

## Woman makes styles of past come alive

EAGLE – An ability with a needle, the historian’s interest in fashion and the chance to work in the present while clothed in the past were the features the led Beverly [Wassam], of Delavan, to present “Another Time,” a special fashion presentation.

[Bev] was born in Waukesha and grew up playing with pin cushions instead of rattles, so clothes became her fascination. Since her 4-H days, she’s been interested in making garments and understanding how particular fashion trends started.



**Picture 1: Models in the “Another Time” fashion show are, from left, Linnea Loesch, Rita Lurvey, Judy Laufenberg, Mary Kay King, Mary Kilps and [Bev Wassam]. (Joan Holma Photo)**

This interest drew her to Old World Wisconsin where, since 1982, she has been working as an interpreter in the museum’s village site.

The original homes of the state’s European settlers have been transported, refurbished and equipped with authentic tools and garments of the times so visitors can see life as it was.

At Old World, Bev wears clothes of 1860 which the museum staff researched and hand made. Today’s visitors to Old World are transported to the past as they meet and watch interpreters in period dress. Many questions are asked about the dresses; many women want to know where the costumes came from and the story regarding the fabrics. [Bev] had the opportunity to learn firsthand how the state museum researched the costume background and how the fabrics and fashions were duplicated. She drew on her skills and created a Victorian wedding gown and the idea which eventually became the shows involve facts and fashions from 1803 – 1890.

The history of hoop dress bustles and even the story of how Amelin Bloomer was responsible for the article of clothing named in her honor are anecdotes shared during the show.

“From the Skin Out” is another part of the program which draws interest. [Bev] says during that time one of the models appears in a chemise and corset to allow dressing to precede with explanations so the audience becomes knowledgeable regarding the importance of undergarments and accessories.

As [Bev] becomes more involved in “Another Time” she said she has come to prefer sewing a dress from history rather than spending money on modern fashions. “It’s easy

for me to justify time and expense when I'm making a costume than by sewing something to wear that has no tradition."

Her daughters Tess, 15, and Angie, 11, have their mother's enthusiasm for "Another Time." They can be seen as part of the scheduled shows. So for this family, "Another Time" is happening now.

(Joan Holman is a Freeman correspondent who lives in Eagle.)