

STICK WITH WOOL, LEATHER, COTTON – FORGET THE NEW CLOTHING FABRICS

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No question about it, we live in the best of times. I know we old timers lament and tell the youngsters about the “good old days.” It’s been that way since time immemorial. The truth is there have generally been few periods in history when times have not been better for succeeding generations. It has been particularly true for Americans.

We live in a time of unprecedented technological advances as well. It appears there is no avenue that cannot be improved upon. I tell myself that constantly, but am left to wonder how there are still some things that seem to be difficult to consistently duplicate.

One of my biggest bugaboos is clothing. Much like Crocodile Dundee, “When Subaru told me they were changing my outback, I was a tad concerned.” I hate change in my clothing. I want it to be durable, functional and comfortable.

Primarily I refer to work clothing. When I lop around the house, while watching the tube or reading, it concerns me little. My work takes me outdoors for the most part and is what most people would deem strenuous and questionable for a guy in his seventies.

Unless you are an armchair forester, your work takes you over some remote, tough terrain in all four seasons. Over fifty-odd years at it (and related similar activities) have taught me which articles of clothing serve me best.

I have tried all the latest improved innovative fabrics and material touted to eclipse its predecessors. I still stick with wool, leather, rubber, cotton and an occasional touch of nylon in proven models and styles.

It has not escaped my attention and notice that most of my disappointments have escalated with the advent of NAFTA and the proliferation of foreign made goods. I will admit much of my anguish and failure can be attributed to falling for the siren song of the Fifth Avenue pitchmen. I should know better, but if it looks good in color and sounds plausible, I will try it – even though my instincts tell me not to.

Many a lucky pilgrim has been the recipient of my impulsiveness because I have no tolerance with work attire that does not meet my needs. A man's interest should be focused on his work, not on how hot, heavy, slippery and ill fitting his boots are. The same goes for his hat and how hard it is to keep it on in the brush. His attention should not be constantly directed to his underwear or pants creeping up into his crotch.

Socks are the bane of a true woodsman's life. They should be knee length and stay where you put them. There is nothing more disconcerting than stopping constantly and pulling them from the toe of your boot. I want them knee length for two reasons. Protect your legs from abrasions and fly bites.

Proper apparel is as important for any type of work as the tools for that job. The problems I have is once I find an item I like, when it's time to replace it they either no longer make it or I cannot find it. Clothing is much like people in that you have to work with it to know its character and worth.

I find myself searching for my next pair of shoes, socks or underwear. It's trial and error and usually no luck finding more of the same when I need it.

There is yet one more commodity in this modern day era that leaves me ever looking and longing for. A simple everyday item that is readily available in a metropolis as small as Utica. It's a good loaf of fresh bread. To make a long story short, an item that is consistently hard to come by on a day by day, year-round basis, short of Utica.

Keep the faith and keep those cards and letters coming folks.