

SCHAUMBURG: OUR STORIES

CATHERINE STIER



Crochet's role grows

A former Unocal employee, Marge Scensny, never imagined herself teaching classes at a craft store. Or volunteering as an instructor at a nursing home. Or, perhaps most startling, coordinating a fashion show.

Yet Scensny, a longtime Schaumburg resident, has discovered an important truth: our passions may guide us to some surprising places.

Scensny is passionate about the craft of crochet.

"I crochet every day, every single day," she said. This lifelong interest led to her role this Saturday as coordinator of the Jazz Up Your Style With Crochet Fashion Show, one of the headline events of the Crochet Guild of America's Chain Link 2003 10th Annual Conference at the Radisson

Hotel O'Hare in Rosemont, running July 24-27. Semi-professional models will sashay down the runway, showcasing more than 80 crocheted garments including tops, vests, hats and, as a grand finale, a beaded, silk wedding gown.

"The items are all brought to the conference by the people attending," said Scensny. "Most were made within the past year."

Small beginnings

Scensny explained that the Crochet Guild Conference fashion show began as an impromptu event when several women at the 1994 conference were asked to model for the group the crocheted clothes they had worn that day. It now serves

(Continued on page 14)

■ Stier *Continued from page 13*

to offer fellow crochet enthusiasts new ideas and to dispel any notion that the craft is merely old fashioned.

"The purpose of the fashion show is to show the audience what crochet looks like today," she said.

Behind the scenes, Scensny has worked for months, contacting local models from Harper College's Fashion Design Program and coordinating the garments and equipment. The show will feature light jazz accompaniment, highlighting the conference theme, "Sweet Home Chicago," so named because the Crochet Guild was founded in the Chicago suburbs by Rolling Meadows resident **Gwen Blakely Kinsler**.

Though Scensny has crocheted since she was 12 years old, she cites her departure from Unocal during its relocation to the West Coast as a turning point. She left the company, and found herself with more time to spend on her craft.

Paying her dues

In her pursuit of a crochet certification through the Craft Yarn Council of

America, she underwent 25 hours of intense training and then donated 25 hours of free teaching time in crochet.

Today she teaches crochet classes at Hoffman Estates' Michaels Store. She has also served for three years as a volunteer teacher at the Devonshire Assisted Living Home in Hoffman Estates, where one of her most enthusiastic students is a 92-year-old woman. "And she does beautiful work," added Scensny.

Scensny believes she benefits from her ongoing affiliation with the Guild.

"They keep me motivated and I've learned so much from the ladies in our chapter," she said. "I get a lot of enjoyment (from crochet), a lot of satisfaction in seeing the finished product, and a lot of relaxation. It's therapy."

For more information on the Crochet Guild's 10th annual conference, log on to www.crochet.org. The Northern Illinois Chapter of the Crochet Guild of America welcomes new members. Call (847) 524-0271 to learn more.

Catherine Stier is going on vacation. Her next column will be in the Aug. 21 issue. Contact her at cbstier@concentric.net or (847) 352-1979.