

August 8th, 2006

Venable: A Few Brief Notes On Undies

If the heat is oppressive tomorrow and you simply can't take it any more, go ahead and peel down to your skivvies.

If you get arrested, you'll have an ironclad defense: It's National Underwear Day. What judge would dare throw the book at a red-blooded, patriotic - not to mention varicose-veined - Amurikan?

No, this day was not decreed by congressional or presidential edict. It's National Underwear Day, by crackies, because an online merchandiser called Freshpair.com says so.

The observance started in 2003 and has been celebrated ever since in major cities with throngs (and, presumably, thongs) of young men and women parading in their BVDs.

Given Knoxville's proud history of lagging well behind the curve, I daresay we'll join these festivities around the year 2025 - or whenever World's Fair Park is redeveloped, whichever comes first.

According to Michael Kleinmann, Freshpair's chief operating officer, intimate apparel amounts to a \$13 billion-a-year business. He said this special day was created so folks can "feel comfortable mentioning unmentionables and celebrating skivvies."

Fine by me - as long as everyone realizes the entire lot of Homo sapiens ain't prime material for strutting their stuff.

Blame it on poor genetics or abundant couch-potatoing, but most women aren't constructed like the bra-and-panties models from Victoria's Secret, and most men aren't contenders for the Chippendales calendar.

Thus, to keep visual pollution at a minimum, approximately 98.7 percent of us (and we know who we are) should not actively participate.

Nonetheless, here are a few underwear factoids that have been wadded up on my desk for weeks.

First, there's the advertisement for a \$20 garment called Pad-A-Panty. Robert Patt, a fellow News Sentinel employee, found it in the 2006 "Grier's Almanac." Based on the illustration, these look like Depends on steroids.

A pair of these drawers, the text says, "gives you what nature didn't: a beautiful butt



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and curvier hips. All without exercise, diet or surgery!"

Perhaps. But I daresay you'd get the same look by gluing a short loaf of French bread on each cheek.

Next is a dispatch from the Los Angeles Times wire service, submitted by Bill Henry of Oak Ridge, describing the development of the first sports bra.

This innovation occurred in Vermont in 1977 when a runner and costume designer put their heads and two jockstraps together and started what has blossomed into a \$300 million-\$400 million industry.

I'm all for entrepreneurial success. But if a jock will suffice for this purpose, the physical dimensions of Vermont men and women must be radically different from the rest of us.

And finally, I cite an entry from Guinness World Records, which claims the largest underpants were 47 feet, 3 inches wide and 34 feet, 5 inches tall. They were displayed in Bolton, England, on Nov. 9, 2005.

No word if they were later shipped to Vermont and fashioned into a jockstrap.

About Freshpair:

Freshpair is a leading Internet retailer of men's and women's intimate apparel, offering hundreds of styles of bras, panties, t-shirts, boxers, briefs, socks, sleepwear, and more. From full-figure to petite, shapewear to thongs, boxers to briefs, and everything in between, we are the ultimate destination for intimate apparel shopping. Freshpair.com carries many of the major brand names including 2(x)ist, C-IN2, Calvin Klein, Wacoal, Chantelle, Le Mystere, and Bali.