

Home buys call for ingenuity

(This is the second of a 12-part series on the recent best seller, "BBB Consumer's Buying Guide, How to Get Your Money's Worth.")

The purchase of either furniture or carpeting involves considerably more use of the imagination and examination of the family budget than do most other purchases that the housewife is normally called upon to make.

If she chooses precipitously, she's generally stuck with what she bought for some time. If she has purchased unwisely, she cannot expect either the carpeting or the furniture to last as long as she herself had anticipated.

Furniture—Studies show adults generally buy furniture at least twice in their lives. The first purchase is generally made around the time of marriage; the second when the children have reached their teens. The first set of furniture may not be expensive but it is generally intended to last 10 or 12 years.

The furniture you buy will be from three basic categories—case goods, occasional furniture and upholstered pieces. Case goods generally include dining room and bedroom furniture. Occasional furniture includes nonupholstered pieces—desks, chests, end tables and other furniture for other rooms of your home that don't require upholstered parts. Upholstered pieces include chairs, couches and other pieces built with padding, perhaps with springs, and covered at least partially with fabric.

Complaints to the Better Business Bureau involving the purchase of furniture involve:

—Delay in delivery or damage upon receipt. Examine your furniture when it arrives.

—Beware of firms which advertise as "warehouses." Frequently they are retail outlets trying to attract the unwary.

—Furniture is seldom guaranteed by the manufacturer. If a salesman makes such a representation, get it in writing. Any "lifetime" guarantee on furniture should be approached with suspicion.

Carpeting—As is the case in all areas of purchase, knowing the reputation of the carpet firm with which you intend doing business is important.

Since many people will want to see the carpeting they purchase in the setting of their home, many firms offer "in-home" shopping service. Complaints received by the BBB allege substitution of merchandise and selling inferior carpeting at considerably more than prevailing retail prices. Prospective customers should check the reputation of firms to establish their record of reliability.

In the choice of a carpet, the fabric is not the factor which, in itself, determines wear. Construction is most important. Depth and density of the pile, the weight of

the yarn, balance in the weave, strength of the backing and other structural features are uniquely important. The pile means the outer surface of the carpet formed by the interlocking of fibers which bears the brunt of traffic.

The Better Business Bureau cautions you against these pitfalls:

—Be careful of "three rooms of carpeting sales." Too often the square footage advertised cannot be expected to cover three average-sized rooms.

—Be leary of becoming involved in a referral sales plan where you are offered the carpeting with the inducement that it will pay for itself merely by referring the names of friends as possible purchasers at X number of dollars per referral.

—If you are offered commercial or industrial carpeting and told of its wonderful stand-up-to-the-crowd appeal, be cautious. There are no standards established for "commercial" carpeting and although you could be getting a bargain, the likelihood is not overwhelming.

WOMEN NOW

Africa bans 'shocking' mini

Midi- and maxi-length skirts may be the fashion rage in sophisticated capitals, but the mini continues to stir controversy in sub-Saharan Africa.

Women in black Africa who favor ultra short skirts have had a hard time for several years asserting the right to keep in style.

Mini skirts and dresses might be gradually passing from the fashion scene, but there are few signs that male dominated countries are easing from their vigilance.

Female police clerks in Portuguese Mozambique have been ordered not to wear skirts shorter than three inches below the knee. Tanzania, Zambia and Uganda have cracked down on miniskirts as offending their national dignity.

Upper Volta's decree that skirts should be no higher than the knee has created unfortunate circumstances. An Upper Voltan newspaper reports that overzealous young men used the order as an excuse for "outrageous impor-

tuning" and "rummaging about" inside suspect skirts.

A few loopholes are left the girls of Upper Volta. Short skirts are acceptable for tennis and other sports. They can also be worn for traditional tribal dancing, but the Minister of Security—which is responsible for the whole business—cautioned that miniskirts are taboo for modern dancing.

In South Africa, lay preacher and anti-miniskirt campaigner Gert Yssei says the Springbok rugby team which toured Britain last year lost because of the "decadent influence" of miniskirted British women. The South Africans recently defeated the visiting New Zealand All Black rugby squad, but Yssei is not changing his tune. He warned South Africans to "stop crowing about Springbok's victory over the All Blacks" because the demise of South African rugby is imminent. The players are obsessed with sex, he said.

H. Kamazu Banda, the bachelor president of Malawi, says he is shocked with high hemlines.

His central African country unofficially banned the mini about two years ago. A notice warning female visitors to keep the length of their skirts within the locally prescribed limits of decency was posted at Chilenka Airport. At least one woman was asked to leave this former British territory, apparently for insisting on her right to wear minis.

"I feel strongly about miniskirts or any short dress at all," Banda told a recent gathering of his Malawi Congress Party. The party faithful promptly called for legislation to outlaw the mini. The audience chuckled, but later applauded after Banda explained his position.

"Most women do not realize this. When they have a skirt coming here—when they bend down—they don't realize it. I am deeply offended to see a woman . . . I mean just that when I say I am offended. When a woman bends . . . oh terrible, terrible."

Banda insisted he would rather have the entire civil service break down than have Malawi tolerate miniskirts.



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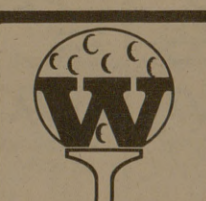
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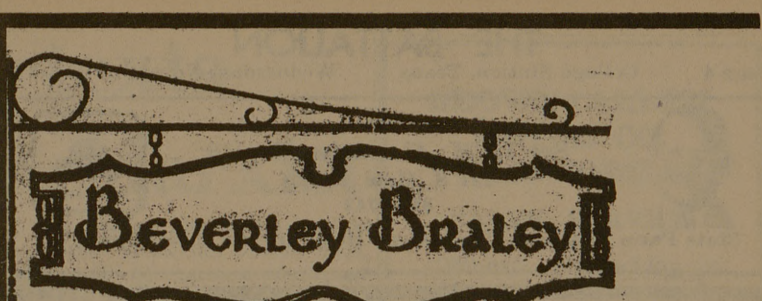

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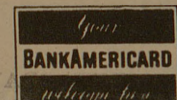


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