



Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

After careful investigation I am convinced we have a sock gobbler living in our washing machine. He's invisible and eats only one sock at a time.

"If there really is a sock gobbler," my wife argues. "then why does he eat only one of a kind? If one sock fills him, why doesn't he eat the spare sock on his next visit?"

I have no answer. I only know he is there. To prove it I have 13 unmatched socks in my sock drawer—widows of the sock gobbler.

At first I thought it was my wife's careless washing procedures. "The reason my socks don't come out even is you don't put them in even." I howled when my most expensive and favorite pair of socks became a single.

"I remember distinctly gathering them two by two. Believe me, Noah didn't do a more complete job. I took two pairs from your shoes under the bed . . . a red pair from Bruce's feet while he was asleep . . . a stiff pair from his ceiling . . . a mud-caked pair from under the front seat . . . a moldy pair from under the drier . . ."

"Aha," I screamed. "I bet the rest of the mates are under the washing machine." However, my search turned up nothing but a bucketful of lint, three pennies, two rusty washers from my daughter's bicycle, a skate key and the bell off the cat's collar.

"I think inside this washer is a little trap door that pulls in one sock from each pair and holds them captive. Somewhere in this machine lies a secret treasure house of mismatched socks."

"You're not making sense," my wife said, shaking her head. "Those maroon socks always come out perfectly."

"Sure," I moaned sensing defeat. "I hate the maroon pair. The elastic is stretched out of the top and they have a big crease across the top of my big toe. They come out of the washer even when you don't put them in. It's the sock gobbler. There's no other answer."

I went back to my room and laid out the 13 mismatched socks on the bed. The only ones left in the drawer were some big, white fuzzy socks that have shrunk up until they look like those little things golfers pull over the heads of the club. . . two pairs with the tops stretched out so they looked like shopping bags. . . and, of course, the maroon pair.

Last week I bought 10 pairs of new socks — all the same size and color. Just to be sure, however, I've started washing them out by hand and hanging them on the shower curtain rod so I can check them during the night.

Of course, there are other problems. My teenage son wears socks the same size as mine. Each time he wears them they disappear completely. Not just one, but both of them, before they even get to the washing machine. However, I guess I should get some satisfaction out of the fact that the current famine is causing the sock gobbler to suffer.

In the meantime I am going to start a new fashion custom. Why should we be forced to wear the same color sock on one foot as the other? Besides, blue and brown afford real variety, especially when you cross your legs. And anything is better than maroon.