

THE CLOTHES PRESS

CSNS QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2008: No. 92

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR:

There are changes and exciting projects to share with you! First of all, as we approach another annual general meeting, I extend thanks and great appreciation to our 2007-2008 board of directors. These individuals are acknowledged on the back page of this newsletter, and a real debt of thanks is owed for each contribution to the Society.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday, April 12th, starting at 9:30 a.m. with our meeting and election of officers, followed by our always delicious 'Pot Luck' lunch and a great afternoon of programming. Please note the new venue for 2008 detailed in the outline for the day. This is our biggest day of the year - and a good occasion to spend some time with others 'costume-oriented' like yourself. Not to be missed!

The opportunity to embark on another project that exemplifies what the Costume Society stands for is before us. In 2001, hosting the provincial theme year "The Year of Costume" was a wonderful success for the CSNS. The project at hand is a publication featuring images and stories of some of the best examples of our heritage costume in Nova Scotia collections. This publication creates a real opportunity for the wonderful people resources within the CSNS and will get our costume collections out into the light of day in a lasting way. Bonnie Elliott has prepared a great outline and proposal to begin the discussion and guide us through initial legwork. There's much to discuss for a project of this magnitude. Your interest in participating will be invited at the annual meeting.

At the Federation of Nova Scotian Heritage (FNSH), there is a renewal and reorganization in the works. Benefits of our membership in the FNSH have included a 'home base' for our Society (our mailing address is c/o FNSH office) as well as partnerships on workshops and the delivery of the 2001 theme year programme. We experience the benefits of our FNSH membership on an ongoing basis and look forward to the continuation of this important link between our members and the heritage community.

CSNS was contacted by the organizers for the 2009 event celebrating the 250th Anniversary of the Founding of the Royal Navy Dockyard in Halifax (1759-2009). You will have received already information and updates through Yahoo e-mail. The details involved in creating an event such as this are tremendous and organizers want to get the look right, along with a good measure of fun for participants and observers - bravo! The goal is a to create a very 'peopled' event, in good period style - all are invited to the presentation in the afternoon of our annual meeting.

In our monthly programming, we have had some struggles with attendance. If you have a flair for programming and/or publicity, there is a real opportunity to put your work to some good.

There are two people that I feel are deserving of a great big "Thank You" - Sally Erskine Doucette and Anita Campbell, for all their work in getting our newsletter out to you.

I look forward to seeing you at the AGM in April. *Karen Pinsent*

AGM 2008

April 12, 2008, 9 AM to 5 PM at The Local Council of Women of Halifax Building, 989 Young Avenue, Halifax

Pot luck lunch, door prizes and presentation:

Reenacting for the 2009 Celebrations of the Founding of the Royal Navy Dockyard in Halifax (1759-2009)

SUMPTUOUS BOA

By Charlotte McGill



This is without a doubt the most sumptuous feather boa I've ever experienced! It came coiled in a tall hatbox and literally burst out when I lifted the top! I immediately plunged my hands into the iridescent splendour of it and felt the texture of its genuine feather construction.

We threw a party over the holidays and brought in Monique to enhance the festivities with her sparkly beret, red 30s slink and silver mesh slingbacks. She provided the perfect venue to display this glorious feather concoction to perfection. It was a gift from Christopher Wilcox of Scotia Festival renown, who had purchased it simply because he couldn't



not – from Chibby of Montague Street, Lunenburg, fame. But then last summer, when he and I took a three-hour tourist vacation in Lunenburg and we started chatting about things vintage, he said that this boa had my name written all over it!

I wonder about feathery things, though, in terms of the poor birdies that have needed to die for us to have them. I remember seeing in a 1915 Ladies' Magazine long ago an article about the decimation of the egret population, sacrificed to the vanity of ladies' hats, adorned such as this one. Then there is the fur controversy and

the to wear or not issue. This clothing collecting is fraught with ethical questions and my feather boa is particularly poignant, because it is new.

However, while prowling in one of my closets the other day, I came upon a vintage feather duster with the same kind of feathers as the boa - rooster feathers, I believe and, realizing the delicious sustenance these birds also provide, I felt much better about my treasure.

Charlotte McGill

Of Charlotte's Web, Mahone Bay, repute – two decades ago!

**Would you like to view these photos in luscious colour?
You can by requesting to be sent your newsletter as a PDF file.
Contact Sally at sedoucette@ns.sympatico.ca**

AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR UNIFORMS

By Gail Hamlin

I am a tailor. I love uniforms! My specialty is the uniforms worn during the American Revolutionary War 1776-1783. When my husband & I retired from our day jobs we became involved in reenacting. We belong to the *British Provincial Loyalist Regiment of the King's Orange Rangers*, *Royal Fencible Americans*, and *84th of Foot Royal Highland Emigrants*, all of whom saw service in Nova Scotia and in the original 13 American States. We belong to the father organization, *Brigade of the American Revolution (BaR)*, and these people make the rules of our game!

The uniforms are reproduction quality. They are constructed following the British Military Warrant of 1768. They are made of wool of various weights for the exterior shell and linings (linen is used for some of the upper body linings). Stitching is done by hand, the exception being the main body seams that don't show. The pewter buttons are reproduction of originals.

I am the designated Costume Mistress for the Civilian Class Membership of the *Brigade of the American Revolution, Maritime Region*. Pictured here are the uniforms I completed in the fall of 2007;



Left to right: Musician of the King's Orange Rangers, Gunner Royal Artillery, Private 3rd New Jersey Volunteers, Lt. Royal Fencible Americans.

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

The library collection is housed within the Costume Studies accommodations at 1515 Dresden Row, Suite 202 in the City Centre Atlantic, above Pete's Frootique. 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.

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS AND SYMPOSIUM:

MILLINERY WORKSHOP WITH MEG WILCOX

Historic Sherbrooke Village, Sherbrooke Nova Scotia, March 26 to 28, 2008

The Millinery workshop is set for March 26, 27 and 28. Classes will begin at 9:00 am with a break at noon, and then continue until 5:00 pm. Evening activities will begin at 7:00pm and continue until 9:00pm or whenever we get too tired to talk!

The course fee is \$150.00 per participant, and includes all materials and instructions to complete a hat of your choice. There will be a few little surprises, too!

Food and lodging are available nearby at reasonable prices. Rooms at the St. Mary's River Lodge are available in the off-season for \$40 per person per night, with no meals.

Please contact me, Meg Wilcox, at adaptamouse@hotmail.com ASAP if you are interested in attending.

LOOKING BEYOND THE MASK: DISGUISE, IDENTITY, AND COSTUME

Costume Society of America Symposium May 20-25, 2008 New Orleans .

Check their web site at <http://www.costumesocietyamerica.com/natsym.htm> for more information.

MARY E. BLACK GALLERY, HALIFAX: CALLFOR PROPOSALS

Mary E. Black Gallery Call for Proposals for the period commencing January 2010 are welcome from community groups, cultural groups, guilds, artists/craftspeople, and curators. Typed proposals need to include the following: clearly describe your theme or idea and the type of work whether defined by medium, technique, membership or function (max 500 words); proposed or working title of exhibition; a list of artist/s and justification for their inclusion; works to be in the exhibition (include artist, title, medium, dimensions in metric, date of work) OR if not yet created, a list of what is planned for inclusion; support material which can include any material relevant to the application such as slides or photos (max of 20), promotional materials, reviews, catalogues; a list of the support material provided including the title and type of material; a résumé of the principal organizer/curator. Proposal evaluation is based on: the artistic merit of the exhibition proposed; the quality of the applicant's work to date; the ability of the organization/individual to bring the exhibition to fruition.

Mary E. Black Gallery covers: Artist's fees based on the recommended CARFAC rates; the cost of an opening reception; a colour invitation; inclusion in the NSCCD standard publicity program. Deadline for proposals: March 17 (postal date), delivered by 4 pm or emailed to susan@craft-design.ns.ca. Visit www.craft-design.ns.ca for gallery details.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

Just a note to remind those members who have not renewed their CSNS memberships, that unless you renew, we won't be able to send you any more newsletters! I know I always look forward to the newsletter and exchange of ideas by way of the e-mail list, and I hope you do too.

Perhaps you would like to become more involved in the group. Is there a committee you'd like to work on? We're always open to ideas from th membership; just let us know. I'm sure you'll agree that being part of the CSNS is well worth the price. Please contact me if you are not sure about the status of your membership.

Linda Badcock, Membership Chair (LBadcock@gov.nl.ca)

EXHIBITS AND EVENTS:

Women's Heritage Celebration
Memory Lane Heritage Village July 25, 2008

www.heritagevillage.ca

A tribute to the heritage of women in rural Eastern Shore during the 1940s. Displays of domestic skills as well as women's work outside the home. Hands-on opportunities and **planned expansion of the programme for 2008 include demonstrations of 'making over' and repairing textiles.** Memory Lane has examples of darning and elaborate repair in their textile collection.

If you have a particular textile interest or expertise to share in the planning of this event, Memory Lane is keen to hear from you!

Please contact: Thea Hammond-Wilson Memory Lane Heritage Village, Lake Charlotte, Nova Scotia, (902) 845-1937 / 1-877-287-0697, email: info@heritagevillage.ca

REVEAL OR CONCEAL?

McCord Museum, February 22, 2008 to January 18, 2009

A well-turned ankle peeking out from under a long hoop skirt, an expanse of thigh in a mini-skirt, an exposed midriff in low jeans - this McCord Museum exhibition looks at how revealing a woman's body has always been as much a part of Western fashion as concealing it. In spite of or because of their impact, shocking and tantalizing styles, like knee-length skirts in the 1920s, hot pants in 1971, and exposed thongs today, have become mainstream.

Some 200 objects from the McCord collection will illustrate how with each decade of the past century, clothing revealed more of the female body, and women seemed to gain ever greater physical comfort and social and sexual freedom. But did they really? This exhibition shows how revealed or concealed, the female body is contested terrain for changing social attitudes and practices.

McCord Museum, 690 Sherbrooke St. West, Montreal, www.mccord-museum.qc.ca

YVES SAINT LAURENT

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, June 5 – September 28, 2008

This exhibition spotlights Yves Saint Laurent, whose unique style intertwines references from the art world with those of popular culture and the social revolution. This first retrospective, covering the forty years of the Yves Saint Laurent Haute Couture house, highlights the innovative character of a work that has marked history and the present with its new definition of femininity and left a signature that transcends fashion. With some 150 accessorized designs belonging to the Fondation Pierre Bergé – Yves Saint Laurent, the exhibition will also feature drawings, photographs and videos.

Organized by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and the fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, in collaboration with the Fondation Pierre Bergé– Yves Saint Laurent, Paris<http://>

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts at www.mmfa.qc.ca/

CONSERVATION SUPPLIES

THE CSNS MAINTAINS A SMALL INVENTORY OF CONSERVATION SUPPLIES SUITED TO TEXTILE CARE. THESE ARE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE BY CSNS MEMBERS.

Contact Anita Campbell at anitacampbell@eastlink.ca

TEXTILE HISTORY FREE ISSUE

The May 2006 issue of Textile History is free online at

www.ingentaconnect.com/content/maney/tex

Download these articles as PDF files:

Clothing the Poor in Early-Nineteenth-Century England by Peter Jones

A City in Search of Yarn: The Journal of Edward Taylor Of Norwich, 1817 by Gillain Cookson

A Rare Survival: The Barge Cloth of the Worshipful Company of Pewterers and the Embroiderer John Best by Patricia Wardle,

Enterprise in Some Working-Class Communities: Cotton Manufacturing In North-east Lancashire and West Craven, c. 1880 to 1914 by Kenneth Jackson

COSTUMING FOR AN HISTORICAL MURDER MYSTERY

By Millie Hawes



The deceased governor and playwright (Kent Thompson) and the three Winniett sisters, Brenda Thompson (no relation), Brenda Keen and Madeleine Akin-Carhart after the final inquest in the Annapolis Royal courthouse.

Photo by Jon Percy

The Annapolis Historical Society presented "Five Stab Wounds in the Governor" over a weekend in October, 2007. This new production by local playwright Kent Thompson investigated the untimely death of Lieutenant-Governor Lawrence Armstrong in 1739. Set in Annapolis Royal at the time when it was capital of the young British Colony, the play presented a little-known slice of our past as an intriguing "whodunit". It worked remarkably well because this particular death, although caused by five stab wounds, was officially pronounced "suicide in a fit of lunacy"! There are plenty of potential suspects - at least five individuals have motives or stand to benefit from the governor's demise. We get to know each of them and what they stand to gain through the animated gossip and play acting of the

three Winniett sisters, well-connected residents of the town.

The play comprised five acts, the first of which took place on Friday evening at Newman's restaurant in downtown Annapolis. Over the following two days the action moved to the Hillsdale House, the Queen Anne Inn, the Historic Gardens Café and culminated fittingly at the historic courthouse on Sunday afternoon. At each of these venues hostesses in period costumes served scrumptious food, pertaining to the ongoing drama, adding greatly to the splendour of the event.

The costumes that I made for the three sisters were appropriate for rich young ladies, originally from Boston, who had married well. My main intention was to try to make authentic looking dresses that would be visually interest-

ing over the three days by adding different touches to vary the look. The actresses were adamant that they would not wear corsets through five acts over three days. So boning the bodices of the dresses helped to achieve a more authentic shape. Neither did they want to wear any headgear, so although I made appropriate hats and caps, they were mostly unused. However, they were persuaded to wear judicial wigs for the final dramatic inquest scene at the courthouse.

I tried to choose colours for the dresses that were appropriate to the age and character of each of the sisters. That of the older grey-haired sister was silver and blue silk. The rather staid middle sister, who was very conscious of her important social position as wife of a governor, wore burgundy. The youngest, a rather flighty and animated girl, was dressed in mustard silk and lace.

Needless to say, this costuming was all done on a very small budget. The playwright assumed the role of the deceased governor. Fortunately, an existing town crier's costume was of the correct period and fitted the actor, so it served as his military uniform. We made a new shirt and then promptly ruined it by slashing it in five places with a knife. I received some strange looks when I asked our local butcher for a small amount of animal blood to stain the perforations in the shirt. Even then, I still had to touch up the bloodstains with some red fabric paint to make them more readily visible and realistic.

After each performance, a general discussion was encouraged amongst the audience about the ongoing drama and the possible motives of characters just revealed. This friendly debate and in-

formed speculation as to the eventual outcome added greatly to the overall fun.

Unfortunately, the number of tickets was limited to 50 due to available space at the different venues selected to showcase the town's historic buildings. Consequently, many people were disappointed at not being able to attend. However, there is discussion of staging another performance in 2008.



The three Winniett sisters, Brenda Thompson, Brenda Keen and Madeleine Akin-Carhart, pose in their finery on the stairs of the Hillsdale house.
Photo by Jon Percy

MORE NEWS FROM THE ANNAPOLIS VALLEY BRANCH

Our January meeting was well attended. Jenny Stewart gave an interesting talk on clothing for a farmer's wife during the 18th century.

In February, Dr. Barry Moody, professor of history at Acadia University, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the life of the Loyalists in Nova Scotia, particularly those in the Annapolis Royal area.

READING LIST:

HISTORICAL DYNAMICS OF CLOTHING AND FASHION

By Dr. Michael Collins

This course was offered to the public through Saint Mary's University Extension Department at the Halifax Regional Library, Spring Garden Branch in 2007.

Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: the Meaning of Style* (Routledge 1988)

J Craik, *The Face of Fashion* (Routledge 1994)

C Breward, *The Culture of Fashion* (Manchester UP, 1995)

Lipovetsky, *The Empire of Fashion*

F Pionnier and P Mane, *Dress in the Middle Ages* (Yale UP, 1997) chapters 1 to 3

W Parkins, *Fashioning the Body Politic* (Berg 2002)

L Taylor, *The Study of Dress History*

Susan Vincent, *Dressing the Elite* (Berg 2003)

Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions* (Macmillan 1996)

Jane Ashelford, *Dress in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I*

Colin McDowell, *The Literary Companion to Fashion* (Sinclair-Stevenson)

A Ribeiro, *Dress and Morality* (1985) particularly chapter 1

M E Roach, Ed, *Dress, Adornment and the Social Order* (1965) pp 332-346

D E Allen, 'Fashion as a Social Process', *Textile History* 22: 2 (1991) 347-58

L Banner 'The Fashionable Sex 1100-1600', *History Today* 42, (1992) pp. 37-44

L Kybalova, Ed, *The Pictorial Encyclopedia of Fashion* pp101-36

P Lacroix, *Manner, Custom and Dress during the Middle Ages and during the Renaissance Period* (1874!!)

S M Newton, *Fashion in the Age of the Black Prince*

M Scott, *Late Gothic Europe, History of Dress Series*

J Evans, *Dress in Medieval France*

I Brooke, *English Costume in the Early Middle Ages.*

C Willet & P Cunnington, *Handbook of English Medieval Costume*

E Crowfoot, *Textiles and Clothing c-1150-c 1450* pp15-25

These are some suggestions from 29 pages of references. Others will be included in a later issue. Contact Sally at sedoucette@ns.sympatico if you want the complete document.

**THE COSTUME SOCIETY OF
NOVA SCOTIA**

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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.

CSNS Board of Directors:

Chair	Karen Pinsent
Vice-Chair	Bonnie Elliot
Secretary	Laura Legere
Treasurer	Anita Campbell
Members at Large	Steve McLean, Faith Wallace

Annapolis Regional Committee Executive:

Chair	Leona Seguin-Straker
Secretary/Treasurer	Valerie Davies

Standing Committees:

Membership	Linda Badcock
Programs- Halifax	vacant
Programs - Annapolis	Mildred Hawes
Yahoo Group Moderator	Meg Wilcox

AGM 2008

April 12, 2008

9 AM til 5 PM

Location: The Local Council of Women of Halifax Building, 989 Young Avenue, Halifax (corner of Young Ave. & Inglis St.)

Directions: traveling south on Robie, turn left at Inglis and right at Young Avenue. Parking on both sides of the street.

Pot Luck Lunch: bring along your yummys for another great CSNS feast!

Presentation:

Reenacting for the 2009 Celebrations of the Founding of the Royal Navy Dockyard in Halifax (1759-2009)

Event planning for this major reenactment and period soiree is well underway – with tall ships, a flotilla of longboats and as many well-costumed 18th century participants as can fit at Historic Properties! Come hear all about this grand event!

The Clothes Press

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Millie Hawes, Charlotte McGill,

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.