



A brief discussion of unmentionables

By Eddie Glenn, Press Staff Writer
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It used to be referred to as "[unmentionables](#)," and as that title implies, it was rarely talked about.

But today, [underwear](#) is not only an acceptable topic of conversation, it has managed to become such an important aspect of American society that it has - not unlike independence, presidents and the flag - been given its very own day.

Today is [National Underwear Day](#), and in New York City, models will be running around town in their [underwear](#), attempting to bring (and probably succeeding in bringing) attention to our most hidden garments.

According to [freshpair.com](#) (an online [underwear](#) retailer), we spend \$13 billion on "[intimate apparel](#)" every year. That kind of expenditure, [freshpair](#) believes, deserves some publicity.

Of course, that's New York. Chances are, you're not going to see too many people in Tahlequah today, running around in their [underwear](#).

But we did manage to find a few who were willing to discuss the subject.

For some reason, females seem to be more comfortable discussing their [undergarments](#) than males.

Fewer of them said, "Uh, why are you asking me about my [underwear](#)?" or "None of your &*%#@^ business!" than men when approached about the topic.

Why is this?

"[Underwear](#) is just fun for girls; it's like an accessory," said Kristy Harrison, who works at Kimberly's Boutique. "Some girls even match their [underwear](#) to their shirt, so if their [underwear](#) shows, they'll match."

Like every other female interviewed for this story, Harrison doesn't stick to just wearing one kind of [underwear](#).

There are, evidently, many styles of women's [underwear](#), including but not limited to traditional [panties](#) (either high-rise [briefs](#) or [bikini](#)), [thongs](#), [boy-cut](#) (which are cut, not like boys, but like boys' [briefs](#)), and [tangas](#), which Harrison said look like [boy-cuts](#), but are made of lace.

"I try all of them," said Harrison. "It depends on what kind of mood I'm in, and what else I'm wearing. If I'm going to wear a skirt, I'll wear boy-cut so I'm not all hanging out in the back."

Kate Kelly agrees that one's choice of [underwear](#) often depends on how one feels when one gets up in the morning - at least, if one happens to be female.

"I like to mix it up," she said. "The thing about [underwear](#) is that even if other people don't know what you've got on, you might just put on some pretty [panties](#) to make yourself feel better. Sometimes, I even wear men's [underwear](#); they're thicker and they have a different feel."

What?!

Transcending gender differentiation in [underwear](#)?

(Evidently, it's not all that uncommon for women. We didn't find any guys who said they occasionally wear women's [underwear](#), although there probably are such guys).

"I especially like to wear men's [underwear](#) when I'm wearing a nice dress, because it's such a dichotomy," said Kelly. "Like I said, I like to mix it up."

So, are men as particular - or as vocal - about their [underwear](#) choices as women?

To find out, we talked to Mark Giese, a rather dapper fellow who obviously has refined tastes in automobiles, clothing, briefcases, and other of life's important accessories.

Do those refined tastes transcend his outer appearance, all the way to his [skivvies](#)?

"Absolutely not," he said. "I buy whatever is on sale. I have only two concerns about [underwear](#): Are they clean; and are there enough of them?"

This concern about cost seems to be common among men, even those whose [underwear](#) may be visible during most of their working day.

"Well, we don't wear 'whiteys,'" said Chris Cisternino, a local plumber. "I prefer [boxer briefs](#); they do a better job of hiding the so-called 'plumber's crack.' Someone has invented a plumber's T-shirt that's extra-long to cover your rear end, but I don't wear them - they're too expensive."

According to Kendall Bruening, guys are probably at a disadvantage when it comes to

[underwear](#), because they just don't have as many choices as women do.

"I even have days when I just shop for [underwear](#)," said Bruening, who like every other female who waxed philosophical on the subject, wears a variety of styles.

"I think guys pretty much stick to one style."

According to local historian Beth Herrington, Bruening, Kelly, and Harrison should feel fortunate to be living in the early 21st century, when they do have so many choices in [undergarments](#). "[Unmentionables](#)" haven't always been as comfortable as they are today.

"Women's [underwear](#) and underpinnings have always depended somewhat on what the gentlemen's figments of imagination wanted them to be," said Herrington. "For example, before the Civil War, the small waist was the fashion."

By small, she means something like 18 inches around, a look obtained by cinching one's mid-section in with a corset.

As the 20th century got under way, women's [underwear](#) got progressively more comfortable, but still depended a great deal on what the fellows liked to see in a woman.

"I graduated from high school in 1947, and back then, the [bras](#) had little pockets in them," said Herrington, who also noted that [bras](#) weren't even worn until the 1920s. "There were little felt things that would fit into the pockets; then they started making foam rubber ones."

Those things, of course, made a young lady appear to have larger breasts than she actually had.

Those sorts of garments still exist today (although a false advertising lawsuit might end their production), but they've probably improved in quality.

According to Herrington, back then, one had to make sure the padding stayed in place, as one of Herrington's cousins found out at a football game.

During all the excitement of cheering, jumping, and other activities associated with rooting one's team on to victory, one of her foam rubber "breasts" escaped from its pocket and began crawling up her shoulder.

Breasts, of course, aren't supposed to move around that much.

"There are lots of issues with [underwear](#)," said Herrington. "Lots of issues."

But does it have to be that way?

Last week, in a story about the popularity of flip-flop footwear, we designated Big Will



PRESS COVERAGE

Boatman as Tahlequah's official etiquette and protocol consultant. So to make sure he earns his keep, we asked him about his preferences in [underwear](#).

What kind of [underwear](#) does Boatman wear?

"I don't," he said.

So there you have it.

Simple and to the point.

No [underwear](#), no issues.