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## ANNOUNCING

### Cornell Design League Show Set for April

The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Cornell Design League Runway Show has been set for April 26, 7PM in Barton Hall on the Cornell Campus. In the past, some 4-H groups have attended. If a club in your county is interested, contact Charlotte Coffman at [cwc4@cornell.edu](mailto:cwc4@cornell.edu) for information on ticket prices and availability. To learn more about the Design League and past shows, check out <http://www.rso.cornell.edu/CDesignL/index.php>

### New Online Courses

Ten one-credit courses in Socially Responsible Apparel Business have been launched online this semester. FSAD faculty Suzanne Loker and Charlotte Jirousek worked with their colleagues from the University of Delaware and Colorado State University to develop these unique courses based on the United Nations Global Compact, a voluntary international effort to support human rights, labor, and the environment. Although these classes are aimed at graduate students, the goal is to eventually reach a broad array of students and professionals. For more information, view the Cornell Chronicle article from November 2, 2007 at <http://www.news.cornell.edu/Chronicle/archive.shtml>

## ENGAGING YOUTH

### Join the Fun at the Finger Lakes 4-H Expo

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN



4-Hers and 4-H leaders will participate in two FSAD-sponsored workshops scheduled for March 8 at the Canandaigua Middle School in Canandaigua, NY. This popular annual event always draws a crowd with youth from at least nine counties in the Finger Lakes region. The *Let's Weave* workshop explores a variety of looms (2-harness table, backstrap, frame, and cards) while teaching fabric structures. Youth will take home a set of cards for later weaving fun.

The second workshop, *Let's Talk —Sewing Standards*, solicits feedback from teens and adults on developing evaluation standards for textile and apparel items shown at fairs. The long-term goal is to post online judging guidelines, visuals of construction techniques, evaluation forms, and tips for interacting with young people.



## **Create a Real or Virtual Smoothie**

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN



Thanks to Patricia Thonney and Patricia Relihan, a new activity *Super Smoothies* is now online at Go Figure!

<<http://gofigure.cce.cornell.edu>> Fill the animated blender with your favorite ingredients, hit the mix button, and then read or print the nutrition label. Compare the nutrients and calories of your concoction to those in a soda. Then head to the kitchen to make and enjoy the real thing! While online, don't forget to try the other Go Figure! activities.

## **Watkins Glen Students to visit FSAD**

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

Watkins Glen students interested in design, fashion, and fiber science will visit FSAD on April 1 for a first-hand look at the Cornell campus and FSAD studios, exhibits, and laboratories. These Home and Career Skills students are also gathering data for a sizing activity intended for the Go Figure! project.

## **Career Explorations 2008**

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

Once again, FSAD is participating in the annual 4-H summer program, Career Explorations. This year the Focus for Teens topic is *reFashion Entrepreneurs*. Youth will learn about clothing lifecycles and businesses based on recycled textiles and apparel. Participants will use beginning hand sewing techniques and easy embroidery stitches to design a "new" t-shirt from discarded ones. Participants will also develop podcasts of course activities, including interviews with local entrepreneurs. Encourage youth in your area to register soon as space is limited to no more than 20 young people.

For schedule and registration details see

<<http://nys4h.cce.cornell.edu/program/events/CareerEx.php>>

## **CONCERNING CONSUMERS**

### **Detergent Update**

CHARLOTTE COFFMAN

Detergent manufacturers change their products often and for a variety of reasons. Some highly publicized changes that you might have noticed recently on the store shelf are: 1) incorporation of fabric softeners, 2) new formulations, and 3) increased use of "green" ingredients/packaging,

To save the time and money of using a detergent and a separate fabric softener, some detergents now include the softener. *Consumer Reports (CR)* tested seven of these combination products along with 22 conventional detergents for cleaning, keeping dirt off, keeping dye off, and cost. They found that Tide

with a Touch of Downey, the best performing detergent with softener, ranked behind at least five of the conventional detergents in cleaning efficiency and preventing the re-deposition of dirt and dye. CR also compared the post-washing softness of cotton fabrics washed multiple times with the combination product to the softness of the same fabrics washed multiple times with a regular detergent plus a separate fabric softener. They found that using separate products did a better job. Finally, the cost of using the blended detergent-softener was 8 to 31 cents per load while the cost of using a separate detergent and softener was 6 to 61 cents per load.

Long accustomed to powders and liquids, consumers are now being introduced to different formulations such as the Droops gel pack and the OxiClean ball. Droops sells a pre-measured amount of a gel detergent in a water-soluble package. Just drop the packet in the washer and you are done. OxiClean sells a slow-dissolving ball of detergent encased in a mesh sack. Drop it into the washing machine for the wash cycle. Retrieve it for use in up to 25 loads. The presumed advantage of these products is convenience — the consumer doesn't have to measure the detergent. Unfortunately, the CR tests placed both the gel pack and the detergent ball at the bottom of the list for cleaning and prevention of re-depositing of soil and dye. Other bad news — they cost about 52 cents per load.

The push for “green” detergents is coming from both the public and some corporations. Because laundry detergents are used by so many, a little improvement of the product can yield big payoffs in the environment. The three hot issues are detergents engineered for use in cold water, surfactant choices, and reduced packaging. A Procter & Gamble (P&G) advertisement notes that if everyone in New York City did their laundry in cold water for just one day, the energy saved would be enough to light the Empire State Building for one month. P&G makes Tide Coldwater which ranked third among the conventional detergents in the CR cleaning tests. Purex, manufactured by Dial, also has a detergent recommended for cold water but it wasn't tested by CR. Cold-water detergents are engineered with modified surfactants and enzymes in order to accomplish cleaning at 60 degrees F compared to the usual laundry temperature of 90 degrees F. For ordinary wear, cold-water washing should be sufficient, but FSAD faculty member S. Kay Obendorf noted in the Environmental Science & Technology Online that cold water from the tap in winter in upstate New York might very well be colder than 60 degrees F. She also reminded readers that heavily soiled items should still be laundered in hot water.

Surfactants are critical to the cleaning action of detergents, but recently the surfactant class nonylphenol ethoxylates (NPEs) has come under attack. The European Union has banned these chemicals in down-the-drain applications, and the US Environmental Protection Agency claims that they are toxic to aquatic plants and animals. Manufacturers Dow Chemical, Huntsman Corp., and Rhodia maintain that the chemicals are safe to use. The number of detergents containing NPEs are decreasing, but the chemicals are still found in some detergents sold in the US including Sears Ultra Plus Stain Fighting Formula 9835, Sears Advanced Formula Plus with Oxi-Clean Ultra HE 9820, Dropps gel packs, and ShopRite Ultra Free'N Clear. At about 12 cents/load these products cost less than most detergents, but their cleaning power is also less. Knowledgeable consumers might chose Arm & Hammer Clean Burst (17 cents per load), Wal-Mart's Great Value Ultra Glacier Breeze (12 cents a load), or Costco's Kirkland Signature Ultra 38722 (12 cents per load) as all are comparable in price, clean better and do not contain NPEs.

Packaging is a good example of bigger NOT being better. At the Clinton Global Initiative, Wal-Mart announced its intention to favor suppliers that reduced packaging. Unilever was one of the first detergent companies to respond with its All Small & Mighty liquid, 32 ounces of a concentrated product that will wash as many loads of laundry as 100 ounces of traditional detergent. Dial's Purex brand also has a concentrated product enroute to the market. The idea of concentrated detergents isn't new. The detergent industry tried this approach about 15 years ago, but consumers felt they were getting less for their money when they went home with smaller containers. Maybe today's activist consumers, corporate interest, and potential legislation will convince the public that smaller is better.

Fabric softeners - make fabrics softer and fluffier; decrease static cling, wrinkling and drying time; impart a pleasing fragrance and make ironing easier. They are added to the final rinse or in the dryer,

Surfactants - improve the wetting ability of water; loosen and remove soil; and solubilize or suspend soils in the wash until soils are washed away.

Resources:

1. Consumer Union of US, Inc. Laundry Detergents Clean & Green Options, Consumer Reports, p. 43-44. January, 2007.
2. Consumer Union of US, Inc. Softergents for Double Duty, Consumer Reports, p.7. January, 2007.
3. McCoy, Michael. Going Green. Chemical & Engineering News 85 (5): 13-19. January 29, 2007. <http://pubs.acs.org/cen/coverstory/85/8505cover.html>
4. McCoy, Michael. Specialty Chemical Makers Seek Business both with Cleaning Product Innovators and the Companies that Follow Them. Chemical & Engineering news, 84 (5): 13-19. January 30, 2006. <http://pubs.acs.org/cen/coverstory/84/8405cleaning.html>
5. Soap & Detergent Association, <http://www.cleaning101.com/laundry/index.cfm>
6. Technology News. Cold-water Laundry Detergent Is a Hot Idea, Environmental Science & Technology Online, September 21, 2005. [http://pubs.acs.org/subscribe:journals:esthag-w:2005:sep:tech:rp\\_detergent.html](http://pubs.acs.org/subscribe:journals:esthag-w:2005:sep:tech:rp_detergent.html)

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