Meg Carignan           |



Jenny Stewart poses in her 1780s costume at our Christmas get together. The shoes are her own fabrication.

photo by Anita Campbell

### THE CLOTHES PRESS

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| Jenny Stewart             | Sheila Yeoman  |
| Sally E. Erskine Doucette |                |

#### Submissions

The Clothes Press encourages content from its readers. Send articles, reviews, and letters to the Editor, costumesociety@ednet.ns.ca or Costume Society of Nova Scotia, c/o Federation of Nova Scotia Heritage, 1113 Marginal Road, Halifax, NS B3H 4P7. The Clothes Press is published quarterly by the Costume Society of Nova Scotia, a registered charitable organization. Views expressed in The Clothes Press are those of the writers and do not necessarily represent CSNS or its supporters.