

Fall fashion is framed by sadness

GUEST COLUMNIST



ALICE RHEIN

Last week was supposed to be fashion's week to shine in New York, with eight days of runway shows scheduled.

Even the staid *New York Times* ran a breezy front page photo on Tuesday of the style makers and fashion followers that flood the city during the annual Fall Fashion Week.

But Wednesday's front page told a very different tale. And suddenly, fashion didn't really matter. With the city in a state of shock, fashion week was virtually shut down, with tentative plans to reschedule in October.

And even events closer to home were affected. The 12th Annual Birmingham Fall Spectacular, which was scheduled for Wednesday in Shain Park, was canceled.

"The tents were already up and they had to take them down," said Linda Ashley, the event's public relations coordinator. "We didn't think that people wanted to be festive. There's no heart in it here."

Karen Daskas, owner of Tender in Birmingham, said that her sister, Cheryl, had an extensive line-up for the show, but had to retrieve the clothing from the Townsend Hotel when told the event was canceled. Tender's fall focus is on tall boots, fur wraps, lots of belts, and textured and colored tights.

The Daskases said that many customers came into the store to hug and linger when they heard about the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

"I think they just wanted to be with people they know," said Karen. "The company Tender does business with in Japan offered its condolences via fax. They speak barely ten words of English, but they wrote that they hoped that people we know are safe," said Karen.

But for at least one of the Birmingham retailers that had planned to showcase a fall line, the cancellation of the Fall Spectacular was seen as a way of "giving in" to terrorists.

"This event is for a good cause. The money goes to children with cancer," said Cathy Lauri, manager of Fitigues, located on the corner of Old Woodward and Maple, referring to the Benumont Pediatric Cancer Survivors Scholarship Fund. Fitigues fall line features its trademark traditional comfortable clothing, and a new line of holiday colors is being introduced on October 10.

So far, the Birmingham Fall Spectacular hasn't been rescheduled. The Birmingham Bloomfield Chamber, which organizes the event that draws nearly a thousand guests, is expected to make a decision by Monday.

But nearly 75 participants did attend the "Best of Bridge" sportswear show at Saks Fifth Avenue in the Somerset Collection on Thursday. The showing of the Fall 2001 sportswear collection was a benefit for the Child Abuse and Neglect Council of Oakland County.

Cheryl Hall, the store's public relations/special events specialist said the events of last week, including the closing of Somerset Collection in the wake of Tuesday's tragedy, did not pose a deterrent.

"We called the charity to see what the feeling was," said Hall. And when the sentiment was "let's go forward, let's move on," Hall said her group was in it 100 percent.

The show featured works by Michael Kors, Gucci, Dana Buchman and Eileen Fisher, among others.

Karen Daskas said that she had just returned from New York earlier in the month, and was planning a buying trip there again next week. The hesitation in her voice spoke to the fact that no one knows when New York will be ready to accept visitors again.

For a week that started with images of Vuitton purses, and ended with such unimaginable destruction, perspective had certainly changed for the citizens of New York. And for the rest of the country.

What a difference a day makes.

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Threads of hope

Act of buying Old Glory brings people together



Worth the wait: Customers wait in line to purchase American flags on Thursday afternoon at American Flag and Banner in Clawson

By NICOLE STAFFORD
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Behind the Main Street storefront of American Flag and Banner, a business that has been selling and making flags in metropolitan Detroit since 1917, strangers become friends.

Clutching flagpoles and star-spangled boxes containing nylon and cotton versions of Old Glory, they patiently wait in the Clawson store's check-out line — a queue that has spilled out the front doors, circled the building and reached into the back parking lot more than once during the last two days.

As they wait in line, they cannot help but converse with one another; it has only been two days since terrorists crashed planes into the World Trade Center in New York and Pentagon in the nation's capital.

They share thoughts on the tragedy. Tell stories about today's search for an American flag.

Exchange plans for the one they are about to purchase.

One man cradles an enormous flag that was passed down to him by family. He carefully opens the ensign to show the woman standing next in line.

"It's beautiful," the woman says.

The line of waiting customers bond for the same reason: a steady flow of people continue to rush into the store. It's the same reason retailers across metropolitan Detroit are selling out of American flags as fast as they can get them in stock. Hundreds of miles away from the crash sites, local residents are grasping for a way to pitch in, show support and stand up for their country.

"You feel helpless. You want to do something positive," says Jim Stewart, a Troy resident who's carrying a 3-by-5-foot American flag and two flagpoles. "After the shock, I thought what can I do. I can't go to New York. I can't push the rubble around. This is something I can do."

Stewart says flying the flag fosters solidarity. "You want to unite the country and that starts with uniting the neighborhood."

In line, Tracey Eckenrod clutches her 16-month-old daughter Brianna, and waits to pay for a flag windsack and five small American flags to place in her front yard. Most of Eckenrod's Royal Oak neighbors have put up flags, she says. "I think it hit me yesterday, it was time to show a little pride and say we're American."

Bobbi Beckett of Bloomfield Hills carries two poles, having purchased two flags earlier in the day, one set for herself and another for a neighbor, she tells others in line. "I told my neighbor 'you need a flag' and she said thank you."

"It's the American thing to do," she adds, her eyes suddenly watering. "Now, I'll start crying. ... It's just the simplest thing we can do. They can't use our blood. This is something that we can do."

By the close of business, the shelves on the sales floor at American Flag and Banner are almost empty. "We are completely out of flags," says co-owner Bill Miles.

"But I have a truck coming out from Newark tonight. He'll be here at about five tomorrow morning."

Miles says he can't predict how long the supply will last — he's gone through two months worth of inventory in two days. He will extend hours of operation and open for business on Saturday as long as he has flags to sell.

"Never have we seen that many people standing in the showroom like that," says Miles, referring not only to the sheer number of customers he's seen but also to their behavior.

"I couldn't believe it, really. Because of the wait, friendships were being made in line," he says, a lump in his throat. "They would come up and pay and then turn to the person behind them and say 'good to meet you.' People were joining with strangers."

Where the flags are

■ **American Flag & Banner Company**, 28 South Main in Clawson, (248) 288-3010, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday; American flags available as of Friday, Sept. 14.

■ **Contemporary Awards & Trophy**, 33409 Grand River in Farmington, (248) 478-8850, 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday-Friday; expecting a delivery of American flags mid-week and customers may order or reserve by phone.

■ **The Flag Shop**, 6560 Schaefer Road in Dearborn, (313) 582-2720, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday; expects shipment of American flags on Monday and Tuesday and will place customers on waiting list by phone.

■ **Tarnow Doors**, 23701 Halsted in Farmington Hills, (248) 478-9060, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Friday; sells 20- and 25-foot telescoping flag poles with an American flag, expect delivery next week and will take orders by phone.

■ **Lazer Images Instant Signs**, 33664 Five Mile Road in Livonia, (734) 427-4141, 9 a.m.-6:30 p.m. Monday-Friday; sells banners with imprints of the American flag.

■ **American Sign Shop**, 31930 Woodward Avenue in Royal Oak, (248) 549-0095; flags available by special order only.

■ **American Sign Shop**, 29179 Northwestern Highway in Southfield, (248) 356-3320; flags available by special order only.

* Starting Monday, American Sign Shop stores in metropolitan Detroit will offer American flag bumper stickers for cash donations made to the American Red Cross.

Retail, style and special store events are listed in this calendar. Please send information to: *Malls & Mainstreets*, c/o Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009. By fax, (248) 644-1314. E-mail, nstafford@ec.homecomm.net. Deadline for publication is two weeks in advance.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

SILHOUETTE ARTIST VISITS

Silhouette artist Joyce Redman comes to Jacobson's in downtown Birmingham, through Sept. 21, 1-8 p.m. For more information, call (248) 644-6900.

BOBBI BROWN EVENT

Nordstrom, the Somerset Collection in Troy, presents the Bobbi Brown Great Faces event featuring personal appointments at the Bobbi Brown makeup counter. To schedule an appointment, call (248) 816-6100, ext. 1417.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

SHOE SAMPLE SALE

If you wear a size 6 shoe, head over to Nordstrom, the Somerset Collection in Troy, for the retailer's one-of-a-kind sample sale featuring over 800 pairs of shoes, through Sept. 23, Salon Shoes, first floor. For more information, call (248) 816-6100, ext. 1600.

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

MEN'S FOOTWEAR COLLECTIONS

Saks Fifth Avenue, the Somerset Collection in Troy, presents the fall 2001 men's shoe collections by Salvatore Ferragamo and Bruno Magli, through Sept. 22, Men's Shop, first floor. For additional information, call (248) 614-3377.

MALL CONCERT SERIES

Northland Center's series of Friday and Saturday afternoon free jazz concerts concludes with Teddy Harris the Bebop Society, noon-2 p.m. on both Sept. 21 and 22, at center's Outdoor Court. Free refreshments will be provided. For additional information, call (248) 569-6272.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

ART IN THE PARK

Downtown Birmingham's Shain Park hosts the 27th Annual Art in the Park event featuring more than 170 artists in a juried art fair, plus food, musical entertainment and children's art area, through Sept. 23. Admission to the event, which benefits the Common Ground Sanctuary, is free. Hours are 10 a.m.-6

p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday. For details, call (248) 456-8150 or visit www.CommonGroundSanctuary.org on the Internet.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

CELEBRATE EDUCATION DAY

Parisian at Laurel Park Place in Livonia raises money for community schools, while shoppers enjoy a 20 percent discount. Shoppers only need to purchase a ticket from a participating school to partake in the event, which includes refreshments, door prizes and a drawing for a \$500 shopping spree. Tickets are \$5 each. For a list of participating schools or to purchase a ticket, call (734) 953-7600.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

FASHION SHOW

Tender of Birmingham and Koochie Koo of West Bloomfield present the Generations Fashion Show II at Israel Bonds at 60, a family event with dinner (Metro Detroit's Women's Division of State of Israel Bonds 60th anniversary), 5 p.m., Congregation Shaare Zedek, 29201 Telegraph Road in Southfield. Tickets are \$10 for children and \$35 for adults. Children under age 3 are free. For information or to purchase tickets, call (248) 352-6555.