



BACK HOME

-By Michelle S. Rodgers

Berks Extension Home Economist

BY MICHELLE S. RODGERS
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Hand in hand you see them traveling through the mall. Some are happy and excited, laughing while they juggle packages, while others look frazzled, their faces tear streaked. It's back to school shopping time. Which picture best depicts your shopping trip?

My childhood back to school shopping trips were enjoyable and memorable. Probably my mother and I were the original designers of the "shop 'til you drop" slogan. Mom designed one day to shop with each child. And, those shopping experiences proved to be good wardrobe training. Parents can use these and other occasions

as opportunities to guide children into a lifetime of successful wardrobe planning and decision making.

Although most children do not identify clothing as an element of self-expression until grades six or seven, they let parents know what they like and don't like to wear long before that. By two years of age a child will express color and texture preferences. These preferences are the beginning of a child's individual style. Although later influenced by peers, a child's sense of dressing flair begins at home. That's not to say that there won't be a time of fads, but a recognition of flattering colors, good design, and high-quality fabrics

and workmanship can be cultivated early and nurtured. The understanding of good appearance is deeply rooted and may be easier to learn as a child than as an adult. Also, the understanding of a clean, neat appearance accomplished with a basic mix and match wardrobe will be instrumental in meeting clothing budgets now and in the future.

Here are a few tips to make sure that your shopping experiences are cheerful rather than tearful. One stop shopping is the ideal. Look for a store that reflects both of your tastes and patronize it regularly. If you don't have one favorite place, then you might benefit by doing some preview shopping. Note stores that have the kinds of things you and your child are interested in and at your price range. Especially with younger children, plan to show them a few items then allow them to make the choice. This is not as overwhelming as choosing from a rackful and you get your shopping completed within the attention span of your child.

Shop for major purchases (coats, dresses, shoes) at the beginning of the season when the selection is best. You are more likely to get what you want and you will

stand a better chance that your child will be more willing to wear them all season. Shop the sales for basics such as underwear, play clothes, and accessories.

Take into consideration your child's favorite colors. Children enjoy wearing clothes that have colors they like. Keep in mind that children look best in medium intensity rather than light pastels or electric hues.

Accessories can be a great way to liven up jeans and T-shirts. Suspenders, ribbons, colorful stretch pants may add a special look to a basic mix and match wardrobe.

If your child insists on expensive designer labels, you may want to suggest that your child help use his or her allowance to purchase these items. The result may be better care of the clothing and an understanding of the costs involved. As a child gets older, you may want to shop together for some basics, then allow your child to spend a certain amount of dollars on their own adding to the basic wardrobe.

By discussing how and why separates go together, how to match appropriate clothes to the occasion, and items that lasting wear, you can build life-long shopping skills. In my childhood, after a shopping trip and a modeling dis-

play for dad, we laid our clothing on the bed and talked about the mix and match choices and where we would wear certain items. To this day, I often come home from shopping, lay out certain garments and confirm my mix and match possibilities.

Additionally, you may want to involve your children in selecting what to wear. Remember to praise your children when they look good in something they selected. Tell them why a particular piece of clothing looks good on them. This helps reinforce individuality and establishes criteria for future purchases.

I must admit that buying and selecting clothing for now one-year-old Elise has been fun for me. However, in days to come, I'm sure we will have to work it out together, although we're already off to a good start. On most mornings, Elise is held up to the closet of play clothes and whatever outfit she grabs at is usually her selection for the day (or at least one of the outfits that she'll go through that day). And, of course, I've already conditioned her to the fine art of loving to shop. I'll probably be sorry later!

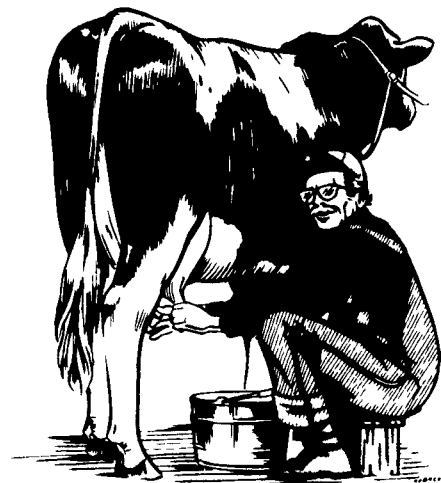
Happy shopping. I'll look for more smiling faces in the mall!

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SUNDAY, August 28

West End Fair Open Horse Show - Grandstand
Vesper Services - Main Stage

MONDAY, August 29

The Pleasant Valley High School Band - Band Shell
R & R Auto Demolition Derby - Grandstand

TUESDAY, August 30

Coke Video Van & Disc Jockey - Fairgrounds
Shucks - Main Stage
The Hollywood Stunt World - Grandstand

WEDNESDAY, August 31

4-H & Open Cattle Judging - Livestock Arena
Big Band Ambassadors - Band Shell
The Gold City Quartet - Main Stage
Buckeye Rodeo - Grandstand
Square Dance Demos - Leasure Squares - Band Shell
Senior Citizen's Contests

THURSDAY, September 1

Children's Contest's - Livestock Arena
The Hollanders - Main Stage
R & R Auto Demolition Derby - Grandstand

FRIDAY, September 2

The Helen Cornelius Show - Main Stage
P.T.P.A. Sanctioned Class A Tractor Pull - Grandstand
Square Dance Demos. - Leasure Squares - Band Shell

SATURDAY, September 3

2 Wheel Drive Sanctioned Pull Grandstand
4 Wheel Drive Sanctioned Pull - Grandstand
Open 2 & 4 Wheel Drive Pull - Local Contestant's
The Bill Anderson Show - Main Stage

ALL WEEK APPEARANCE'S

Antique Engine, Tractor and Toy Club
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Circus Galaxy
The John Bressler Show
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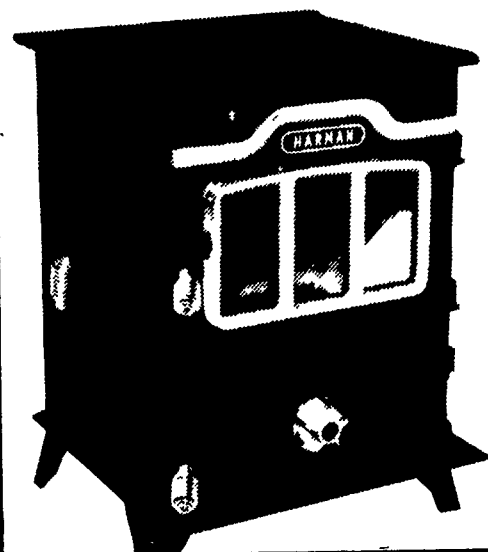
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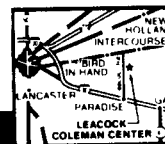
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