The Columbian

Life

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2002

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Today's weather picture by: Ben McMullen, 8, Vancouver, Hathaway Elementary School

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ANGELA ALLEN
Chic Talk

Neat cuffs, collars will snag job, author says

Two men with similar qualifications go for a promotion. Who wins?

"The guy with the ironed shirt. It's true. Studies have been done," says Steve Bourstein, also known as the Clothing Doctor and author of "The Ultimate Guide to Shopping and Caring for Clothing: Everything You Need to Know From Blue Jeans to Ball Gowns" (Footloose Books, LLC, 2002, $24.95).

Aside from selling books and working as a fashion and image consultant, the Washington, D.C.-based Bourstein until recently ran a high-end dry cleaner in Chevy Chase, Md., near Washington, D.C.

He ironed shirts for politicians, CNN news announcers and performers. He charged $4 a shirt, more than twice as much as the typical $1.50 fee. He pressed the collars of the powerful and the rich, and after years, he noticed the shirts of the private sector were far better quality than those of our elected representatives.

He argues that "If you want to make an impression, you do it in terms of the way you look. When you wear a shirt that's not ironed, it shows."

To get the scoop on shirts, have a heart-to-heart with your dry cleaner, Bourstein advises. They know how to make collars and cuffs look good, key to a well-pressed shirt.

The finesse or more delicate a shirt's fabric (and often that's $200 Brioni and Pinks made of high-thread-count cottons), the bigger a challenge to iron.

"You can spend $200 on a shirt and it won't look as good as a $70 Oxford cloth shirt. An expensive shirt is like a linen blouse that has beadwork in it, while a blue Oxford just goes on looking beautiful ... If you're tough on your shirts, wear the Oxfords" (though don't starch them too much).

Then again, if you love beautifully appointed clothing, "go ahead and get the Pinks. It's true it used to dressing well, and makes a point of wearing it a higher strata, people will notice your collars and cuffs."

If they're not lying down properly, you're in trouble. A handsome wrinkle-free collar shows "who's a good dresser and who's not. A man's collars and cuffs are going to show more lately."

Collars can be fused or sewn. When fused, two or three layers are "glued" together with fusing, and this gives the collar a slight sheen, but it makes wrinkles of most non-sweaters.

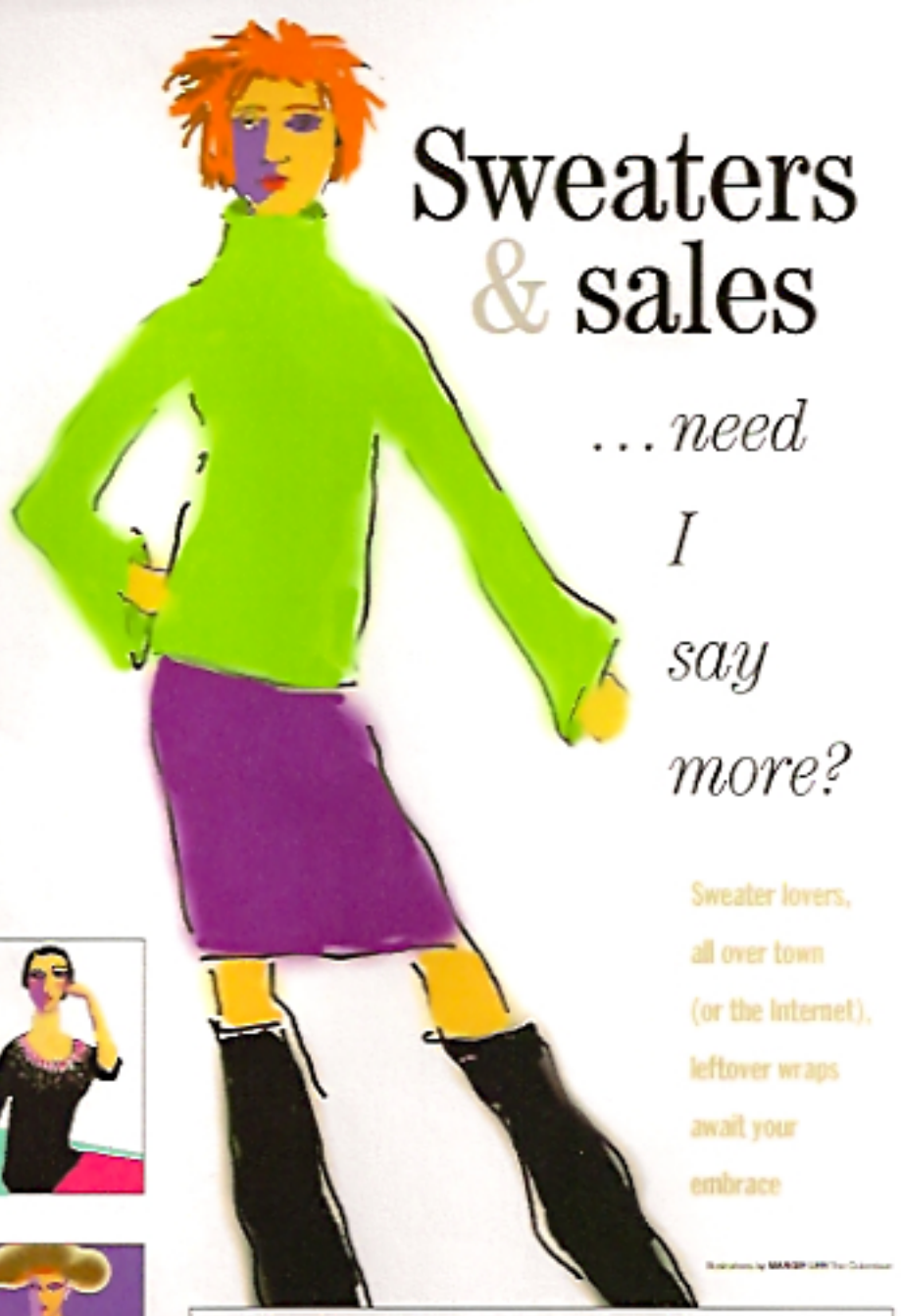
When you invest in a shirt, rub your thumb and forefinger on the top and the bottom of the collar. If the layers separate, "you're going to have a big problem with that collar."

A good collar, like a well-trained dog, sits up when you sit down, and buckles, lying up and to a side. Bourstein feels so strongly about this, he says, "Any man wearing a collar with a wrinkle is missing the fashion boat."

When you're buying a shirt, order the collar one-half size larger than your neck to account for shrinkage, which happens to most shirts, even the custom-made types. If you wear a 15½, buy a 16. Once again, Bourstein says, "and he knew been done on testimonies depth on this."

Details, details! But in light of promotion, closing a deal or rejoicing on a date, collars and cuffs might be more than pleasure monitors.

ANGELA ALLEN writes



Sweaters & sales

... need I say more?

Sweater lovers, all over town (or the Internet), leftover wraps await your embrace

Illustrations by MARCIE LIPP The Columbian

By ANGELA ALLEN
Columbian staff writer

When you're a clothes lover, you can never own too many crisp, white shirts, black shoes or sweaters.

Which means today could be your lucky day. Retail is the stick, knows and the sweaters hanging with the matching cuffs, and you'll have enough to grab yourself a sweater — at a darn good price. All over town, racks of sweaters are on sale, searching for lovers.

What better way to spend the day after Christmas? To build on a precious collection? To add to the piles of wool and cotton and cashmere spilling from shelves, nudging each other from drawers like eager puppies begging for attention.

If you suspect your sweaters are well enough rounded, do what I do. For each new turtleneck or cardigan, give away an old one. Sweaters, I've come to realize on sweaters, and I hold on to the ones I love dearly, sometimes after a moth burrows in and leaves a hole, or a button falls off.

This season, sweaters practically have turned into dresses. The rage and of styles, necklines, fabrics, cuts and details are complicating the once simple universe of the plain pullover and shell beneath twin-set.

Notice the simple style sweater, for great values, or the slim slipovers with the big bell sleeves that balance the inflow of flared pants. With all the belts and trims, they could pass for coats. Sweaters, after all, are quite the bargain when they pass for more than sweaters.

As for the necklines — funnel, mock, cowl, boat, square, halter, V-neck, square, cowl, mock, boat, square, halter, V-neck, square, cowl, mock, boat, square, halter, V-neck, square, cowl, mock