

Many factors involved in buying suitable clothing

By JANIE WELKER
Collegian Staff Writer

President Ford may be predicting better times ahead, but with the current price of clothing, many consumers are developing a greater awareness of the need to budget money wisely.

While college students are known for their traditionally low budgets, college towns are not known for traditionally low prices. Yet, there are some economical places to shop, even in State College.

One thing a consumer can do is check the telephone book for listings of manufacturer's outlets. These stores often sell over-stocked and sample items for lower prices. However, the stores often sell seconds and irregulars also, so people who do shop there should make sure they know what they're getting.

Another factor to consider is what the consumer is buying — if it's jeans or painters pants, the local Army-Navy stores may be the place to try. If it is a bigger or more important investment, one might consider waiting for sales at stores that carry quality merchandise.

No matter where one shops, there are certain guidelines that are helpful in spotting good workmanship. Often it is more economical in the long run to buy clothes of good quality although they may be more expensive, as they tend to wear better and hold up longer. Some criteria for judging quality in clothes are:

—Seams: are they finished or overcast to prevent raveling? Also are the seam allowances generous — at least one half inch?

—Sizing: is it consistent? Cheaper clothes often run smaller in size. (If you are unsure as to what size is best suited to you, clothing

catalogs usually have helpful fitting guides.

—Check buttons and button-holes. Buttons should be sewn on securely and button-holes should have a neat appearance — no loose threads.

—Machine stitching should be neat and even.

—Plaids and prints should match, especially at the back center-seam. Also, plaids on the arms of the garment should match the body.

—Zippers should move smoothly. Separating zippers should be easy to open and start.

—The last measure is just common sense — does the garment hang well? Are the seams straight — does it have an overall good appearance?

Another thing to be aware of when buying clothes is fibers and their uses and care. Aurelia Adams, assistant professor of Man Environment Relations (MER), cautions that before a consumer buys something, he should be sure that the garment is made of a material that is suited to that garment's particular use.

For example, Adams said that nylon is one of the best materials for ski-jackets because of its high ability to take abrasion. "Consumers know less about fibers than anything else," she added.

It's always a good idea to investigate sales and bargains, but it is better to judge how good the bargain is by the quality of the garment rather than by just how much the price is marked down. Unfortunately, consumer fraud does exist and some stores actually mark up prices to make sales look better.



Photo by Jeff Pilster

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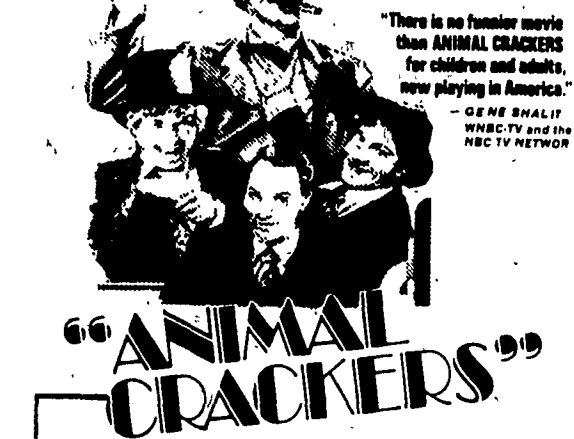
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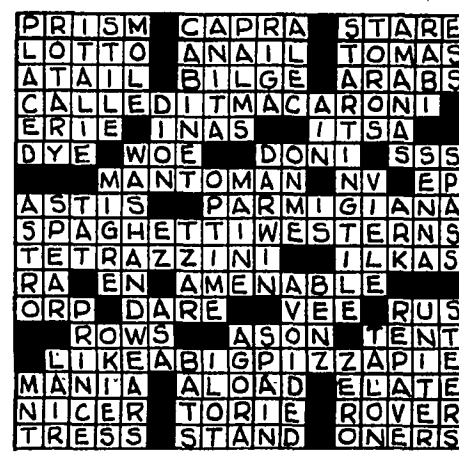
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(answers to page 4 puzzle)

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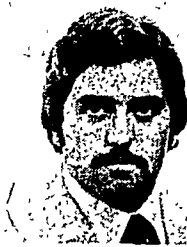
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Valerie is in the Capezio Classic Scoop Neck Leotard (\$7.50) and Capezio Stirrup Tights (\$5.25)

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Photo by Aperture

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