

Everyone has own style, speaker informs students

**Author discusses fashion,
need to stress positives**

BY DEBORAH LOCKE
of the Journal Sentinel staff

Pewaukee — Helen Villa Connor, 50, apologized to the Waukesha County high school students for the way her generation and the one before it narrowly defined beauty as youthful, tall and thin.

When women and girls look into a mirror and don't like the reflection, the problem is the clothes, not the person, she said.

"Beauty belongs to every woman," she told the Waukesha County Technical College audience of 170 fashion and marketing students on Wednesday. "Everyone can develop a style of their own. Fashion is about clothes, but style is about the person wearing them."

Connor is co-author of "The Triumph of Individual Style — A Guide to Dressing Your Body, Your Beauty, Your Self," published by Timeless Editions in 1994.

Barbara Ollhoff, WCTC fash-

ion marketing instructor, said the morning was designed to give the young people some training in the fashion marketing field and introduce them to WCTC college programs.

Bangs or No Bangs?

During a break and after the presentation, girls swarmed around Connor, asking questions such as what body types they were and if it was OK to wear bangs.

Connor answered all questions, tossing in compliments about pretty hair and eyes and gentle encouragement about a different clothing style or fabric to accentuate the girl's natural good looks.

"Maybe you want to grow those bangs out," she said about a puff of blond hair.

To another girl, Connor advised wearing taut fabric like a crisp cotton blouse to enhance a muscular, lean frame with broad shoulders.

Jackie Kennedy herself had figure imperfections such as a straight waist that was difficult to effectively belt, Connor said. Kennedy compensated by wearing and popularizing linen

sheath-style dresses.

Variety of Life

All living species have diversity in appearance, Connor said, showing a slide of brightly colored butterflies. A weight of 135 pounds on one person may look much different than the same weight on another.

"What does 135 pounds look like?" she asked. "We don't know."

Often, children are stereotyped as uncaring about their clothing, said Judy Boeck, who teaches interior design and design trends at Menomonee Falls High School and brought several marketing and fashion students to the presentation.

"We may see the kids in plaid shirts and blue jeans only, but they do have an interest in making the best of what they have," she said.

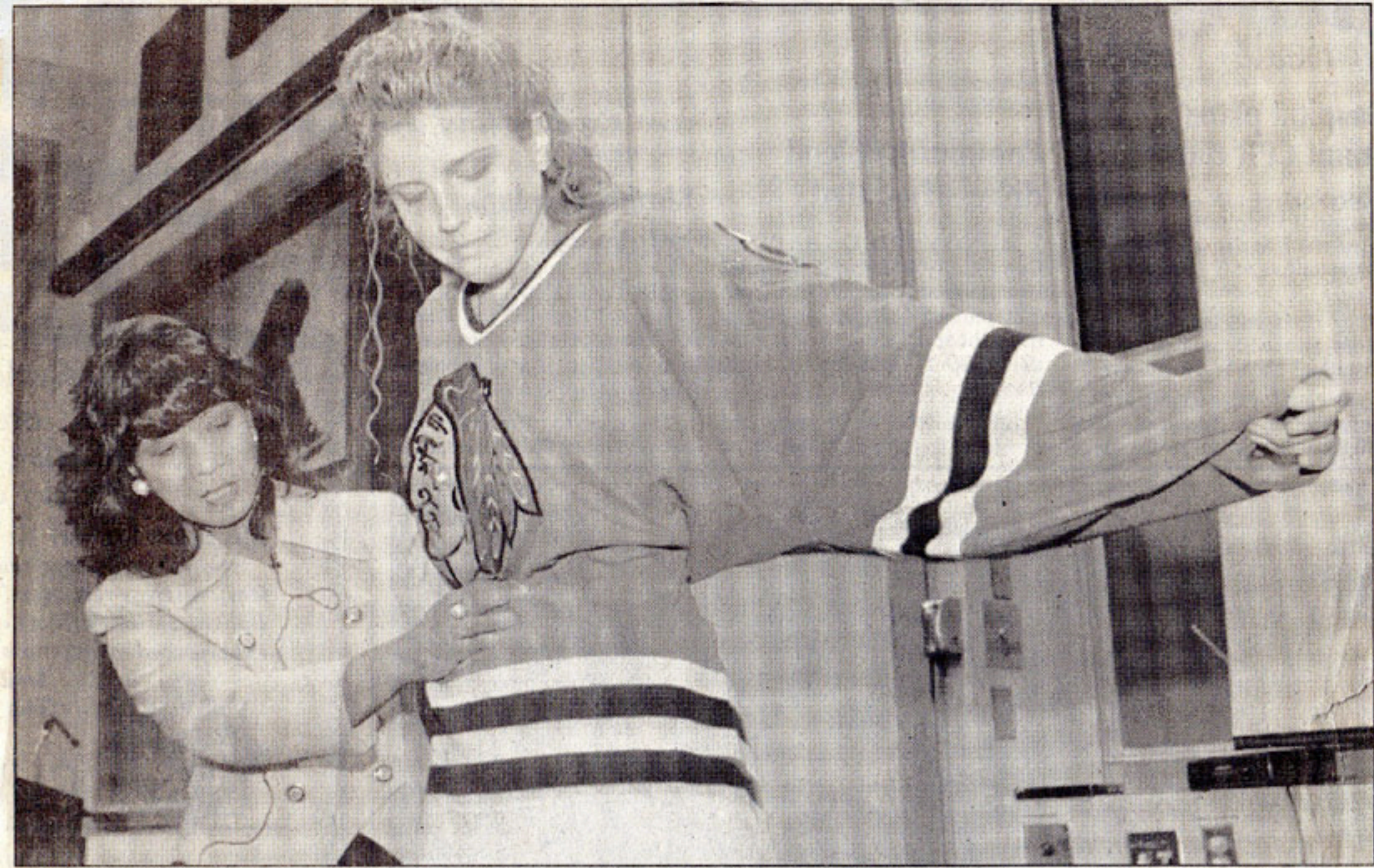
Winning Converts

Now some of the students may develop an interest in helping a customer make the best of what he or she has, said Heather Ebert, a senior at Oconomowoc High School.



WILLIAM MEYER/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Helen Villa Connor (left) evaluates the right look for Kelly Pfaff, a senior at Menomonee Falls High School, during a talk about fashion Connor gave Wednesday at Waukesha County Technical College.



Todd Ponath, FREEMAN STAFF

Helen Connor talks about the clothes Cheryl Staeger, a Muskego High School student, picked for a night at a sporting event during a fashion consultation for a group of high school students at Waukesha County Technical College. The students were taught what types of clothes were appropriate for certain situations and also what types of clothes would look the best on their body types.

Fashion sense

Expert gives advice on what works - and what doesn't

By Stacy Swadish
Freeman Staff

PEWAUKEE — Women should dress to complement their own body shape and not worry about being thin.

That was the message delivered to 170 high school and college fashion merchandising students this week by author and fashion speaker Helen V. Connor. Connor, of San Carlos, Calif., used student volunteers to demonstrate many of her points.

The talk was part of an annual career day and was designed to mimic a professional

training seminar, said Barbara Ollhoff, chairman of the fashion merchandising department at Waukesha County Technical College.

Students from Arrowhead, Muskego, Mukwonago, Menomonee Falls, Oconomowoc, Waukesha West and Palmyra-Eagle high schools who are earning college credit for high school courses attended the workshop, along with 20 WCTC students.

"We have these stereotyped images of what is beautiful," Ollhoff said. "Too many young people think they have to be thin to be beautiful."

Ten students were chosen to model outfits they selected from J.C. Penney and explain why they chose them. Connor then critiqued their choices.

"Don't let people see the clothes before they see you," said Connor, as she adjusted the neckline on a red beaded formal dress.

The dress, modeled by Kelly Drescher of Muskego, was a good selection, Connor said, but more care should be taken to more closely match the exact shade of red in the dress to that of the shoes.

Other hints shared with stu-

dents included swapping chunky T-strap shoes now in style for a more elegant pump with a formal dress, and making sure jackets fit correctly.

"This jacket is too long for you," Connor told Trish Martinez of Mukwonago. And the pin-striped pants she was wearing should match the jacket in both fabric and color.

Connor praised Lucy Bozek of Menomonee Falls for the outfit she chose. The teen wore a green miniskirt paired with a white knit top and green and white patterned vest. The vest texture complemented Bozek's wavy blond hair, Connor said.