

Believe it or not, the school year begins later this month. Next week's Post will include a back to school primer for high school students.

Return of Retro



Retro is hot for back to school this year. Above, local students model fall plaids, neons and florals.

PHOTO/ISSUE ANN JOHNSON

Plush makes comeback

By Jeri Young
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Everything old is new again for back to school.

Pardon the cliché, but it's true. What we wore back to school in '77 — hip huggers, bell bottoms, odd mixes of corduroy and satin and of course, faded denim — has made a huge comeback.

Along with them has come the return of — sad but true — plush. Yes it's back in all its soft slightly furry glory. Thick spongy corduroys, lush spongy velvet and — the granddaddy of all '70s fashion, the venerable spongy velour — are all back, at least for one glorious, slightly too warm season.

"Plush comfortable and cozy fabrics in rich autumn colors are key must-have looks for back to school this year," said Fran Yoshioka, director of fashion and design for Sears, Roebuck and Co. "Subtle '70s influences blend with plush, nylon, synthetic and denim fabrics to create a variety of new styles and fashion options."

So what does it mean for parents? According to Yoshioka, it's time to drag out all the stuff from the Age of Aquarius.

Peace signs, flowers and smiley face appliques will be plastered over denims, and pretty much everything else from shoes to back packs. When teamed with novelty sweaters and cardigans, you've got a perfect, if a little loud, fashion statement.

Skirts and dresses for girls are a tad shorter this season, reminiscent of the minis of days long gone. Add to that the return of the baby doll dresses and jumpers, in — you guessed it — plush and knits.

Also back for a fun run are plaids in rich dark autumn colors and classic reds and greens. Boys will sport them in shirts, girls in skorts, shorts and minis.

But of course, the piece of resistance will be pants, especially jeans.

"Denim has become a wardrobe staple for almost every age group," said T.J. Maxx fashion spokesperson Laura Cervone. "According to current industry statistics, the average teen wears denim 4 1/2 days a week; younger children also appear to be following in these footsteps. Denim is predicted to be hot this year, and so comfortable, that youths of all ages will want all the latest styles."

Returning for both boys and girls are boot-cut jeans, flared legs, overalls in denim and corduroy and the classic khaki. Boys will sport them with a plethora of button-down, striped knit shirts and sundry team wear, from baseball tees to jerseys. As long as it's got a team name it's popular.

For girls, leggings and stirrups will be teamed with sweaters or turtle necks, says Connie Knight of Osh Kosh B' Gosh.

"People are buying a lot of fuschia and dark colors for fall," she said. "They're buying a lots of knits — long sleeve tops in red and solids."

Knight, an assistant manager for the Osh Kosh B'Gosh outlet store at Gaffney, S.C.'s Carolina Factory Shops, says other hot sellers are neons in lime or orange and jeans in midnight blue and dark and light green.

Popular shoes for girls include the ever present Mary Jane updated with thick, clunky heels. Also hot are '80s favorites jellies and clogs. For boys, athletic shoes rule along with hiking boots and suede oxfords.

So dig out the old yearbooks, wade through your attics and curl up on the couch with reruns of the "Brady Bunch" and "Good Times." The '70s are here to stay.

At least for a second season.



Above, plush velour dress in pea green, yellow and blue.

PHOTO/TARGET STORES



Footwear retro looks: New twists on classic styles are the hallmark for the season. Below, boys looks include athletic shoes and hiking boots.

PHOTO/SEARS, ROEBUCK & CO.



Spirit of MMM revived

The local organizing committee of the Million Man March of Charlotte will host a Revival of the Spirit of the Million Man March/World Day of Atonement, Monday at 7 p.m., Muhammad Mosque No. 36, 3300 Tuckaseegee Road. The keynote speaker will be Minister Benjamin Muhammad, assistant to Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

For more information, call 394-4123.

No longer a gay disease

Free confidential AIDS testing is available each Saturday at Community Health Services, 1401 East 7th Street, 10 a.m. — 2 p.m.

African Americans account for the highest amount of reported AIDS cases documented since 1990. In a four-year period, the AIDS incidence rate grew 68 percent among African Americans and only 14 percent among whites. AIDS is leading cause of death for African American men, age 25-44-year-old. An estimated 1 in 3 deaths of men between 25-44 is due to an HIV-related illness. The incidence of AIDS is also rising among women, particularly African American women. The infection rate for African American women doubled since 1990, rising from 25 percent to 50 percent. Appointments are required. For more information, call 375-0172 during normal business hours.

Sponsored by Community Health Services, Carolinas Healthcare Systems and Metrolina AIDS Project.

Thursday

- "Star Bright Story Night," 7 p.m. Story hour for children. Beatties Ford Road Branch Library, 2412 Beatties Ford Road.

- Introduction to Microsoft Word, 6:30 p.m. West Boulevard Branch Library, 2157 West Blvd.

Saturday

- Juba Saturday, 11 a.m. Activities for children. Beatties Ford Road Branch Library, 2412 Beatties Ford Road.

- Charlotte Hornets Honeybees tryouts, 8:30 a.m., Hornets Training Center, 1-77, Exit 88 in Fort Mill, S.C. For more information, call 357-0252, extension 4860.

Sunday

- Film, "War of the Worlds," 3 p.m. Main Library, 310 N. Tryon St.

- International House dinner, 7 p.m. Lang Van. Meet at International House, 322 Hawthorne Lane at 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday

- Seminar for small business, 6:15-8:45 p.m., Main Library, 310 N. Tryon. Speaker: Alan Elam, Retirement Planning Consultants

- Matching Grants Workshop for neighborhood development grant seekers, 6-8 p.m. Adams Service Center, 4150 Wilkinson Blvd. First of three workshops for neighborhood based organizations that will improve local neighborhoods. To qualify for

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PHOTO/SEARS, ROEBUCK AND CO.

Uniforms have made a splash in schools across the nation. Thirteen local schools will have uniforms this year.

Navy, white craze hits

By Jeri Young
THE CHARLOTTE POST

For some parents and children, back to school fashion is as simple as one, two, three.

Actually, as simple as one and two. Or navy and white.

As a way of improving behavior and decreasing the emphasis that many children place on fashion, public schools have taken a page from parochial schools and adopted uniforms. The new wave has even reached Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools, where 13 of 118 public schools in the county have adopted uniforms.

The outfits, navy bottoms paired with white tops, have proved a rousing success among teachers and administrators. Uniforms, which on average cost less than \$20 per child, have been praised by parents.

"I really like the idea," says Vicki McLain. "The focus is not on who's wearing what. It takes the attention off clothes in a lot of ways."

McLain says her son Victor, a rising second-grader at Hidden Valley Elementary, doesn't mind his uniform. He even wears it during the summer.

"My daughter, who's four, likes them, too," McLain says with a laugh. "I had to buy her one, too. The uniform has really gotten her interested in school. I just thought it was cute."

McLain says she only has one suggestion.

"I wish there could be one day a week when the kids could wear something a little different," she says. "Or maybe the schools could adopt more than one color for shirts to add a little color and break it up. I think the kids would like that."

Her nephew, Christopher McMillon, a third-grader at Hidden Valley agrees. He doesn't like his outfit as much.

"We have to wear it everyday," he says. "My mommy doesn't like for me to wear the same clothes all the time."

Hidden Valley principal Al Winston says it may be a while before the benefits of uniforms can be measured, but the program is off to a good start.

"The first reason we went to uniforms was for instructional focus," he said. "Now it has become part of the school's identity."

According to Winston, about 90 percent of the school's students wore outfits daily.

"We even incorporated it into our motto," Winston said. "Think smart, work hard and look good. We would compliment the kids on how good they looked. They really did look good. It helps kids with their self-esteem."

Researchers agree.

A study completed last year

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