

VASHONBEACHCOMBER.com

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Election 2009



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The logo for Vashon Market, featuring the word "Vashon" in a blue script font above the word "MARKET" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. Below this, it says "OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK" in red and "Next to Vashon Auto Parts" in a smaller blue font.

Vashon
MARKET
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK
Next to Vashon Auto Parts

Shop for the Lowest Prices on the Island
Quality Produce • Fresh Meats • Service Deli
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A background image showing various fresh vegetables like carrots, green beans, and leafy greens.

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A small comic strip panel featuring Garfield the cat. He is sitting on a red cushion, looking grumpy. The text "Ziggy Cathy" is written in a stylized font across the bottom of the panel.

Ziggy Cathy

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Clothing swap offers a fresh take on fashion

By [SUSAN RIEMER](#)

Vashon-Maury Island Beachcomber Reporter

Jul 28 2009, 2:09 PM · **UPDATED**

Arlette Moody's closets are full of one-of-a-kind items — multi-colored capri pants for her daughter, a Mad Hatter's jacket she's sewn for her theatrical husband and creative costumes she sometimes dons in her work as a performer.

She didn't use yards of new fabric or Butterick patterns, however, to make these creations.

Moody makes many of her clothes from what others cast off — items culled from thrift stores and second-hand shops that she reinvents at her sewing machine.

This weekend Islanders can join Moody in her spirit of thriftiness and eco-creativity at a clothing swap and sewing extravaganza, called Swap-O-Rama-Rama.

The event — many of which have been held around the country but is a first on Vashon — will include unlimited clothing for swapping and revamping, a dozen sewing machines (eight flown in by Singer, which helps sponsor the events), several sewing tutors, books to inspire and jog memories, an embroidery station and a variety of sewing workshops throughout the day.

"You could get a nice addition to your wardrobe," said Islander Jenni Wilke, the force behind the event. "I am hoping people will feel inspired."

Swap-O-Rama-Rama is a nonprofit organization based in New York, with roots in the relatively new Slow Clothing movement, Wilke said. Like the Slow Food movement, which has inspired many to consider the impacts of the food they eat, the budding Slow Clothing movement encourages people to learn more about the clothes they wear — where they might have come from and who might have made them and under what conditions. The movement also seeks to reduce the considerable waste in the textile industry and return creativity to people who wear the clothes.

Organizers of the event have been stockpiling castoffs, and more will arrive with participants throughout the day, so there will be clothes aplenty, according to Wilke. In the center of the room, there will be tables with clothes arranged according to type — pants, shirt, sweaters — with the sizes all mixed together, because at a Swap-O-Rama-Rama, size does not matter, Wilke said. The focus is on people transforming garments to make them fully their own.

Moody, a master of the art of clothing reinvention who says she does not so much as measure when she works, believes starting from existing clothes is easier than starting from scratch. Indeed, her closet tells the story about how far imagination, needle and thread can take a wardrobe.

A pair of plain brown pants that had become too tight now have a black velvet strip down each leg and a black velvet ruffle at the bottom, making them both comfortable and striking.

Too-short shirts were amended by cutting them off under the breast and sewing the bottoms of other shirts below, giving them panache and making them longer and more functional.

An elegant black shirt was originally a black slip and two or three other black shirts.

The list can be endless, Moody said. A slinky robe can be made into genie pants for a child's costume. Take a maternity shirt, cut off the sleeves and neck and create an elastic waist, and voila — a new skirt. Moody, a performer, made a Queen of Hearts costume a few years back, complete with a hoop skirt, from two shirts, two skirts, wire and piping. It always draws attention, she said, and children are in awe when she tells them



Arlette Moody and her daughter, Louisa, display some of Arlette's creations, made from cast-off clothes. Amelia Heagerty/staff photo

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