

The fashion plate

Jeans no longer get standard brand

By RUSTLE SHAND

Did you ever stop to think that we are branding our backsides with blue jean labels in much the same way cattle are branded by the ranchers?

Can't you just imagine Levi Strauss chuckling and rubbing his hands in glee. "You belong to me," he's probably saying of the millions of Americans who wear the "Levi's" brand on their right hind quarter.

Or Sasson, who has the trendy teens set baffled into believing any brand other than this is dumb and shows lack of imagination and flair.

The epitome of good breeding in the land of brands comes with the new Yves Saint Laurent brand which is equally de rigueur worn with or without a shirt. Mother always said, "good breeding will out." Don't you wonder if she would go so far as to flash it on her hip?

The coup de grace of blue jeans, however, has just been introduced by none other than America's darling from Indiana, Bill Blass. Designed especially for the modern, young American woman who wants to update her jeans wardrobe, the bold "Bill Blass" signature splashed across the rear pocket tells the world she has entered a new sophisticated stage in life.

The new sophisticate has probably given up Calvin Klein on her derriere in favor of Bill Blass because Calvin's name now adorns jeans for the toddler set and she feels they are beneath her.

Branding, of course, reached an all time high, or

low - depending on how you view it - with the advent of "Calvin Klein" stamped not only on jeans for the grown-ups but for the two year old toddler as well. Good cattlemen know you never brand the little calves.

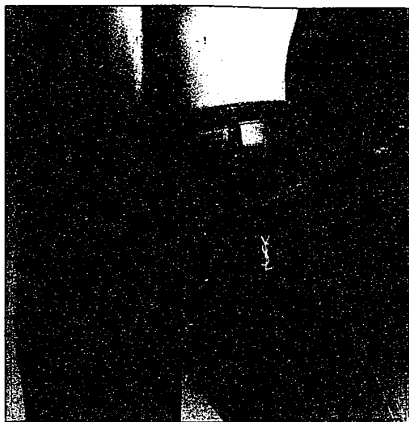
As if all of this identification with the wild west were not enough, America's teens are honing up for a western venture in make-believe cowboy hats and shirts to go along with their Ralph Lauren and Calvin Klein jeans.

Kids who didn't dare wear anything but jock shoes are growing up to western-look boots and cowhide string ties to wear for prancing around shopping malls and clomping through hallowed school halls this fall.

And it's all because Ralph Lauren, who grew up in the heart of New York City, dreamed of being a cowboy while he doted on western movies as a youngster - or so he says. He is the designer who went western all the way with his spring line and started the stampede.

Even Italian designer Andre Laug who has always maintained a woman should be feminine and above all sexy in her dress has done a western cowboy suit for milady of the world to wear.

The real test always comes when it's later than you think. In the end, this final roundup in the sky, will you be stamped "USDA choice" or "USDA prime," or just plain old "hamburger?" Will it matter whether your backside was branded "Levi's," "YSL" or "Bill Blass?" Probably not.



Health plan to be viewed

Employees of General Motors, the Automobile Club of Michigan and the State of Michigan can get a firsthand look at Health Alliance Plan (HAP), the state's largest health maintenance organization, at three open houses Saturday, Sept. 8. They will be held in Westland, Dearborn and West Bloomfield.

Health Alliance Plan, which will be offered to GM, AAA and State employees during enrollment periods this month and next will host the open houses from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the three HAP facilities.

They are Metropolitan Health Center West, 28303 Joy, Westland (between Inkster and Middlebelt Roads); Henry Ford Hospital Fairlane Center, 19401 Hubbard at Evergreen, Dearborn; and Henry Ford Hospital West Bloomfield Center, 6777 West Maple, West Bloomfield.

During each open house, HAP personnel will answer questions about the new health plan, and health center staff will conduct tours of each facility. Light refreshments will be served.

General Motors employees will have the opportunity to join Health Alliance Plan during a Sept. 4-17 enrollment period at GM. A HAP enrollment period for AAA employees will be conducted from Sept. 4-21. State of Michigan employees will be offered the plan from Aug. 20-Sept. 21.

Health Alliance Plan, which was officially introduced to the public earlier this year, is the result of a merger between HAP and Metro Health plan, an existing health maintenance organization (HMO) whose 75,000 members have transferred to the new plan.

Under the new program, for a fixed prepaid premium, members will receive comprehensive inpatient and outpatient care from a network of facilities operated by Henry Ford Hospital and Metropolitan Hospital.

DAV helps vets exposed to Agent Orange

The list of American casualties of the Vietnam War continues to mount, even though the United States' involvement in the fighting in Indochina ended several years ago.

Hundreds of thousands - possibly many more - American GIs were exposed to Agent Orange and other powerfully toxic defoliants while fighting in southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. Agent Orange contains dioxin, which Barry Commoner and many other scientists have called "the most toxic man-made substance known."

Dioxin has been blamed for a number of severe health problems and some deaths among Vietnam veterans, as well as birth defects among some of their children. These disabilities are showing up years after exposure to herbicides such as Agent Orange.

The 622,000-member Disabled American Veterans (DAV) has set up a nationwide program to assist these veterans in filing claims with the Veterans

Administration (VA) for health care and disability benefits for illness that may be associated with dioxin poisoning.

The most common symptoms attributed to dioxin poisoning include:

- Numbness in fingers, toes, arms and legs in varying degrees.
- Nervous disorders, especially loss or decrease in the sensitivity of the senses.
- Psychological effects, including loss of memory, confusion, aggression or irritability.

• Skin rashes, specifically chloracne, which resembles a severe case of acne and is usually found on the face, arms, chest, back or legs.

• Altered sex drive, including diminished sex drive or impotence among men and increased sexual activity among women.

• Cancer, particularly cancer of the liver.

• Birth defects in children born to affected parents - primarily defects of the hands, fingers, feet and toes. Some hyperactivity and psychological problems have been reported in children of affected parents.

"It will be extremely difficult to show that these disabilities are the result of exposure to Agent Orange for the purposes of claims for VA benefits," said Norman B. Hartnett, DAV

national director of services.

"That's why it's so important that a Vietnam veteran benefits expert, who does not get his pay check from the government, represent him in filing this type of claim."

The services of DAV veterans' benefits experts are provided free of charge to veterans and members of their families. Veterans of the war in Southeast

Asia who have symptoms they feel may be related to exposure to such herbicides as Agent Orange should contact National Service Headquarters, Disabled American Veterans, 807 Maine Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20024.

The case, will then be referred to a DAV National Service Officer in the veteran's area, who will have the resources and expertise of the entire DAV National Service Program behind him in developing a claim.



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