

## SEWING LESSONS

by Lill Pluta

One of my first memories is of sitting on a tall wooden stool in front of a slanted counter laden with pattern books. Mom flipped. I flipped. We oohed and ahed, and then went to the tables loaded with bolts of calico, corduroy, and wool. I can't remember the exact fabric store, but when I go into an old fashioned dime store with the worn wooden floors and wobbly ceiling fans, the memories come back.

I grew up watching my mother sew and wore her fashions up until the day I married. She made my wedding dress because I couldn't find one "plain" enough ready made. She hand tatted lace for the edge of my sleeves and was tatting lace medallions to decorate the skirt, but she never finished to the relief of her lace-phobic daughter.

After I got married, I began sewing my own clothes. Mom helped me out in a pinch when it came to zippers, buttonholes, linings, and patterns that made no sense.

And now I realize that most of what I know about writing and revising, I learned by sewing.

1. A lot of the fun is in the dreaming about what you're going to make, but if you want to wear it, you have to sew it.
2. The first thing you do is throw away the directions. But keep them handy just in case you get stuck.
3. You don't have to go by the picture on the envelope. You can mix parts and make something new.
4. Once in a while you might want to go take a class to learn how to do something new or how to do something old better.

5. If you make a mistake, you can incorporate it into the design.
6. If you really make a mistake, don't throw it away. You can at least use the trim, buttons, and scraps for something else.
7. You can use something other than the suggested fabrics, just use common sense.
8. You have to mark and measure to make things fit (comes in handy with complex collars and poetry).
9. You need a little trim, but not too much.
10. If it's driving you crazy, lay it down and go cook supper.
11. When you're done, you have something based on a pattern; but through your skill and creativity, you've made it uniquely yours.
12. You get better with each one you make.

THANK YOU MOM