



COURIERPOST

Underwear Day: Full exposure and disclosure

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As a favor to my newsroom friends, I'm writing this column at home - sitting alone in the family room, at my desk.

And in my undies.

How else to prepare for Wednesday's celebration of National Underwear Day, when an Internet peddler will stage a very public "panty parade" of models wearing only - well, only.

"We've taken underwear out of the dresser drawer and into the streets," boast the event's proud organizers at freshpair.com.

Frankly, this statement shocks me.

People keep their underwear in drawers? No wonder my wife's always irked to find mine on the floor.

But I also find this underwear undertaking to be a bit underwhelming.

After all, there's plenty of competition these days for frivolous fashion events. Just last week, a California racetrack sent a press release touting a "guns and garters" charity event. And a Miami nightclub wanted me to know about its "adult film star pajama party."

The PR piece for the pajama party - an "exclusive event" that was somehow open to the ticket-buying public - promised more than 40 "film stars," including Candi Apple, Alana Lipps and Destiny Summers. And it swore they'd all be wearing "Sexy Lingerie," which sounds like a pretty good porn name itself.

In contrast, Freshpair's fiesta seems more like a tawdry trade show. Twenty models on the streets of Manhattan will promote the retailer's intimate inventory, featuring brand names like Male Power and, um, Rips. (Insert your gas-related punch line here.)

The event also will highlight industry trends, such as "profile-enhancing" designs for men that offer "contoured support pouches" - or a built-in bulge.

"You should get some of those," my wife tells me. "We could use the storage space."



Among other activities, the "underwear ambassadors" will survey onlookers about their tastes in underwear. They'll also ask people to sign a petition urging official recognition of Freshpair's third annual event - as if a White House that can't stand gay marriage will rush to embrace guys in tightie-whities.

Organizers insist the coming-out party was a big hit last year.

"Underwear fever was in the air," says a press release, telling how enthusiastic onlookers joined in the celebration. Still, I have to wonder at a phrase that describes people "caught up in the grip of underwear frenzy."

As Freud would say, "Ouch!"

The press release also puts Underwear Day in historical perspective, citing a young Marlon Brando's torn T-shirt and an aging Madonna's bullet bra. It also invokes "the carefree attitude of '60s happenings, when free spirits took control of public spaces as venues for their art."

All of which reminds me of a heartbreaking tale from the equally carefree '70s: A college friend in Boston offered me a ride in her car, leading us, somehow, to a skinny-dipping party in a New Hampshire stream.

About a week later, I bumped into my friend and remarked on that eye-popping experience.

"Oh," she said, sounding honestly confused. "Were you there?"

Maybe I should take that as a sign - and either sit out Underwear Day or just observe it briefly.