

editorial opinion

Corinne Abatt writes

Evangelist saves used clothes

If you were the youngest in your family, then you remember hand-me-downs. The days of having to wear your older sister's cut-off purple knit cap with the orange ski jacket your brother had outgrown are probably still an ugly colored memory.

In large families, the youngest never did see a new outfit until she got her first job. She went from somebody else's lavette to a used prom formal with navy a new thing in between.

Maybe it's because I was the only girl that there is no stigma to wearing someone else's clothes. Only, at this point, mine aren't hand-me-downs, but hand-me-ups.

It began this week as I started out the door with my ice skates slung over my shoulder—the shoulder well padded by a jacket one daughter had left in the back of the closet. I was wearing a striped ski sweater and double-knit jeans my son had outgrown, both found tucked in the back of the bottom drawer between the Cub Scout uniform and a 1972 Playboy magazine with the centerfold ripped out.

Scrounging for a top to wear under the sweater I found a soft shapeless cotton turtle neck in another daughter's drawer. If she knew how to dust

she probably would have used it for that, but since she doesn't, it was still there, nestled between a two pairs of size 6X shorts.

STILL, I have no right to complain because the last time she wanted to borrow a pair of socks from me, she found them beside an "I Love Ike" button and two EX10 glasses of Tyrone Power.

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"The colors are lovely. You mean you don't wear this? Why Aunt Mary gave you this in 1965 and I'll bet she paid a fortune."

"IT'S BARRY," someone remarks between bites of a peanut butter sandwich.

"IT'S NOT," whatever you call it, Grancy, someone else translates.

"The problem with you kids is you don't know how to recycle anything. You don't appreciate it."

"I recycled my gum this week," says one. "I chewed it all day Monday, stored it on the dresser overnight and chewed it all day Tuesday."

"I'm gonna recycle this peanut butter sandwich right now," says another, tossing the gooey mess to the waiting dog.

"YOU DON'T seem to understand," I say in my most dramatic tone of voice. "I am speaking of things with intrinsic value."

"The gum was valuable. It was the only piece I had."

But the point was made. I knew the next day when I found a carefully assembled pile of hand-me-ups waiting on my bed—two tie-dyed tee shirts with the sleeves cut out, one black body shirt with red sequin lips and Kiss me, Kiss me' emblazoned across the front, a pair of lime green hip huggers, a gold safari jacket with two tucket stubs from an Iron Butterfly concert in the side pocket, a purple lace midi skirt and a straw hat with Acropolis stitched across the brim.

If you spot me on the street in my latest hand-me-ups, don't be ashamed to wave.

Consider it your patriotic duty to salute a fellow recycler.

Carl Stoddard writes

Answers leave public cold

Sometimes it's easy to feel dumb. You ask a question and get an answer you don't understand. But wait a minute, maybe you didn't get the answer at all. Maybe you just got the business.

Journalists these days are becoming particularly aware that all answers are not good answers. Some don't even make sense.

In the good old days reporters knew politicians and press secretaries would answer a question in one of four ways: they'd simply answer it; they would admit they didn't know the answer; they would say "No comment"; or they would lie.

With these simple ground rules, press and politician coexisted fairly well for more than a century.

VIETNAM and a bungled break-in at the Watergate changed all that. An endless life of Pentagon spokesmen began talking about "surgical air strikes" and "protective reactions." They even went so far as to change the name of the lovely shovel every foot soldier carries.

The little shovels were called on trenching tools. Now, the Pentagon says they shall be known as personnel emplacement excavators.

RON ZEIGLER, you all remember him, went even further. Zeigler is probably more to blame than anyone for turning the art of question-answering into smoke screen over extremely muddy waters.

At first, a lot of us just thought we weren't catching on when Zeigler and

the Pentagon brass started talking. We listened, but we didn't hear.

We should have listened to Marshall McLuhan. He would have told us that if the message isn't received, the problem may, but not with the receiver but with the sender. Unfortunately, McLuhan sometimes has trouble sending out clear messages and so few of us learned the lesson.

Out of the Nixon era have come a variety of wondrous new ways to answer questions and baffle the press and public alike. Of course this has provoked the press and the public to start asking tougher questions and not accepting answers at face value.

To help you understand the new ground rules and recognize a bad answer when you hear one here are a few examples.

THE NUMBERS GAME answer: it doesn't matter what the question was. Well, based on the 1973 GNP report about 47 per cent of those in the 35th percentile were responsible for 12 per cent of the decline in the 30 and over group and if you divide that by the present 12 per cent and add a third for local differentials you will see why I say that we need an 83 per cent tax increase.

THE ZEIGLER MANEUVER Well in answer to you question let me preface it by adding that reasonable approaches were utilized at all possible levels. Now then, as you know, the first step was to determine the accepted summation of critical development which is fundamental to

the advancement of both the principle and the actual application as well as future application. This was done with presidential approval. Next question.

THE STATISTICAL STOPPER again the question is unimportant.

As was reported in the 1974 Consumer and Fiscal Report by the Department of Fields and Waterfalls, chapter 9, section 19, paragraph 273, subsection 14, the pre-tax income of the lower socio-economic group in the eastern sector of that area is roughly equivalent to that of the western sector of the country and, as you know, the persons in the latter category have a reported income, based in departmental figures for 1971 to be in excess of those reported for the previous year. Therefore, we feel confident that we have not erred in our cancellation of all future welfare programs for the City of New York.

THE MILITARY MESS At 6:53 hours we deployed tactical forces contingent with standard preemptive plus orders. A surgical airstrike was requested for an insurgent stronghold in the northern part of the country. Due to an administrative miscalculation, the course followed by our forces was other than scheduled. The force was deployed and carried out its mission as ordered, however, because of the misadventure of the area, the mission was completed on a personnel containment location which was reportedly used by non-aggressive forces for recuperative functions. (Translation—they made a mistake and bombed a friendly hospital.)

wish me well with just a touch of malice like "You're finally catching up with me" or "You're older than you look."

It was tough reading my birthday cards when I couldn't find my glasses without my glasses on. I really believe I'm too young to be this old. But nobody else does.

Having the flu on my natal day gave me pause to reflect. But first I had to get over the feeling I was being punished for lying about my age for some 25 years.

Then I had to buy the balcony about life beginning at 40, alternative to you know what.

But no matter how you slice it, we live in a youth-oriented society. When you watch TV and they compare the hands of a 30-year-old to those of a 21-year-old and you're over 29, it's a real ego-shrinker.

They tell me my gray hair is distinguished, but blondes have more fun and the beautiful people use hair color because they deserve it best.

THE WOMEN on TV who take Serutan every morning because it makes their husbands love them more don't look a day over 25. And they didn't get that way from gulping Serutan.

The worst thing that can happen on your birthday, besides having the flu, is watching TV commercials. I decided the next worst thing is looking in the mirror and deciding what part of your face to have lifted first.

Now that I am back on my feet, I figure birthdays aren't really so bad. It only hurts for a really so.

Having the flu isn't the worst thing either. Coughing is the most exercise I've had in years. And besides I never let anyone see my cry.

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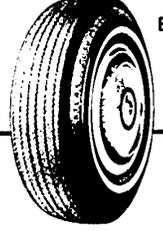



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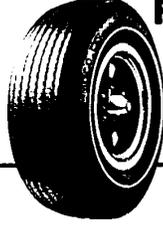


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Jackie Klein writes

I'm too young to be this old

My husband gave me a groovy birth day present last week—his flu.

We drank a toast to my happy day with hot tea, a cold pill and a slice of lemon for a festive touch. Between chasers and aspirins we enighed "Happy Birthday to Me" in unison.

It wouldn't have been so bad if I could have stuck a status label on my illness like Port Chalmers, Asian or Acropolis flu. But what ever I had, it was third class.

I had planned on locking myself up in my room and crying a lot on my birthday. I didn't expect a surprise party, but sneezing wasn't exactly what I had in mind either.

There were a few brighter moments. My grandson the genius called and sang "Happy birthday, gamma Jackie, you got cake."

AND MY OLDER friends called to

wish me well with just a touch of malice like "You're finally catching up with me" or "You're older than you look."

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