

sports & outdoors



PHOTOS BY JILL SANDOLE



Dressed appropriately for the occasion, Darwin (above) wasn't diggin' it, while Andrew and Mr. Wagley (at left) certainly were.

DRESS CODE

Pity poor Darwin. And no, I don't mean the scientist. I'm talking about Darwin the yellow lab. His father, about whom I know nothing, aside from the fact that he drives an antique Toyota Land Cruiser and has a great dog named Darwin, explained Darwin's dour expression thusly: "He's depressed because I dressed him up like a fool."

You see, kids, Darwin was sitting in the back seat of the aforementioned Toyota Land Cruiser on Main Street during the staging of the Daffodil Festival parade last Saturday. And his father had dressed him for the occasion. He was sporting a wreath of daffodils around his neck, and I have to say that I thought he looked smashing.

Darwin apparently did not share my opinion.

My own beloved, though, rushed to Darwin's rescue. Jill assured him that he looked great, and I quote: "You look fine, Darwin. Just look at that fool," she said, hitching her thumb in my general direction. I looked over my shoulder so as to ascertain who it was that Jill was disparaging, when I realized that it was yours truly she was referencing. Nothing like true love, huh?

Yes, another Daffodil Festival is in the books, so to speak, and we got very lucky with the weather. Saturday was pretty much as good a day as we could have hoped for, and Sunday proved that it's still not quite summer just yet. Saturday's weather allowed for yours truly to wear, without discomfort, the previously promised monkeys-riding-horseback pants, which have become something of a Daffodil Festival tradition. It was those pants — coupled with a straw hat and a plaid blazer — that apparently caused Jill's faux pas. Apparently she isn't quite so well versed in the ways of male fashion as I, but she has other strengths, so for this she can be forgiven.

But for those of you out there who count yourselves as amongst the uninitiated, allow me to elucidate the finer points of Daffodil Weekend fashion. For a perfect example, please commit to memory the photo that accompanies this week's column. That, kids, is the yin and the yang of Daffy fashion. You'll notice my own duds lean towards the more casual side. The day-glo pants pair nicely with the subtle plaid of the blazer, while the hat really ties everything together. John Wagley, on the other hand, has gone the more formal route. His theme this year was "restored elegance," and he certainly dressed the part. The cape, while a brave fashion statement in and of itself, pairs marvelously with the top hat.

It's important to realize that John and I have been pushing the fashion envelope for many years, and neither of these are moves I'd recommend for the budding fashionistas out there. Rather, it's like a Lowlands single malt. You graduate to Lily Pulitzer, kids. You aspire to dress like the Count of Monte Cristo. But you know what all this talk about dressing up reminds me of? Fishing on Nantucket.

This season, the House of Spencer is featuring their oh-so-drop-dead-elegant Segue Line that is sure to be the talk of runways from Milan to Miami.

Friends and neighbors, as this weekend has so aptly illustrated, the weather on this fair little stretch of sand is fickle. It'll change on a dime this time of year, so you've got to be prepared for just about

everything. And that goes doubly for when you're out there surfcasting.

Let's start on the inside and work our way out, shall we? First off, layers are vital. If you're planning on being out in the surf when the wind is blowing — and when is it not blowing this time of year? — you're going to want to make sure you've got some kind of wool sweater or fleece on over a long-sleeved shirt. Top that off with a windbreaker, and you've got a combination that will keep you warm while still allowing you to have a range of motion. Heavy socks are a must, too. I prefer wool for two reasons. One, my dainty little tootsies tend to get cold when I'm standing in a single place for any length of time. And two, wool will still keep your feet warm even if it

gets wet. And there is really nothing that can compare to the misery of cold feet when you're walking along the beach.

End it all off with a good pair of waders. Do yourself a favor and check for leaks before you get in the water. Better yet, check for leaks before you even leave the house. There are three methods I've tried in the past to test for leaks, and each has varying degrees of reliability and misery. First off, you can just wear 'em out into the water. If your waders leak, you'll know by the icy-cold tingling that is water running into them. The good thing here is that it's foolproof in terms of deciding whether or not your waders leak. The bad thing is that you're not going to be able to actually locate the leak. Another method is using the garden hose to fill up your waders with water, then seeing if any water comes squirting out. Again, you've got a pretty foolproof way of determining the existence of leaks, plus you can actually see where they are. Of course, you've also got to allow your waders to dry out now, which can take some time. Which brings us to method number three, which involves taking your waders into a

dark closet with a flashlight and a piece of chalk. Put the light in your waders and look for places where the light is shining through. Mark those spots with chalk, then repair them later. If you're in doubt about the ability of your waders to prevent the introduction of water, buy new ones. Best money you'll spend all week, I promise you.

If you're ready for anything, there's nothing that can surprise you. And that's especially true for the weather. So dress appropriately and don't let anybody tell you that you look like a fool. Unless you're wearing a top hat on the beach at Miacomet. Then you deserve it. ■

Tight lines.