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LIFE

Project for girls' prom attire

SPECIAL TO THE POST

New or slightly used formal dresses, accessories and shoes are just some of the items Girl Talk Foundation, Inc. will collect during JD's Fourth Annual Prom Project April 7, 8am-6pm at ImaginOn: The Joe & Joan Martin Center, 300 E. Seventh Street, Charlotte.

Janine Davis, a radio personality with WPEG and executive director of Girl Talk Foundation, Inc. will host a 10-hour live remote from the dress drop-off location. All of the dresses collected will be donated to young girls in need.

"Every girl dreams of being a princess at least one night in her life," says Davis. "I want to help make that dream come true. Not everyone is in a position to buy a dress. What better way to help out than to donate dresses to those young ladies who need them?"

Girls will get to choose their gowns at a make-shift boutique on Saturday, April 8th, 10am-1pm at ImaginOn.

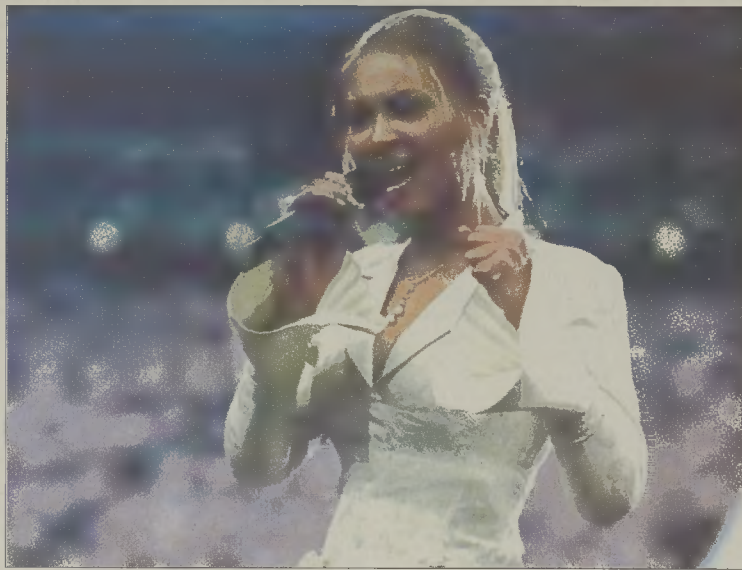
As a pre-requisite to shopping, young ladies will also complete an etiquette class sponsored by Dr. Miracle's Hair Care System featuring national hair stylist Donna Langley and hair educator Kathleen Johnson. The class is designed to provide girls with the skills needed to pull off a totally classy evening.

Over the past four years, Girl Talk Foundation, Inc. has collected over 1500 gowns for young ladies in need. Most recipients of the dresses are young ladies from the Girl Talk mentoring program and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System.

Girls interested in receiving a gown, must register at www.girltalkfoundation.org or call the Girl Talk office at 704-335-5885. Girls can also register at ImaginOn by calling 704-973-2728.



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FILE PHOTO/WADE NASH

Singer/actress Beyonce Knowles, is no stranger to hooking up white in her fashion statement.

White's all right

Designers rediscover its versatility for spring, summer

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK—After years of throwing at shoppers every bright color they could concoct—often punctuated by metallics and beads—fashion designers are declaring spring a more peaceful and tranquil season.

Many of the button-down shirts, crocheted sweaters, eyelid dresses and high-waisted pants in stores this season are offered in Grand

Cayman sand, cappuccino foam or moonlight—all fancy names for white.

Offering white for spring and summer is, of course, nothing new. But it is both fresh and refreshing.

"I think the interesting thing is we've had quite a few years of bling, bling, bling, bling, bling. To me, it's like putting Splenda in the ice tea. It's sweet but not too sugary," says designer Michael

Kors.

The emphasis of the clothes shifts from an attention-grabbing hue to the cut, subtle details and luxuriousness of fabrics, he says. That's not to say it's a boring fashion season, he adds, but there's a restraint that was minimal. "It's romantic minimalism, which, yes, is an oxymoron... It's like putting Splenda in the ice tea. It's sweet but not too sugary."

Wearing white, espe-

cially in a city, always makes people look as if they're above the fray, Kors says. "In Paris, you'll see a woman on the crummiest, rainy day in a white coat. It immediately gives her a movie star spin."

Kors' spring collection features layers of white in soft silhouettes, accented mostly by simple beiges and blacks. But while it's hard to mix blacks with different

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Which white? There are myriad choices

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Milk white is pretty much the standard white, says Leatrice Eiseman, author of "More Alive With Color," but there are dozens of other shades. Milk white likely stands out because it's a bright white.

"The purer the color, the more the human eye sees it like a brilliant color. The attention-getting value of a very bright white is enormous," she says.

But pure, bright white isn't always the best choice.

For example, says Eiseman, people think they want a pure white for their kitchen, but the light reflection is tremendous and the room can end up appearing cold and sterile.

In fashion, bright white usually looks best on very fair skin or very dark skin, she says. "On dark skin, it's a great contrast, and on very fair skin, off-white will look strange. But you have to think of the texture of the fabric. With sheer white or semi-sheer, the color of the skin becomes the undertone of the white."

Also be careful where you wear the white. It can be "enlarging"—which might be why it's so popular in home decorating but it's an optical illusion you need to be prepared for if you're wearing head-to-toe white.

Off-whites, however, work more like a neutral color.

"If you want to use white because it 'goes with everything,' you might want an off-white," says Eiseman.

"You're likely to be more comfortable—and it's more versatile."

Since pure whites have blue undertones, they don't necessarily work with warmer colors, such as peach, yellow or gold. A creamy white tends to have a yellowish undertone, and an off-white—yes, there is a difference—can have a pink or peachy tone, or even have a slight green or lavender cast, according to Eiseman.

Bright white looks best playing off black or navy because it adds crispness, she adds, and bright white also can pop against brown, tan and blueish gray.

White is enjoying a burst of popularity, confirms Eiseman, also the

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Professor brings hip hop to campus

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GREENSBORO—As the students took their seats in a UNCg classroom last week, their professor turned on the overhead projection system.

The MTV2 logo appeared on screen over a number of scantily clad female dancers. It was the video for "Run It!"—a hit song by 16-year-old singer/rapper Chris Brown in which he promises to "show you things that's gonna have you sayin' I can't be 16."

It's a hit song, but the groans from the class were audible. The students in "Hip-Hop Culture, Economics and Politics" take hip-hop seriously, and this song was lightweight.

"This video disturbs me greatly," said Tracey Salisbury, the lecturer who created the class in UNCg's African American Studies program. "The video re-

enacts a high school dance in which the kids go to the locker room and simulate sex... what's the message?"

Salisbury's lecture style is free-form and aggressively Socratic. She stalks the floor in front of the class, posing the hard questions about the culture of hip-hop—an art form that was born on the streets of New York City, was dismissed as a fad and went on to conquer the music charts and invade pop culture.

Salisbury loves hip-hop. She talks about old-school artists such as Run DMC and Whodini with the deep, abiding love an English professor has for the classics, but she also studies today's MTV with the careful eye of a sociologist. Her verdict on modern, mainstream hip-hop?

"It's killing us," she told her class. "You've got images and body shapes

that are not us. You've got women being exploited, materialism and the glorification of the ghetto and poverty that is absolutely ridiculous. And we go along with it when they tell us that's hip-hop."

The course is in its third semester and, after a few all-black classes, there are finally some white faces in the crowd. The course dissects the bruises on the hip-hop apple: sexism, homophobia, violence and materialism. But not even the most hard-core fans in the class dismiss Salisbury as a detached and overly critical academic. She has street cred.

Salisbury grew up in Los Angeles, the daughter of schoolteachers. Her early life was a strange tension between her home in middle-class Baldwin Hills and afternoons with her grandmother in South Central.

"We got to know the Crips and the Bloods in that neighborhood, and there was a definite gang and drug dealer presence," Salisbury said. "But I sort of got a free pass because I could play basketball and my grandmother was the neighborhood baby sitter."

Salisbury's West Coast hip-hop roots are apparent. Outside class she dresses in sports jerseys and sneakers, a silver tag on a long chain hanging around her neck. Though she's soon to be 40, her students often think she's in her late twenties. Salisbury said that suits her fine—she's used to living between worlds.

Salisbury was one of the students who benefited from the California busing program. She avoided her neighborhood middle school and later got into a special program at Beverly Hills High School.



How to treat risk for esophageal cancer

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Chronic heartburn appears to be fueling the a fast-growing cancer, esophageal cancer.

Millions are thought to have a type of esophagus damage from severe acid reflux that puts them at increased risk for the deadly cancer—and new research is exploring whether it's possible to zap away that damage and block the cancer from ever forming.

"The million-dollar question is can we prevent cancer," says Dr. VK. Sharma of the Mayo Clinic, who is leading one of the newest studies, using radiofrequency energy to burn away the damage. "That has not been answered."

But it's a question taking on new urgency as doctors chart a six-fold increase in the last two decades in the main type of esophageal cancer.

Most cases won't be diagnosed until patients feel such symptoms as trouble swallowing and loss of appetite. The prognosis is grim: Just 16 percent of esophageal cancer patients survive five years, and 13,770 are predicted to die this year.

Most have esophageal adenocarcinoma, the type linked to severe chronic heartburn.

With this gastroesophageal reflux disease, or GERD, a loose valve allows stomach acid to regurgitate back up into the delicate esophagus. In a fraction of heartburn sufferers, most over age 50, severe GERD over many years actually changes the lining of the esophagus. When the stomach acid kills cells in that lining, the esophagus eventually starts healing itself with more acid-resistant cells—which happen to be cancer-prone.

It's a condition called Barrett's esophagus, and Barrett's sufferers are thought to be at least 30 times more likely than the average person to get esophageal cancer.

Here's the rub: Esophageal cancer is slow-growing and doesn't appear overnight. Just one in 200 Barrett's patients develops cancer every year, cautions Dr. Stuart Spechler, a gastroenterologist at the Dallas Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Those who go on to develop precancerous spots called "high-grade dysplasia" are at greater risk—one in five will get full-blown cancer in the next five years.

Current guidelines call for doctors to watch for these step-by-step changes by giving Barrett's patients regular down-the-throat exams, so they can operate at the first sign of cancer when survival is around 80 percent, he says.

The debate is whether to just monitor—or to try to get rid of Barrett's tissue.

Last year, the Food and Drug Administration approved a device that snakes a balloon inside the esophagus and beams RF energy through it to burn away the Barrett's tissue. Maker Barx Medical Inc. this month began funding a study of 120 patients at Mayo and 15 other medical centers to see how well RF ablation treats Barrett's patients with precancerous dysplasia.

Other options: Freezing away Barrett's tissue; photodynamic therapy, where a combination of a light-sensitizing drug and a laser burn it away; or endoscopy.

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