

Shopaholics' passion is in fashion

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Steve Madden, a store dedicated to edgy stilettos and boots averaging in the \$90 bucks range.

"A misconception is shopping is all about wasting money but the best shoppers know the deals," she said. "Today Steve Madden had a whole table of shoes that were half off. These sandals were originally \$79.95, the final price was \$39.95! I come here to shop for shoes to stand out from girls at school. There are very few girls that will even pay \$30 for heels at Waddell, most of them go to Concord Mills or Eastland and pay \$20, if not \$16.99."

The unique factor was the same way a few other girls felt who were actually past friends from middle school.

"I know a lot of girls from South Meck follow what they see in school, they just switch up the look and make it their own. I like the seventies look that is going around like the colorful jackets and the wedged heels. I think the vintage look is so creative so that's what I stick to," Amanda Grant said.

Her friend Christian Barrett offers her expertise also. "You notice it's only us four girls, that's because we know it's less stressful to shop with females, than

males. My dad can be in and out of a mall in 15 minutes. What men fail to realize is the longer they stay inside the more deals they find. Like Dillard's can have golf tees for one price but Sears can have one better. Boys are in too much of a rush and they ultimately end up making the wrong decisions."

Lindsey Pearl, 17 a senior at South Mecklenburg, says stores focus on teenagers because they are the ones who are more vulnerable to spend unnecessary cash. "I think it's smart for stores to have items for teens because once we get our paychecks we are so eager to spend it on something that will compliment us. I'm more likely to spend money at the mall because it's nothing like getting something that you know looks good on you. I can have a terrible hair day or no make-up, but the perfect outfit will make my whole look."

Melanie Crawford, the youngest of the group says shopping in some ways is a form of survival. "In school it's such a big deal about what you're wearing. You are only as good as the clothes you wear, so that's why shopping is so important. If I were to all of a sudden slow down on my purchasing, girls at school will think, man what-

ever happened to that girl Melanie? We've got a reputation to protect and being the trendiest comes with its benefits. It's only right we stay up to par."

"Guys don't have to worry about that, that's less pressure on them because they can care less about the outfit another guy is wearing or how much it costs but girls are the ones to judge you based on your appearance. I admit I do too, but it makes me look forward to school everyday, it's like a fashion show, it's so funny now that I look back on last year," Grant exclaims.

Urban Outfitters focuses on vintage clothing for the younger generation with fluffy skirts and Wonder Woman shirts, the average shopper here will undoubtedly look retro.

Caitlan, 20, who didn't want to use her last name, is here to benefit from the tax-free weekend. "Guys just don't know how much they are missing out. I guess they don't like the crowds and how fast the pace is in malls, everyone's looking for a good bargain. I love that about malls. I'm a people person, if a store looks deserted, I wouldn't want to go inside. Shopping does for girls what football does for guys, it

makes you forget about your problems because you're doing something you enjoy. Ofcourse you're spending money but you gotta know how to spend it, that's the art of shopping."

Tricia Beckham, a rising freshman at N.C. State University, is here to spend the money her parents gave her for getting scholarships and grants. "I think girls tend to love shopping so much because it goes back to childhood when on Easter girls have on these laced dresses that twirl when they spin. When you're a little girl, at times like that you feel pretty. That's why shopping is so important for girls because it makes them feel pretty, knowing they're getting a brand new wardrobe, it's like dress up. Boys never dress up so they perhaps, will never understand."

Remembering John H. Johnson

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Division, which publishes books by black authors.

Johnson also donated millions to historically black colleges and the civil rights movement, and he took pride in mentoring young people.

"John had a dream of black people who were successful and smart and beautiful and heroic," said Clinton, who awarded the fellow Arkansas native the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1996.

The funeral had lighter moments as well—such as when a friend of the family reminisced about Johnson's love of bubble gum ice cream, and broadcaster Tom Joyner's frustration at never being able to catch his former boss out of a suit and tie—even on weekends.

When Johnson's casket—covered in red roses—was taken out of the church, the orchestra played the jazz classic "Take the 'A' Train."

Johnson is survived by his wife, Eunice, a daughter, Linda Johnson Rice, president of Johnson Publishing Company Inc., and a granddaughter, Alexa Rice.

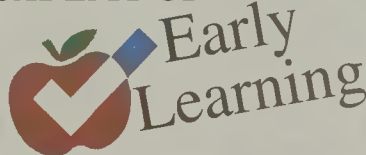
"John, your legacy will never die," Clinton said. "It lives on because you became great by showing the greatness and the goodness in others."

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