

'Gatsby look' influencing fashions

By Pat Schnitzer

Women will look and feel like women this spring in clothes that convey softness and femininity.

According to Lincoln clothing buyers, femininity will be a dominant theme in both dress and casual clothes.

The nostalgic trend, influenced by the "Great Gatsby look," will create a soft, flowing look in high fashion apparel.

Supple, silky fabrics, such as chiffon, Quiana nylon, silk and jersey, are most common in these knee-skimming dresses.

Drop shoulders, wrapped bodices and gathered skirts achieve the flowing look. Buyers also said shirtwaist and belted dresses should be popular this summer.

And the wrap style won't be limited to dresses, one buyer said. It should be popular in blouses, skirts and coats.

Delicate, airy colors, such as mint green, apricot, silver blue, peach and coral, make these dresses a cool summer choice.

And the neutrals—beige, white and cream—also will be strong spring and summer hues.

Buyers agreed that the party pajama, with wide pants, will

be a favorite for evening wear. The pajama should be of the same silky fabric as daytime dresses.

And an alternative to the party pajama is the ever popular long dress, this year with a matching shawl.

One buyer said these spring clothes are seasonless.

"Pants will always be a way of life but dresses are selling because women like to feel feminine," she said.

Buyers agreed that dress length will fluctuate around the knee. Although below the knee length often is pictured in magazines, buyers were skeptical that this length would be popular with everyone. The length is appropriate for the tall girl but not the short one, they said.

And for more casual wear, sheer voile blouses over halter tops will be a favorite with pants.

Buyers said two new toppings for pants this spring are the camisole and the "big" top. Both loose fitting, the "big top" resembles the old tent dress and skims the hips. The camisole usually is made of sweater knits or cotton.

Buyers said sweater tops with one shoulder strap, halter tops, low necked T-shirts and simple short sleeve blouses still will be popular this year.

Although pant toppings have changed little, pants will be

somewhat different this year, buyers said.

Pants, and especially jeans, will be lower and more tapered this spring. But they added that customers can find pants in any length or width, cuffed or uncuffed.

Despite the rumored shortage, denim will hold a high place on the fashion agenda. Faded and regular denim with rhinestones, studs and embroidery will be found in pants, skirts, jackets and pea suits.

Accessories are all-important this spring. Matching bracelets and earrings are popular in seashells or in natural tones of wood, cork, twine and straw. And for the more sophisticated dresses, wear smaller bracelets and necklaces of gold and silver.

Shoes will be lower and slimmer for dresses this spring. Heels are lower and thinner with tapering toes for the softer clothes.

But for casual dresses platform shoes, although a bit lower, are still popular. One buyer said shoes are an accessory now, rather than being in the spotlight.

The sportswear shoe probably will be a refined tennis shoe on a rope or marshmallow wedge sole.

In men's spring fashions, buyers agreed the western look and the "sport suit" will be two popular styles.

The western influence has inspired yokes, front pockets and pearl button snaps in shirts. These shirts might have contrasting cuffs, collars or yokes and be studded or embroidered. And gingham check is a good fabric for the cowboy shirt.

However, the jacket is casual and can be worn with a sport suit or turtleneck sweater. This suit usually comes in two basic styles, with the short jean jacket or the longer, square bottomed jacket.

Popular fabrics for the suit are denim, double knit, corduroy and polyester cotton blends.

Jeans may be more costly or harder to find, but buyers will offer a variety of styles. Back yokes, rag stitched seams and buckled backs should be popular.

Buyers said new pants most often are uncuffed and straighter, but cuffs and flares are also available. New spring pant colors are light blue, yellow and green.

The "Gatsby look" has not yet become a strong style for men, buyers said. The vested suit is the Gatsby style selling most now.



Costs reflect 'changing times'

By Scott Svoboda

"The times they are a changing," Bob Dillon sings, and the same thing can be said about the fashion merchandising industry, especially where prices are concerned.

That's the general belief of store managers and merchandisers in Lincoln.

Gone are the days of \$5 jeans and much of what a college student on a limited budget might have been in the market for. Where did those days go?

Down the road of increased labor costs and raw material shortages, according to most retailers interviewed.

One Lincoln merchandiser for men's clothing said clothing costs can be compared only when components and workmanship are the same.

Some manufactures, he said, are coming up with ingenious

substitute materials that look and feel similar to the higher priced materials and craftsmanship consumers are used to.

Like most merchandisers interviewed, he assumes that clothing costs will rise about 15% to 20% by next fall.

"As a consumer seeing the clothes in the racks, you may not discern the price increases, because the manufacturers substitute fibers and/or eliminate some extras," he said.

Another merchandising manager agreed, adding that there seems to be cycle to price increases.

Returning from a recent trip to New York City where he talked to clothing industry representatives, he said the shortages of raw materials are altering buying patterns.

"Anytime there's a shortage of something, you have a price increase," he said.

So far, the major concern has been a shortage of synthetic fibers which are derived from petroleum.

He said he predicts a 5% to 10% increase.

Although all these men predicted price increases, they said it's hard to establish just what articles of clothing will go up and by what percentage.

Prices for clothes with cotton and wool will increase, they said. Last year's cotton crop partially was ruined by floods in the South. Japan bought a rather large portion of the gray wool in world markets, according to a fabric store manager.

He noted a rising export demand for American produced fabrics in the world market.

That means more fabrics will be produced and sold to foreign countries, regardless of price increases, he said.

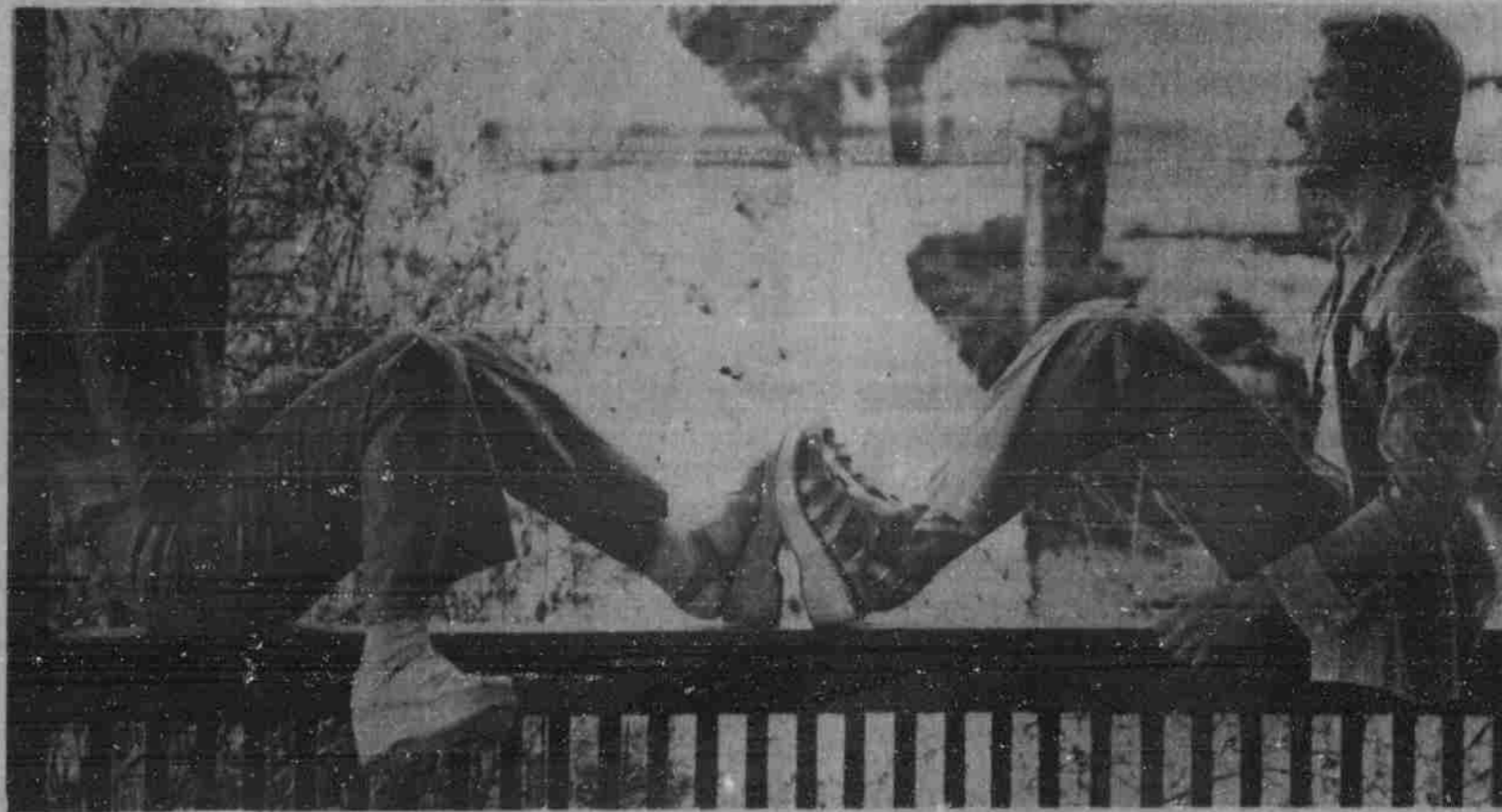
Do any of these businesses fear a slow down effect in consumer purchases because of price increases?

One clothing store employee said the price increase won't affect business.

Another merchandiser agreed, but added, "I'm not a pessimist, I feel if there is interesting merchandise to buy, people will buy it in spite of the fact that it is higher than they paid for last time."

Another merchandising manager said, The "fashion business will be strong next year because people want something that's fashionable."

The manager of a boutique for women said that increased shoplifting will increase prices also, but she doesn't foresee any slowdown for business.



Clothes and accessories by Hitchin' Post, Wooden Nickel, Hovland-Swanson. Photos by Gail Folda.

