

# THE ARTS

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## Dressing for the Coaster Theatre stage Velcro is the best friend of costume designer Judith Light

By NANCY MCCARTHY  
FOR COAST WEEKEND

Costumes for the summer plays hang in the Coaster Theatre's two small dressing rooms: brightly colored blazers, a beautiful black beaded gown, a green dress with flamboyant shoulders and tony tuxedos.

Even though "9 to 5: The Musical" opened last weekend and "Let's Murder Marsha," opens this Friday, Judith Light, the theater's costume designer, still tweaks the costumes. A button may be loose, a thread may be unraveling or a necklace may not be quite right. Velcro — for quick costume changes — and a seam ripper — to make costumes fit right — are her best friends.

"When I can stand back and say, 'I've got where I was headed, it's what I wanted,' it's good. It's good," Light said.

The former owner of a belly dancing studio in northern California who moved to Cannon Beach late last year, Light has been designing costumes for many years — mostly as a hobby for herself and family members. She also sewed costumes for her studio dancers and helped out at the Woodminster Summer Musicals in Oakland.

Light came to the Coaster after seeing an ad for a costume designer. Her first play was last December's "Once Upon a Mattress," which required



In "9 to 5: The Musical," Cindy Karr, Jean Rice and Allison Johnson decide to teach their egotistical boss, played by Aaron Harris, a lesson.



The over-the-top costumes in "Let's Murder Marsha," worn here by Sue Meyers, Ellen Jensen and Frank Jagodnik, recall the 1980s soap opera "Dynasty."

costumes for 25 actors of all shapes and sizes. The outfits ranged from long satin dresses for the ladies in waiting ("I decided I wanted them in the colors of ice cream sherbet," Light said.) to a red velvet

gown trimmed in white faux fur for the Queen. "I'm a fabric-aholic," Light said.

Since "Once Upon a Mattress," Light has decked out actors in three other plays, in addition

to the two summer plays. Before she starts looking for fabric or checking out discount stores and websites for costumes, she draws renderings for all of the characters and discusses them with the play's



PHOTO BY NANCY MCCARTHY

An orange kimono, sewn by Judith Light, "just because I wanted to" appeared in "Once Upon a Mattress" at the Coaster Theatre. The rich fabric is an example of the brocades and other materials — including upholstery — used by Light, who calls herself a "fabric-aholic."



PHOTO BY NANCY MCCARTHY

A rainbow of threads stand ready to be selected for the next costume created by Judith Light.

director.

Ryan Hull, for instance, who directed "Let's Murder Marsha," wanted costumes for an affluent family in the 1980s. The comedy about murder, double crosses and

birthday surprises takes the costumes over the top, which Light enjoys.

"She approached me before the auditions and asked me what I thought

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