

Mark talks about, well, just about everything

by Mark Owens

Relax. This week is "the kinder and gentler column." It doesn't deal with women, men or hamsters on steroids. After reading this, you could compare me with Jim Nabors and think he's a vicious, drooling psychopath.

Recently I've been feeling Andy Rooney-like. There's a lot of little things that are bothering me. Little annoying things that for some reason just deserve to be mentioned.

One thing I've noticed is Fall Fashion. It seems the layered look is in this year. Go to any department store any you will find mannequins groaning under the weight of thousands of polo shirts and hundreds of sweaters.

Rather than pay hundreds of dollars at clothing stores to get this look, I submit to you my solution: go home and put on all the clothes you own. I know it'll be hard for you to move and you'll probably sweat a lot, but be comforted that you are on the cutting edge of fashion, even if you do look like a 100 percent cotton twill wildebeest.

I must admit, though, that this method has its good points. You'll always know where your clean shirts are, and if you spill something on yourself it's just a matter of peeling off the outer layer. You know it's time to do the laundry when you feel a slight draft.

Another fashion trend that has me worried is sweaters. I went looking for a new shirt last week and all I could find were sweaters, especially cardigans. It's like fashion designers are trying to make us into Mr. Rogers clones.

I know in this picture I'm wearing a Mr. Rogers Neighborhood T-shirt, and trust me, I'm not picking on him. Mr. Rogers is a pretty cool guy, but I think he could use a new wardrobe. I think that a leather jacket could do wonders for him, don't you?

A side thought: is it me, or does the Neighborhood of Make Believe come across as "Dynasty" for kindergartners? Lady Ellane Fairchild

as Alexis, King Friday as Blake Carrington and Krystal Carrington as Daniel Striped Tiger. And everyone is worried about children watching the actual "Dynasty" - ha ha ha!

Something else that's annoying is pets. Recently I've discovered that dogs and cats are nature's Odd Couple. Cats are pretty sly and dogs are the most stupid things to walk the face of the earth.

Take fetching things. When you play fetch with a dog, you take a ball, show it to him and throw it into the dryer. He will drool, yap and run after



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it - into the dryer. You can shut the door, turn the dryer on and and go catch a movie. Your only problem will occur when you try to explain why your cocker spaniel looks like a mutant cotton ball.

On the other hand, try the same thing with a cat. Show him the ball. Throw it. He'll still be sitting there, looking at you as if to say "So, what's your point?"

The same concept applies to feeding time. Let's say you're taking a nap and forget to feed the dog. He'll wander over to where you're sleeping and stare at you with big sad eyes

The Missing Pieces

until you wake up, look at him and remember to feed the animal that drinks out of your toilet.

Cats, on the other hand, aren't so passive. A cat won't wait for you to remember to feed it. He walks over to his dish, sees it empty and you dozing on the couch. He'll march, with claws extended, up your chest, onto your face and walk around a bit until you remember to feed him.

I should remind you that cats will stay on your face until they see a can

being opened. Many a time I've seen my neighbor walking out to get the morning paper with her cat clamped on her face. It's not a pretty sight.

Another thing that bothers me is Stealth Children. I work in a supermarket and have to deal with the children that people sometimes bring with them.

Most of the time I can handle it because I know where they are. I can hear them across the store ("Mom,

can I get this? Can I, can I, can I pleeeeeeassseee?") and brace myself for their attack. It's usually quick, and I only need a couple of Band-Aids.

It's the Stealth Children that frighten me. They don't make any noise at all. They're the children that quietly push the shopping cart into the canned vegetable display I've been working on for two hours. They're the ones that sit quietly in the cart and drop stuff, like five pound jars of spaghetti sauce, on the floor. It's cases like these that require EmergiCare.

Of course I'm not going to even mention the Mutant Child Shoppers from Hell, who like to play tackle football in the store with bags of flour. Somehow when they appear I always wind up in the meat case unconscious.

Oh, by the way, Carolyn, I didn't take your letter personally and I'm glad you finally signed your name. Thanks for the letters.

How're you going to do it?

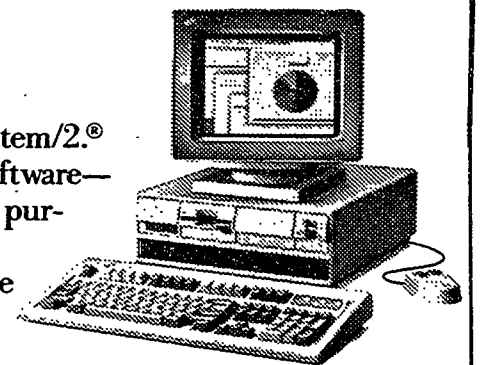


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