



Greetings Fashionistas!

FASHIONGRANNY”S feeling great, having just got off the speaking circuit with the Fripp Island Ladies Club, on one of the beautiful Sea Islands of the Lowcountry. Right here in Paradise, another group of women doing good in and on their little piece of the rock!

They thought I was the greatest, so what’s not to feel good about? We laughed a lot and I felt secure in my fashion observations, as there was agreement all around. A real mutual admiration society!

So here’s a shout out to the gals who get what fashion’s all about!

Dear FASHIONGRANNY,

Can I wear a dress to an upcoming Ball that I have worn in years before? Am I crazy to care?

Signed,

What's it all about, Alfie?

Dear Alfie,

Is it just for the moment we live? What's it all about, when you sort it out, Alfie? Oh! I love that song! There's poetry there, and there should be poetry when you walk into the room in your new ball gown!

Before I answer your question, I want to talk about ball gowns. Yes! There still is a place for ball gowns in our "oh, so modern!" society. I mean, if for no other reason than to give us a moment to get out of our uniforms and into fantasy pretty! You must know by now that FASHIONGRANNY loves fantasy pretty!

There is not one girl alive who didn't have Cinderella doppelganger thoughts, or want to wear whatever grandiose concoction in which Mr. Disney was dressing his latest fairytale princess!

(Well, wait a minute, that's a broad statement. I remember Joan, one of my best playmates in grammar school. When the gang had decided what to play, and had chosen "princess", Joan always wanted to be Prince Charming. She hated the frills! I wonder where Joan is now? Probably a Supreme Court Justice! I digress.)

When an invitation reads "formal", I believe it! When an invitation reads," Ball" I believe that too! When did we start to deviate from the instructions? When did we start calling our own shots as invitees when the invite said FORMAL? Uggh!

Fantasy pretty. It is all too rare that most of us would have need of more than one or two formal gowns in life! There is the one left over from the kids' wedding in '84, and of course, that old standby you paid too much for at the last minute, when you went to that Conference in Toledo. Yuck.

That brings us to you, Alfie!

NO! You shouldn't wear the "same ol' same ol' "anything to a BALL! This is your opportunity to relive, revive or re-invent yourself out of the daily grind!

If you were invited to a Ball, I am going to go out on a limb and say you must have two nickels to rub together. Poverty does not get invited to Balls. Not much fantasy there.

So, having qualified, my suggestion is that you enjoy your opportunity and search out the most beautiful gown for the event, with all the accessories to complement!

If the Ball is theme-oriented, unless you have a Hollywood stylist to aid you in getting ready, don't wear something you haven't perfected. There are few things worse than a Marie

Antoinette wannabe that did her own hair and make-up, getting Beetlejuice as the result! What do you say?

Your gown, however, no matter what your style, must be a gown. Please not a long skirt and sparkly sweater set. That is not formal. That is lazy.

A Ball gives you the opportunity to “dress to impress.” This is a good thing, Martha. People do care about the people around them. I know of no one that woke up one morning and said, “I want nothing but non-caring, unattractive people in my life”

I believe we all care about even the seeming frivolity of fashion, and that it is normal to want pretty people around you.

This “devil may care” and “politically correct” perpetration that has beautiful women and men wearing blazers when tuxedos are called for, or last years gown when there is an opportunity for fantasy pretty... I just don't get it.

Here's what it's about, Alfie. Here's what I do get. Grab that cash or credit card, get into your jalopy and high tail it to wherever you want and buy your beautiful new Ball gown et al. Let me know how you fared. You deserve to be the Belle!

Dear FASHIONGRANNY,

I'm looking at the offerings of fashion in the new magazines, including your favorite InStyle

magazine, and I'm just not seeing anything that floats my boat! I am a 33 year old business woman and I look to you for sane fashion advice. Help!

Signed,

Penelope T.

Dear Penelope, I want to call you Penny of course, as I love that name, too; however maybe you hate it, and so I won't.

Really? You're not liking anything that's in the mags? FASHIONGRANNY is loving pretty much all of it because it leans to the ladylike side of female dressing. All the skirts and rich, flowy fabric blouses shown with mini-fascinators for your locks? Very nice, I think!

Remember it is an in-between fashion time. The season is still "Resort," and in this economy, wisely, that factoid hasn't been played up at all. I am looking forward to Spring. I think separates will rule and many vintage accessories will factor in. I am hoping the violets and dusty blue hues I am seeing in clothes and make-up will make a quick exit. Not liking that retro look. Too moody. No more people with "mood" please.

For Fashion Greatness this year, I am urging everyone to shop their local Consignment shops, as they are the last of a dying breed.

The clothes you find today in these resale stores will not be in existence, give or take a few

years. A few. That is three or so.

The “Ikea” clothing has come, seen and conquered, with none of their wares lasting long enough to make it to resale!

Think about it! It is shocking that the sacrifice of fabric and workmanship we have made over the years, for the sake of affordable, has resulted in truly disposable good for nothing landfill fodder clothing!

Just try to rip up a Wally-world special Tee into rag-size pieces. Bummer! You can’t rip it! It’s not real! No matter what the label says, the label lies. This is not a “real” fabric!

Now try to absorb any liquid with your impossibly ripped Tee. It does not absorb. It isn’t real!

This is what new clothes have been giving us since China became the major player. Chinese goods are like the movie, “Invasion of the Body Snatchers.” Poor imitators. The audience always sensed something was different between the real person and the “pod “person! You just cannot clone nor undercut the real deal!

So, Penelope dear, we will see, what’s on the Fashion Horizon together and give the magazines another glance. I will be talking about Personal Style a lot in the upcoming columns. Stay tuned!

Happy Valentines Day to Everybody!

Heads up to the Gentlemen: Don’t forget the Roses, Chocolates, Fur coats, Jewellery and Sports Cars!

Ladies, receive your gifts with aplomb! Have fun!

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