

*By Kay Gardiner and Ann Shayne*

## Latvian-Estonian-Lithuanian Overload?

Dear Problem Ladies,



The other day I finally finished my Baltic Trifecta Shawl. With its extra nupps and its rare braids, I was superstoked to wear it in public for the first time. I put on a fresh pair of khakis, a white t-shirt, a pair of handknit socks (in the sadly discontinued Grateful Dyed colorway), and some other handknits I can't quite recall at the moment. I wrapped my Baltic Trifecta around my shoulders and fastened it with a shawl pin that I had scored by jumping over several fellow fiber fiends at Llamafest '06. The look: in a word, fierce.

You must be wondering, what could possibly be the problem? Dealing with the envy? The wolf whistles from hotblooded construction workers (at least the Latvian ones)? No, it's the most confounding thing: my kids refused to be seen at the mall with me. How can I improve the taste of my benighted offspring?

***All Decked Out in Secaucus***

## Dear Deeked,

In our personal experience, we find that our children refuse to be seen at the mall with us no matter what we are wearing. Maybe you're not wearing enough handknits. Maybe if you pile on another wrap or two, they'll happily hang out with you because they won't know it's you.

We do have one observation regarding the wearing of shawls, wraps, stoles, capelets, and any other handknits likewise lacking in sleeves. If you take a look at the traditional garb of knitters long ago, the look tended to begin with a dress. Granted, women a hundred years ago pretty much risked being stoned to death if they shopped at the Gap. Still, nobody, female nor male, was wearing lace stoles with their khaki workpants. Do not misunderstand: the Problem Ladies are ardent wearers of khakis and white T-shirts. But we are going to go out on a limb here and suggest that a shawl/wrap/stole/capelet wants to go with a dress. Maybe a pair of party pants. Maybe even dark pants. But not so much the khakis, the shorts, the mom jeans.

We think those traditional knitters were onto something. They tended to wear their shawls with dresses. Depending on which Baltic republic you're talking about, they might have been crazy loud print dresses. Striped dresses. Or plain black dresses. Whatever the dress, it's a good look. A shawl over a black dress shows off the knitting, it sets you up for either a funeral or a cocktail party just like that, and in terms of making you feel great, a dress that floats beats a pair of khakis that bind any day.

Just trying to help! Knit strong!

## ***The Problem Ladies***

Linkiography: [thesartorialist.blogspot.com](http://thesartorialist.blogspot.com)

*\*While the Problem Ladies can cook up imaginary problems all day long, they would love to answer real questions from you. Please email your problems to [problemladies@twistcollective.com](mailto:problemladies@twistcollective.com). And include photos if you need to show us the problem.*