

DUCK PANTS . . . FOR THE BIRDS

By Joan Francis

If my children only knew that blood sweat and tears were represented by those “simple little garments” I turn out on my sewing machine. They think I just love to sew and that they are only humoring me by wearing the things a time or two.

How could they know I was voted the girl least likely to learn to thread a needle by my high school home economics class. How could they realize I only torture myself this way so they may have nice clothes at a budget price.

For instance, take that pair of cord pants my son wanted. I knew I could make them much cheaper than the store price. Sooo . . . I marched down to the local fabric store and found some beautiful wide welt corduroy. It was a little more expensive than I expected, but after all it was for my kids, right? I needed a zipper, thread, interfacing, pattern, new scissors, (the kids did a tin-can glue project with my last scissors), and a few odds and ends of bias tape, pins and things. Well . . . by the time I finished, I had spent almost the price of the store pants, but after all, mine would be so much better made and so individual.

The first thing the pattern called for was a fly. Now I had never sewn a fly before, but I am smart enough to follow simple directions. “Baste left fly to the left front pants. TOP STITCH”. No problem. Except the left is really the right because it goes backwards, sort of. **RIP** “With the right left fly in place sew left side of zipper in place with zipper tape.” . . . zipper tape . . . What do you suppose zipper tape is? Oh well, bias ought to do. “TOP Stitch.” Sew right side of zipper to right side of pants.” OH! Let’s see, the left side to the . . . no . . . the right side to the . . . Gee, the zipper shouldn’t have to crisscross like that. I don’t think Mike could quite get it zipped. **RIP RIP**

By 2 a.m. I had it all together once more except for one little problem. The zipper was set too far over and I I’d never be able to stitch the crotch. A rather loud and colorful explicative from the vocabulary of my mining engineer father escaped my lips. It brought my husband out of bed to see what was wrong. He had a simple solution: “Just sew up the fly and leave a little emergency opening in the pocket.” @#\$\$%^! After removing my seam ripper from his tongue, he decided the better part of valor was to “let sewing mothers fly” alone and returned to bed.

RIP RIP By then there was no material left to “TOP STITCH.” It had either been chewed

by the needle or ripped by my seam ripper. But being very clever and inventive I decided to darn the holes by stitching those cute little ducks all around the fly. Of course, my machine was working at its usual efficiency and the ducks came out looking as if the bobbin snarled.

It was four a.m. It was painful, but MY SON'S NEW CORDS were ready. I crawled into bed sucking the blood from my well-pinned fingers and waited to hear the alarm go off and see Mike's excited, happy face when he saw the pants.

Two hours later, I stumbled bleary eyed into the kitchen to find a cup of coffee, and there is my reward. Mike is already dressed in his old patched tough hides. I asked feebly, "Didn't you find your new cords?" As gently as possible he told me he didn't think a duck trimmed fly was in style this year. Ah well, maybe I can cut those down for a pair of rompers for the baby.