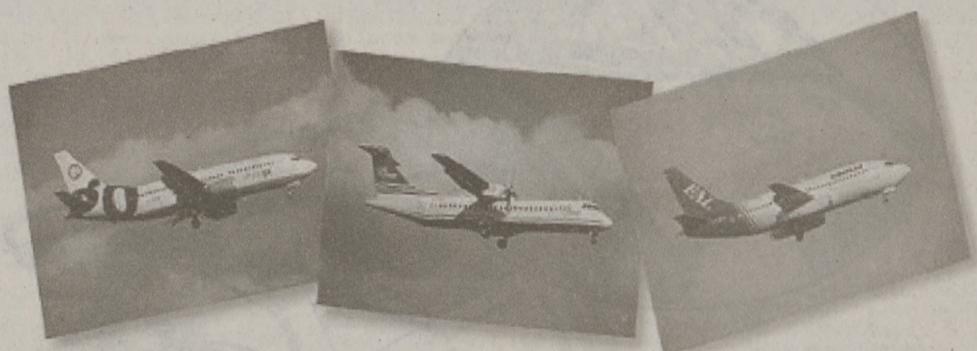


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Janet Blackmon Morgan • KRT CAMPUS

Paul Robinson takes a break in front of the student center at Coastal Carolina University in South Carolina on a Wednesday afternoon. Robinson wears pajamas to class at least four days a week.

Pajamas are no longer just for lounging around the house

By Mary-Kathryn Craft
KRT CAMPUS

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. — Paul Robinson got a few strange looks at first, but now people are used to him strolling through campus sporting his bedtime best.

The Coastal Carolina University freshman, who admits he puts comfort before fashion, wears pajamas to class at least four days a week. Sometimes he'll change into a fresh pair before heading out the door in the morning, and other times he skips the hassle.

"It just depends on how much time I have," he said. "It seems a lot more people are going for comfort than a look. Everyone is just trying to be relaxed."

The casual clothing movement is reaching new heights as comfort seekers have begun bringing jammies out of the bedroom. The trend is popping up on college campuses and can even be spotted at gas stations, grocery stores and video stores.

Before starting classes at CCU in the fall, Robinson, 19, attended Catholic school in Long Island, N.Y., where uniforms complete with blazers and ties were a must. So when he got a chance at fashion freedom, Robinson chose comfy.

Americans crave comfort, seeking out something to spark relaxation daily, according to the survey "The State of Comfort in America 2003," released in November by Karen Neuburger, Ltd.

"For most Americans, comfort is one of the critical elements of everyday life," the survey said. Pj's made the report's top 10 list of things to give women comfort.

But style is also a factor in the recent pjs craze. These days you can create just about any look with soft, flowing flannel jammies. Women now choose the once daytime capri and capri pants in cozy flannel, velour or brushed cotton. Prints range from hearts and flowers to more personality revealing items like purses, frogs, flamingos, coffee cups and martini glasses. You can go for ordinary or bright and wacky patterns. Places such as Old Navy and Target offer plenty of selections of red lips, penguins, cartoon characters or the more sedate pinstripes and plaid.

Robinson often opts for the loud. Sure, he's got the plaid pants, but he also sports dancing Twinkies, sleeping Scooby-Doo and bears playing violins.

"One kid around school calls me Scooby-Doo," he said with a laugh.

The 19-year-old art major said comfort is his pajama bottoms, T-shirts and flip flops make the perfect outfit for his drawing classes, which he takes for two hours three days a week.

"I've had girls say to me, 'I wish I had the courage to go to class in pajamas and be comfortable,' and I say 'Why don't you? It's this early, no one's looking at anyone else.'"

Governors, mayors challenge their constituents to get fit

By Amy F. Bailey
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Michigan's governor is urging residents to walk off extra pounds. The governor of South Carolina is heading up a 300-mile bike ride across the state. And in Texas, the governor is encouraging people to train for a 10K run in April.

As lawmakers across the country consider dozens of bills to promote healthy lifestyles — from testing school students for their fitness to warning restaurant diners about fat, sugar and cholesterol — a number of government leaders are trying to set a good example.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm of Michigan is competing against pedometer-wearing lawmakers to see who can rack up the high-

est number of steps over a 16-week period.

"We've got so many people who are fat, so many people who are smoking, so many who are not active, and that is really contributing significantly to our health care costs, not only to Medicaid but to the private sector as well," Granholm said during the annual meeting of the National Governors Association in Washington.

About 127 million adults in the United States are overweight, 60 million are obese and 9 million severely obese, according to the Washington-based American Obesity Association.

At least 15 medical conditions are exacerbated by gross overweight, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes and liver disease, the group said. Of those

diseases, obesity was responsible for \$102 billion in health care costs.

The increasing difficulty states to cover health care costs of low-income residents through Medicaid is part of the reason governors are trying to encourage their constituents to be more healthy.

In January, Texas Gov. Perry announced the "Round-Up" to help get residents in shape. Program participants are training to compete in a mile walk or run on April 1 in Austin, Texas.

In South Carolina, Mark Sanford invited residents to join him on a 300-mile bike ride across the Palmetto State his State of the State address month. The springtime ride starts in the mountains and ends on the Atlantic coast.

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