

Dressing up:

Zooful of animals snap at the alligator

By Debbie Nelson
Battalion Staff

Alligators may be the "bite" of fashion, but the rest of Noah's Ark is fighting for a place in the closets of the well-dressed.

Animals with varying degrees of ferocity and snob-appeal cling to shirts, sweaters, socks, jackets, nightshirts and belts in nearly every major clothing store around.

The weight of your wallet may help you decide which breed of furry (or scaly) friend you want to wear over your heart.

And there are other things to consider — like the range of colors available and whether the shirt can be tossed in the dryer without shrinking to Barbie-doll size.

The most popular item seems to be the basic polo (small "p") shirt, with prices ranging from \$14 to \$24.

Here's a partial list of some local animal-peddlers:

Court's Western Wear:

Wrangler seagulls float on sweatsuits; sweatshirts \$11.50, sweatpants \$12.50.

Mustangs gallop across \$15 polo shirts, with long sleeves selling for \$17. Mustang corduroy pants and jeans are also available.

Sandy Sebesta, manager of

the Culpepper Plaza location, said mustang shirts have been around for about two years, and seagulls appeared more recently.

R. Rush and Company:

Izod and Polo shirts — the original Preppie animal shirts — are the main attraction here, although the store has carried armadillo shirts in the past.

Mens' short-sleeve Lacoste Izods average \$24, and women's average \$22, said manager Brad DuPlantis.

Izod alligators snap their jaws on everything from shoelaces to socks to an "Official Preppie Night Shirt."

Boys' Ralph Lauren Polo shirts average \$21.50. The Lauren logo features a jockey on a horse.

DuPlantis said the store only carries the boys' Polo line, because it is less expensive than either the men's or women's.

An Oxford-cloth button-down by Ralph Lauren costs about \$22.50.

Lauren started in the clothing industry making ties, DuPlantis said, and has expanded into everything from colognes to keychains.

DuPlantis said the demand for Izod shirts and Polos is just as high as it ever was, even with competition from other labels.

Prices do rise, DuPlantis said, but they do so comparable to everything else in the clothing industry.

J.C. Penney:

Penney's says the answer to the alligator is the fox, \$16 for women's short-sleeved polo shirts and \$18 for men's.

By comparison, a comparable unadorned men's shirt costs \$12.

Clerk Carla Pfeffer said the fox shirts are "almost as popular as the Izods."

She added, "I like mine better than my Izods because they wash better."

Fox shirts are relatively new on the clothing market, having only been out for two years.

The only obvious differences between the fox and the alligator is that the fox is 50 percent Dacron polyester and 50 percent cotton, while the Izod is 100 percent cotton.

Foxes also adorn velour shirts and men's button-front and pullover sweaters.

Penney's also carries sweaters featuring the famous droopy-eyed Hush Puppies dog. Vests or long-sleeved sweaters are \$17.

Sears:

Dragons breathe fire on \$13.99 Sears men's polo shirts, 50 percent cotton, 50 percent polyester.

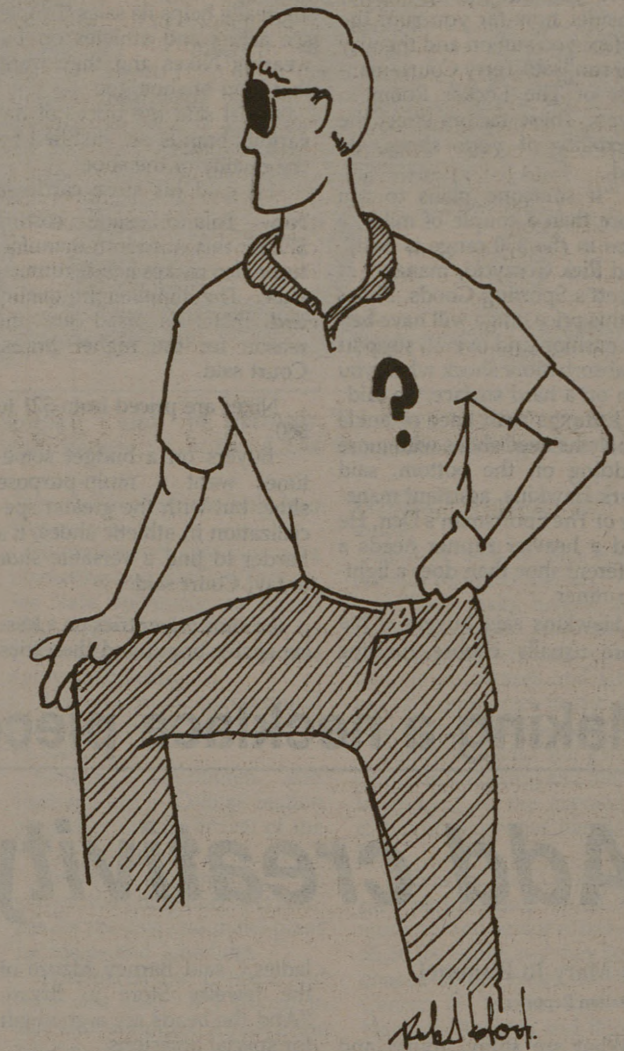
A comparable men's golf shirt costs \$5.99, but has a pointed collar instead of the ribbed one which seems to be "regulation" for animal shirts.

Clerk Isabel Huebner said demand for the dragon is high. "Our rack was almost empty there at one time," she said.

There's also the men's dragon sweater (button-front and pullover) and a \$20 cotton Dragon jacket.

The dragon has been around for about six months, Huebner said, and is only available on men's and childrens' shirts. She expects the line to expand to womenswear soon, though.

Socks complete with fiery



beast are already on the way.

from fading, too."

Shellenberger's:

Izods and Polos are also featured here. Boys' short-sleeved Polos are \$21.50, men's are \$29.50.

Assistant Manager Jennie Wilder said, "It's hard for us to keep men's polos in." Supplies are low right now, but an order is expected in November.

As for the problems of the all-cotton Izods and Polos, Wilder said, "We recommend everybody to hang them to dry, don't dry them in the dryer. That's how I do mine. That keeps them

Beall's:

Shirts by Lone Star, featuring the ever-popular armadillo, are \$17 at Beall's, where they hang side-by-side with \$28 Izods.

Tommy Benbow, manager trainee, said, "Izods have been around for years and years, and the armadillo just came along."

He estimated the armadillo has been in Beall's for five years, but locally is about a one-year resident.

Montgomery Wards:

Armadillo shirts in the boys' department are \$12.99, with a pointed collar. Although the animal was the same, the patch is different from the armadillo Beall's sells.

Margo's La Mode:

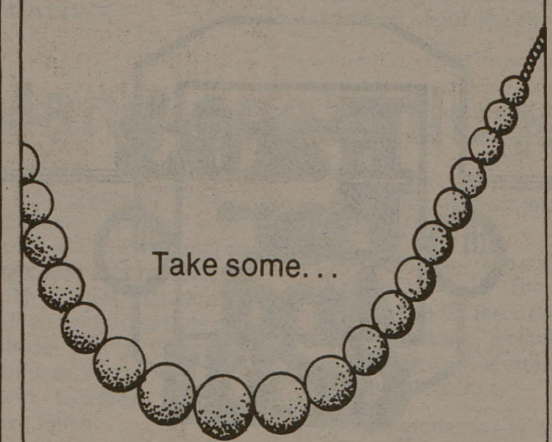
Gloria Vanderbilt has her own brand of polos, featuring her swan logo.

Clerks say the \$26 shirt has been popular "with the young girls."

Other:

And if you're really creative, or just a little playful, buy a plain shirt and a tiny animal patch (usually under \$1) and create your own combination.

But if you want to be in style, don't wear a plain shirt. Everyone will think you've lost your animal.



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