

Watch not just time-teller

By **ELENI CHAMIS**
Staff Writer

What's your style? Creative and off-beat, with splashes of color; or calmer, with more conservative shapes and a little less fancy? It's a fashion statement you wear on your wrist. Yes, a watch. No way, you say. C'mon, a watch?

Watch companies are spending millions of dollars in advertising to put across their own distinctive design and motto — and it seems to be paying off.

Michael Perrie, manager of Wentworth and Sloan Jewelers on Franklin Street, said people today are looking for something with more personality.

"There's a lot more individualization," Perrie said. "Even businessmen are aware of it. They're dressing to address a more conservative style."

Tricia Isley, an employee of T.L. Kemp Jewelry on Franklin Street said, "People are more fashion-conscious now. Watches are becoming more fashionable. A watch is more than just a way to tell time. It's more a piece of jewelry."

Swatch, last year's rage, is not as popular as in the past, according to Karen Pinckney, an office assistant for Reed's Jewelers at University Mall. Pinckney said when other businesses realized what a gold mine Swatch had, "they jumped into the watch industry. Now, everybody has a plastic watch — Lorus, Guess?, Coca-Cola. They flooded the market, so that one company doesn't monopolize."

"I think one reason Swatch is having trouble now is because when those plastic bands break, they're very hard to replace," Pinckney added.

"However, we are selling a lot of the typical watch," she said. "The ones that have the leather band and a square or round face or the ones with the metal band are still selling well."

Kim Oliver, assistant manager of Ivey's at University Mall, disagrees. "People are wearing Swatches now more than ever before," she said. "Other makers are now following along and doing their watches in the same patterns as the Swatches. The

trendy faces and colors are still very popular. Our stock gets demolished every time they come in. I don't see a replacement in the near future."

New styles are coming in for the fall. One is called the Bulova Pulsar, and it's one of the finer watches, especially in design. "It's a name brand and people really go for it," Pinckney said.

Perrie said, "People are going for the less expensive, quartz watches. Ones with lots of color and flash are popular and will continue to be so."

"We have a new designer quality watch in called the Jazz," Pinckney said. "It's getting to be quite popular. It's been in magazines like Vogue, and that attracts the college students. It's off the traditional line. The shapes of the faces are unique and the bands are leather. They run from \$125 to \$200."

Oliver said, "We have a new style coming in on our fall line called the code of arms. It has a big following in a royal way. It really reminds you of medieval Europe, because there's lots of shields on the faces and stuff like that."

"Also, the plain, completely black watches are still popular," Oliver added. "It's one of last year's styles, but it's still big."

According to The New York Times, some other newcomers include the Monopoly watch (\$30), whose face resembles the board game; Goggetime (\$25), which is in the shape of a swimming goggle;

DigiTRIL (\$25), which comes with a bright plastic band and a three-inch digital clock; and the Avion watch (\$22) with a bubble dome, a map of the world face and an airplane as one of the hands.

Everyone's old friend, Mickey Mouse is still going strong. "They're really back bigtime," Perrie said.

Pinckney added, "I think people are going to stay with the more practical. I don't see anything too outrageous for the future. People only own two or three watches at the most. They have one for casual and one for dressy occasions. I think people buy a watch for as long as it's going to last. They're not going to buy a flashy watch and have one thing to wear with it when they can have a typical watch to wear with their whole wardrobe."

No matter what style of watch you choose, you can be sure it's a definite personal statement. "The watch is becoming an accent," Perrie said.



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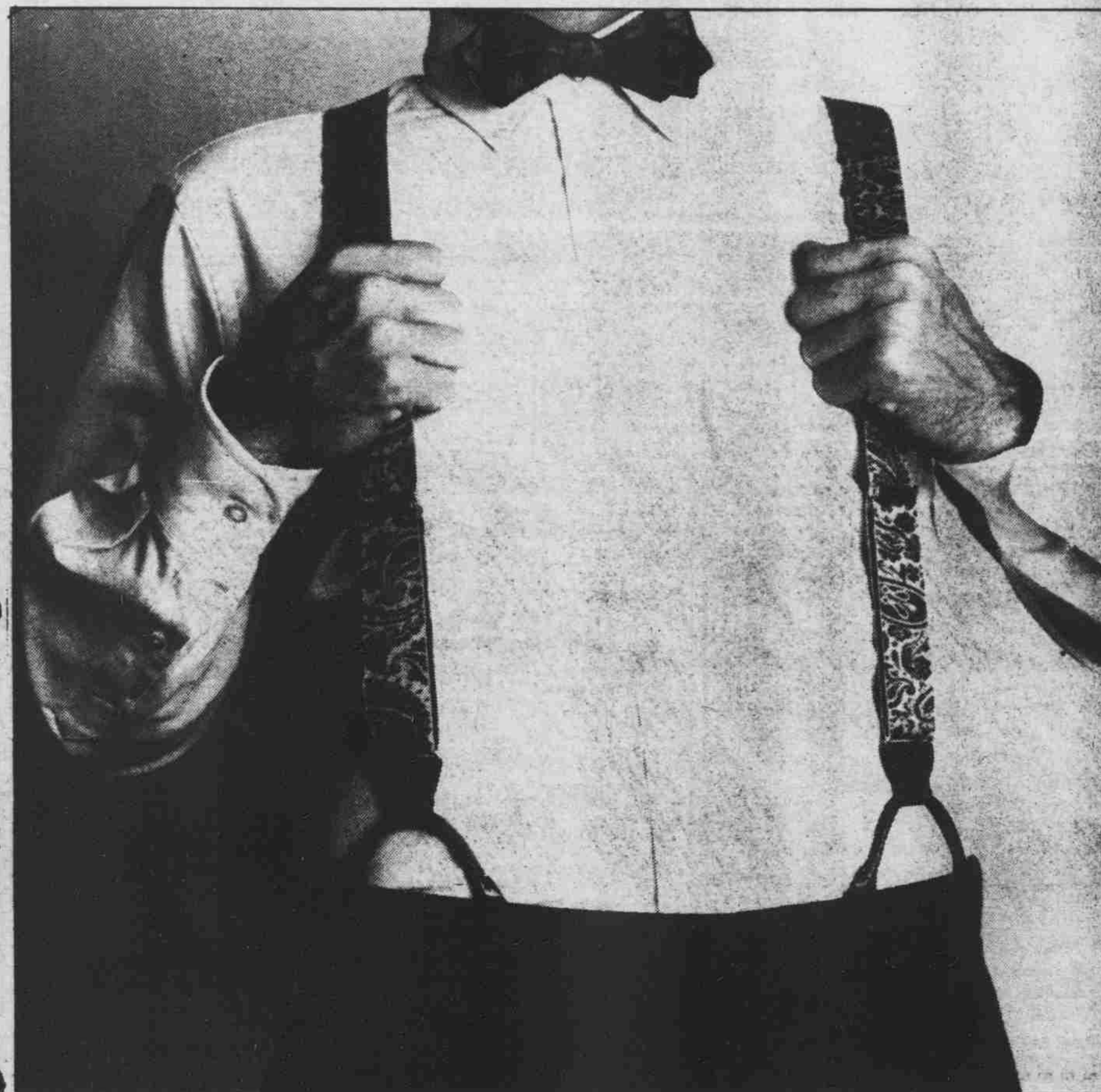
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