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'Going to buy a paper doll that I can call my own'

Fashion is a funny thing in these United States. A lot of the cool things we wear now were cool way back when — dark green plastic shades, jeans, knee-length shorts, deodorant. And some of the things that were cool way back when are out now, but may be in next week. The trick seems to be anticipating which style will come back in when.

dolls seemed to like that get-up, so I let him wear it for a few days. Pretty soon, all the guys wanted a pair. It was crazy, man; a fashion phenomenon!

Darned if I couldn't get the rags off those rascals when the week ended; they liked them! Anyone who had both shoulders covered was a paper pariah. I tried the look, a few of my city friends copied me, their friends in Hollywood copied them, "Flashdance" came out and the fad was on.

I bought some boxer shorts and put my gym shorts on over them. It was pretty uncomfortable; the underwear kinds slick up my loins. It looked pretty stupid too, but I put up with it — my dolls are usually right. Sure enough, by May the trend caught on and Greek men started donning the new style — a dynamic tantamount to social acceptance of a new fad, at least in the UNL fashion community.

Sometimes my dolls are wrong. They really liked big black buckled Puritan shoes I bought them, and made me buy some knee-high stockings, knickers, ruffy shirts, lamb chop sideburns and flowing cloaks to go with them.

Chris Burbach

It was with that purpose in mind that I bought a paper doll set and subscribed to the "Fasten-On Outfit of the Month Club." Each month I get a different get-up to put on my collection of guys and dolls. In additions, I cruise garage sales and thrift shops for out-of-date garb. When I come on combinations which look promising, I take my paper outfits to high fashion stores, maternity shops or the Goodwill tailor and buy the clothes.

Another time I hit was with the "Flashdance" look. My dolls got in a little scrap (okay, an all-out brawl) over who would have to try on the plaid polyester kilt I brought home, and they ripped up the clothes they were wearing.

They begged and begged for petticoats and bonnets. I bought all that stuff, they wore it, and they quit laughing, worked much harder, called each other thee and thou and stayed in their own beds.

Well, anyone who has ever owned paper dolls knows discipline is everything. You just can't let the imps think they can get away with making trouble. Anyway, for their punishment I made the scoundrels wear their torn clothes for a whole week.

When President Reagan was elected, I thought the times were right for the Puritan look. It was tough to find the clothes, the shoes especially, but I succeeded in procuring an outfit just in time for my sister's wedding. I knew I was in trouble when they mistook me for the minister, the janitor and the chimney sweep. But the wedding was fun compared to the reception. No one, not even my sister, would dance with me.

Sometimes I hit. Last spring, one of my male dolls was wearing boxer shorts underneath his gym shorts, just for fun. But the female

Two dolls got thrown in the fireplace for that one. In the fashion world, justice is fast and retribution swift. It's hard, but it's necessary.

I've got to go now — my phone's ringing and it could be Ken and Barbie calling in the gang's reaction to the Cool Crusade. Armored Pajamas I designed for them. Remember: The best way to beat inflation and stay in style is to buy things a long time ago.

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