

Fashion Show celebrates the swinging '60s

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By Ian Hurley

Modern Millie and Cabin Fever are teaming up for a fashion show at Gulu-Gulu Café that benefits Northeast Animal Shelter.

Salem -

The fashion and furnishings of the 1960s meet next week in Fashion Fusion, an event that will bring the best in swingin' vintage style to modern-day hipsters.

Modern Millie, a secondhand Washington Street boutique, is teaming up with Cabin Fever, a vintage furniture store on Essex Street to transport people back to the days of beatniks and Beatlemania.

On Thursday, Sept. 18 at 8 p.m. models will take over the Gulu-Gulu Café, strutting down a runway that will hop with music by the Supremes and the Shirelles. More than 40 outfits will be shown, representing the many styles of the '60s.

"There's so much in one decade," says Christine Robidoux, owner of Modern Millie who organized the show. "It ran the gamut, it was sophisticated, edgy, youthful ... It was everything and its opposite. It started with JFK and ended with Woodstock."

Last year was the first time Modern Millie teamed with Gulu-Gulu for a fashion-show fundraiser, which had a 1970s workplace fashion theme. This is their first time partnering with Cabin Fever, which opened in the spring.

During the '60s, Robidoux points out, the miniskirt made its first appearance thanks to the young English fashion designer Mary Quant. Women began wearing pants more frequently, and fashion, in general, became more free-spirited.

"Before that men had to wear three-piece suits and hats and hemlines had to be in a certain place," Robidoux says. "In the '60s it rose six inches above the knee. Ten years earlier that would have been scandalous."

Vintage décor from Cabin Fever will also play a large role in the show, with furniture providing a theatrical set as models act out scenes from the 1960s.

Roberta O'Connor, owner of Cabin Fever, points out that '60s furniture is known for its clean lines, which differentiate it from the more fancy filigreed designs that marked the 1940s art deco movement.

"In the '60s you see people getting into linear forms," says O'Connor. "You see experimentation with materials like vinyl, metal and fiberglass."

By merging old and new fashions in the show, store owners are hoping to inspire people to become more adventurous with their personal style in an age dominated by cookie-cutter stores like Gap and Ikea.

"The idea is to show people they can bring vintage into their homes and closets and rate a unique look as opposed to what they could buy at the mall ..." O'Connor says. "They can bring a little originality into their homes."

Interested? Fashion Fusion will take place Thursday, Sept. 18 at 8 p.m. at Gulu-Gulu Café, 247 Essex St., at the corner of Washington Street. Admission is free, but donations are encouraged and go to Salem's Northeast Animal Shelter. To guarantee a seat, obtain a VIP pass at the pre-show cocktail hour at 6:30 p.m. at Cabin Fever, 281 Essex St.

Both Modern Millie and Cabin Fever will be participating in a Fashion Fusion sale with 15 percent off most merchandise. They will remain open until 10 p.m. for late-night shopping.

For more information, call 978-740-8882 or visit www.gulu-gulu.com.