

## Mentioning the Unmentionables

Since President Trump says he has all significant national and international problems under control, I feel free to turn my attention to overlooked yet equally vexing issues that hit much closer to home.

For example, I own 38 pairs of identical underwear. Yes, I counted. They overflow an entire drawer in a large antique dresser when they are all clean at the same time, which (fortunately) hardly ever happens.

The issue of uncomfortable underwear is currently at the top of my list of first-world problems. Life is simply too short to have to endure ill-fitting clothes, especially ones that constantly bug the hell out of you if they're not quite right.

I now have a zero-tolerance policy dictating that underwear be immediately discarded regardless of age, once they turn on me. I have returned home from the gym "commando" before, because I refused to put back on a pair that had displeased me sometime earlier that day.

It seems like each time I discard a pair, the remaining ones seem to fit better. It's as if word gets around to the rest of the drawer's inhabitants and they suck in their elastic for a while. I envision one pair nervously whispering to the others, "You know, Fred didn't come back with the rest of the guys in the fresh laundry today. I fear he's been culled."

I currently own so much underwear because I buy a dozen every other year. A biannual birthday present to myself. The batches are easy to tell apart, because the waistbands slowly become more scalloped as they age. My oldest ones look a lot like big balls of lint, but they still fit adequately. For now.

It's comforting for me to know that even if there's a major underwear revolt and I need to lay waste to a significant number of co-conspirators, there are plenty of others only too happy to have a secure home in the drawer.

Googling "world's most comfortable underwear" yields over 50 million hits, so I'm evidently not the only person interested in this issue. You've probably seen the Duluth Trading Company's TV ads for "Buck Naked" underwear involving a

cartoon man having is sensitive parts being crushed by various mechanical devices to illustrate what average underwear supposedly feels like.

By the way, just saying something is the “world’s best” doesn’t make it so. I bought a package of the World’s Best Cat Litter a few months ago and ended up having to chisel most of it out of the bottom of the cat box because it pretty much turns to cement when moistened.

No doubt you’re wondering what brand and style of underwear I currently favor; Jockey Classic Briefs in black. Earlier in life I had lingering affairs with Fruit of the Loom, Hanes, Calvin Klein, Polo and others, but love is fickle and transient.

My experimental phase included a brief (ha!) detour into the world of boxer shorts, which was wholly unsatisfactory. The sensation was much like going commando, but with extra wads of bunched-up fabric in the least comfortable places.

I’m a proponent of shopping locally whenever possible, but I’ve had to admit defeat regarding my current favorite. A year is a long time between purchases; stores move or close, the lines of clothing they stock change, and the depth of stock they carry varies. One year, trips to four different stores yielded zero pairs of underwear since I was unwilling to accept substitutes. Life is too short for such Sisyphean endeavors – I now grit my teeth and order online.

As if I didn’t have enough underwear-related angst, I also have a mental problem with being required to refer to a single article of clothing as a “pair.” That’s just wrong. I suspect it can be traced back to the early days of Big Underwear conglomerates conspiring to play on consumers’ willingness to pay more for a “pair” of something.

As a practical matter, an abundance of underwear means there’s no excuse for my not wearing a fresh pair every day in case I’m in an auto accident. My mother would be proud.

Writers Group Member Dave Parsons does not believe that turning underwear inside out instead of doing laundry is “just as good.”