

A Bust for Low-Riding Trousers

New laws could mean run-ins with police

(AP) -- It's a fashion that started in prison, and now the saggy pants craze has come full circle — low-slung street strutting in some cities may soon mean run-ins with the law, including a stint in jail.

Proposals to ban saggy pants are starting to ride up in several places. At the extreme end, wearing pants low enough to show boxers or bare buttocks in one small Louisiana town means six months in jail and a \$500 fine. A crackdown also is being pushed in Atlanta. And in Trenton, N. J., getting caught with your pants down may soon result in not only a fine, but a city worker assessing where your life is headed.

"Are they employed? Do they have a high school diploma? It's a wonderful way to redirect at that point," said Trenton Councilwoman Annette Lartigue, who is drafting a law to outlaw saggy pants. "The message is clear: We don't want to see your backside."

The bare-your-britches fashion is believed to have started in prisons, where inmates aren't given belts with their baggy uniform pants to prevent hangings and beatings. By the late 80s, the trend had made it to gangster rap videos, then went on to skateboarders in the suburbs and high school hallways.

"For young people, it's a form of rebellion and identity," Adrian "Easy A.D." Harris, 43, a founding



Young men with low-slung, baggy jeans walk Saturday in Trenton, N.J.

member of the Bronx's legendary rap group Cold Crush Brothers. "The young people think it's fashionable. They don't think it's negative."

But for those who want to stop them see it as an indecent, sloppy trend that is a bad influence on children.

"It has the potential to catch on with elementary school kids, and we want to stop it before it gets there," said C.T. Martin, a black councilman from Atlanta. "Teachers have raised questions about what a distraction it is."

In Atlanta, a law has been intro-

duced to ban sagging and punishment could include small fines or community work—but no jail time, Martin said.

The penalty is stiffer in Delcambre, La., where in June the town council passed an ordinance that carries a fine of up to \$500 or six months in jail for exposing underwear in public. Several other municipalities and parish governments in Louisiana have enacted similar laws in recent months.

At Trenton hip-hop clothing store Razor Sharp Clothing Shop 4 Ballers, shop owner Mack Murray said Trenton's proposed ordinance

unfairly targets blacks.

"Are they going to go after construction workers and plumbers, because their pants sag, too?" Murray asked. "They're stereotyping us."

The American Civil Liberties Union agrees.

"In Atlanta, we see this as racial profiling," said Benetta Standly, statewide organizer for the American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia. "It's going to target African-American male youths. There's a fear with people associating the way you dress with crimes being committed."

New Orleans Keeps Black Majority

Study shows changing demographics

(AP) -- New Orleans is narrowly retaining a black majority after Hurricane Katrina, according to a recent study by The Brookings Institution.

The study determined that while blacks left the city at a much faster rate than whites, New Orleans was still 58 percent black during 2006. Before Katrina, which hit Aug. 29, 2005, the city was 67 percent black, according to the U.S. census.

"It's certainly still a predominantly African-American city," said William Frey, a demographer and senior fellow at Washington, D.C.-based Brookings. "Speculation that there was not going to be a black majority in the city is not true, according to these estimates."

While several studies have examined utility hookups and postal deliveries to estimate the population that has returned to New Orleans since Katrina, The Brookings Institution study is the first comprehensive look at the shifting demographics since the storm.

The Census Bureau estimated that New Orleans had about 455,000 residents a month before Katrina hit and was down to about 223,400 in July 2006. Other studies have shown that the city has regained approximately 60 percent

of its population.

Allison Plyer, deputy director of the Greater New Orleans Community Data Center, a nonprofit that has looked at population return to the city, said: "It's very important to remember these numbers are from last year and there's been significant change in the population since."

Plyer said an estimated 80,000 people have returned to New Orleans from 2006 through today. But like the experts at Brookings, she believed that the city's majority black population would not be supplanted.

"It's probably still true that the city has fewer African-American residents than it did pre-Katrina, but it probably has more African-Americans than it did last year," Plyer said, noting increased public school enrollment and other factors.

The Brookings study also found that metropolitan New Orleans had become "more well-educated, less poor and had a higher percentage of homeowners" since the storm.

For instance, 21 percent of the people who left the city after Katrina had less than a high school education, while 32 percent who have moved to the city after the storm are college graduates.

No Room for Historical Carousel

With Jantzen Beach remodel

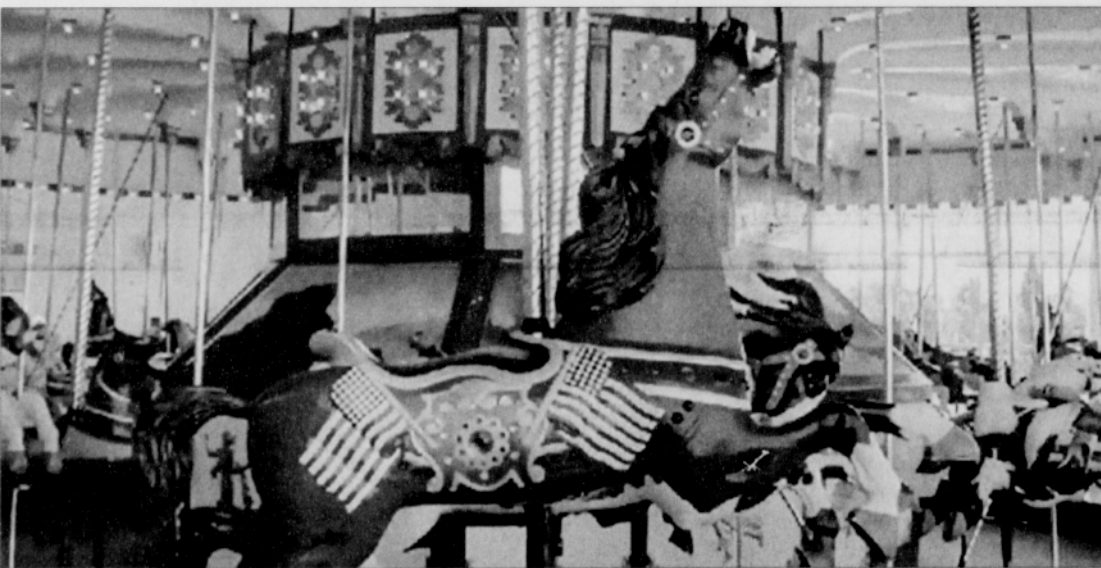
Jantzen Beach SuperCenter is exploring major enhancements for retail space at its Hayden Island location, but will give up its historic 1921 carousel.

The retail center is exploring re-development plans for the aging interior section of the north Portland mall.

"We are looking to create an open air retail space for customers that will be smaller, smarter, greener, and better," said Melissa Freeman, manager of Jantzen Beach.

Freeman said that a project team is discussing deconstruction a small portion of the aging interior portion of the mall only.

Circuit City, Home Depot, Michael's, Old Navy, Linen 'N Things, Staples, Sports Authority, Toys R Us, and other outside retailers will not be affected. Interior anchors Target, Ross Dress for Less, and Burlington Coat Factory will also remain open during re-development.



The historic 1921 carousel at Jantzen Beach SuperCenter in north Portland needs a new home because of plans to make space available for a remodeled shopping center.

The new space will also feature a smaller footprint, more outside space, and bioswales to reduce storm water runoff.

No date for the re-development has been set, but Freeman confirmed that all interior retailers will remain open through the holidays.

The interior Jantzen mall is also home to the CW Parker Carousel.

Although many interested parties have approached Jantzen about taking the carousel, discussions about the future of the carousel are just getting underway.

Freeman did say that although the mall received many requests from around the state, Jantzen is committed to keeping the carousel in the local area. Owners will also

likely donate the carousel to charity if the carousel is to be moved, and will not sell the historically significant pieces individually. Estimates for the carousel range up to \$2 million for the carousel if the horses are sold piecemeal.

Jantzen is committed to spending at least \$500,000 to properly dismantle and re-locate the carousel depending on the eventual plan.

"Jantzen Beach spends tens of thousands of dollars each year maintaining the beauty of the carousel for shoppers and children to enjoy," said Freeman.

Freeman also encouraged people who haven't ridden the carousel recently to stop by and go for a spin.

Rose Court Future Considered

The Portland Rose Festival Association has launched a task force to study all aspects of the court program and make recommendations for possible modifications. Any changes would be put into effect for the 2009 Rose Festival season.

"We know we have a great program, but we want to be sure we're meeting both the needs of the community and the needs of the festival," said Leslie Goodlow-Baldwin, co-chair of the Court Task Force and the first African American to lead the festival's board of directors. "If there are changes that need to be made, we're ready to make them."

The Court Task Force is seeking input from the general public via a questionnaire on the home page of the festival's website,

rosefestival.org.

Aspects of the court program being reviewed include eligibility requirements, purpose and job description, demographics and diversity, time commitment and overall program structure.

Since 1930 the Rose Festival has chosen young women from Portland high schools to serve on its court. Court members represent their schools throughout May and June at many community events, hospitals, senior centers and meetings with business leaders and civic groups; they also receive a \$3,500 scholarship courtesy of the Randall Group, which has generously donated to the Rose Festival court scholarship program, and Pacific Power, which also provides a mentoring program of female executives.

Rights Groups Rally for 'Jena 6'

(AP) -- Civil rights groups hope to see tens of thousands of demonstrators descend on a small Louisiana town on Thursday to support six black teenagers charged over a high school fight in a case that activists say reeks of lingering racism in the South.

Many African Americans say the case of the "Jena 6," which started when three nooses were found hanging from a tree at the school that white students considered only they could sit under, is evidence of bias against young black males in the judicial system.

They say it shows discrimination in rural southern towns in the south decades after racial segregation ended.

The NAACP, civil rights leaders Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton and other groups hope to bring tens of thousands of demonstrators to Jena, a town of about 3,000 some 120 miles

northwest of New Orleans. "The underlying issue is that there was a climate in Jena that has very heavy racial overtones," Richard McIntire, a spokesman for the NAACP. "

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