

Buying beyond the brand name

Students reject brand name clothing to express themselves

BY DAVID HUTCHINSON
Staff Reporter

With a white iPhone disguised as a pink cassette tape in hand, junior Briana Bonner stands in front of her closet and begins the intimate process of selecting an outfit to express her individuality.

Bonner is a health science major, but she said she lives for fashion. By largely rejecting popular trends and labels, fashion-conscious Truman State students find durable items other individuals might overlook.

"When I wear my clothes I feel connected to them, to tell you the truth," Bonner said. "I don't pick out what I want to wear the night before, I just look to my closet and say 'Do you want me to wear you?' and they all just talk to me."

Bonner originally is from Chicago, and she said she went to a high school where fashion choices were dictated by brands. She said rather than wearing good-looking clothes which might have been cheaper, her classmates stuck with comfortable and familiar brands. For rejecting this trend, Bonner said she was voted "most unique" during high school.

Bonner said she does a lot of her shopping at thrift stores

and buys vintage pieces whenever she can. She said when she shops, she does not consider brand names, but instead, she thinks about how well the piece coordinates with the others in her closet. She said her coordination process is interesting because usually she prefers stark contrast rather than matching clothes.

"Some purple pants or some peach pants might catch my attention," Bonner said. "And they'll say, 'Well you don't want a white shirt because it matches.'"

Junior Jessica Swopshire said she has had a fashion interest since she was a young ballerina and would discuss designers during dinner with her mother. Although Swopshire is familiar with designers and can appreciate labels, she said individuals who rely on them to create a look generally are seeking validation.

"It's sort of like [validation] of who you are by what you wear," Swopshire said.

Swopshire said she tries to be creative about where she shops and what she wears. She said thrift stores are where she finds a great deal of her clothing, but said she carefully selects pieces she expects to make lasting contributions to her wardrobe. If she wears brand name clothing, Swopshire said she tries to anchor it with an interesting accessory or by manipulating the item itself.

She likes to combine elegant pieces, like long flowing dress-

es, with traditionally urban materials, like see-through lace tops and hoop earrings, she said. She uses bleach with little hesitation, she said, whether it's to make her vintage Levi's stand out or to clean up her dirt-caked Keds.

Sophomore Lauren Baker also shies away from brand name clothing and enjoys wearing obscure combinations of colors. Baker said she makes use of vests and high-waist pants frequently because she enjoys pushing the boundaries of professional style clothing. Because of her fashion choices, Baker said she often is labeled a hipster, but she said the label is not accurate.

Baker spent seven weeks studying in Spain this summer and said the personal style of the people she saw while there varied greatly from the personal style of her American peers.

"In Spain, everybody cares," she said.

Baker said on campus, her colorful outfits sometimes yield compliments or confused stares from her peers. She said while she enjoys making impressions with her clothes, she takes the time to carefully piece together her outfits for her own amusement.

"If you take time to think about how you look, you just feel better when you're walking around," she said. "Even if you don't want to impress anyone, or just your friends, people like to feel nice. I like to feel nice."



Rose Sparks/Index
Junior Briana Bonner tries on an outfit at Hidden Treasures Thrift Store located on The Square. Bonner considers herself someone who thrifts daily and said she has to get creative with local stores when she's not home in Chicago.



Rose Sparks/Index
Left, junior Audrey Lane lays out clothes to wear for the day. Lane lays out between three and four outfits before making a decision. Above, junior Briana Bonner rifles through racks at a Kirksville thrift store Tuesday. Bonner prefers starkly contrasting clothes instead of matching outfits, she said.

Catholic center builds relationships

BY JOHN BROOKS
Staff Reporter

The Catholic Newman Center might be small, but it aims to make a big impact.

The center, which is located behind Missouri Hall on the corner of Normal and Davis streets, works to connect Truman State students and develop their leadership skills, while helping them maintain a relationship with God, Father Bill Koltensette, the Catholic Newman Center chaplain, said.

Koltensette, who has served as the Center's chaplain for 17 years, said he has found that the center is important to students because it provides them with a place to go when they're stressed or experiencing difficulties in school or their personal lives.

"We try to be a safe place to be," Koltensette said. "We supply a place for

anyone to come and meet friends, find God and study ... It appears like this closed-off place and it's not. We're trying to give people a chance."

Although most of the attendees are Catholic, that's not a prerequisite for attending the Sunday services, or just going to socialize and do homework, he said. He said the idea is to help students find a balance in whatever area of their life they might be struggling with — intellectual, social or spiritual.

Director Chris Korte, who is serving his third year at the center, said he thinks the center helps students grow through opportunities to practice their faith and lead.

"We're inviting young people to grow in their faith," Korte said. "We invite them to serve in the community. We want them to be persons of character, to complement their education. We help students to grow into adulthood and find

their calling, and discern their gifts."

Hosting five Catholic Mass services a week, the center provides students with similar beliefs with a place to worship and grow religiously, Korte said.

Along with the religious services provided, the center offers students opportunities to work together and take on leadership positions, such as intramurals, while making new friends and creating new relationships, he said.

"I've been inspired by the kinds of support and guidance the students give each other," Korte said. "You see their potential come out, their creativity, their organization and their passion."

During the spring, the center offers a retreat for freshmen which provides them with an opportunity to connect with other students. Junior Kate Schmittgens has been involved with the center since her freshman year, and one of these

trips helped her meet other students and get involved at the center, she said.

"Finding a friendship group with people who have the same morals helped me survive college," Schmittgens said. "Everyone is really open, and excited to get to know you. Everything is here."

Sophomore Hannah West said she has had similar positive experiences as Schmittgens.

West said she began getting involved at the center the second semester of her freshman year and has enjoyed her time there since, having established a core group of friends and building relationships with individuals she might not have met otherwise.

"The most rewarding part has been the bonds I've formed already," West said. "I've only been here three months and I already feel like I can talk to anybody about anything."

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