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A real sock hop

Sarah Banse

Summer has many fine attributes – warm days, swimming in cool lakes, fresh tomatoes and corn with names like Super Sonic and Trucker's Delight, fireflies, but most importantly, footwear that requires no socks.

I never thought I'd wish for dirty feet and flip flops, but a month into the school year and every day we are faced with the same dilemma. "I can't find any socks!" There are plenty of socks in my house, all single and living in a commune at the bottom of a giant laundry basket.

I don't know what it is about life as a sock that makes them want to run. Granted, the foot might not be the most pleasant part of the body, but hey, the underwear as well as the jock straps in my house hang in there, so why can't the socks stay together?

If only the socks could take a lesson from the T-shirts which are fruitful and multiply. I have not purchased a T-shirt for one of my children in years and yet they spill out of drawers and dominate the laundry piles, a force in numbers. I could carpet my home in multi-colored Park & Rec attire.

Perhaps matching socks is not in my DNA. I grew up in a house with four children and a single mother. We were the kids in gym class that stood on the line with one tall navy knee sock and one white ankle, brothers and sisters alike. I don't ever recall trying to match socks growing up. We were thankful for two, regardless of color. Kids these days have such high expectations.

My husband grew up in a house of matching socks, I can tell. Morning after morning I am woken up to him grumbling and rooting through baskets of hosiery trying to find a pair. It doesn't matter how many sets he buys, the black hole that is my dryer abducts one. In an effort to thwart the problem he rolls his socks together and places them in the laundry basket. I have to admit,

I often wash them that way to combat the morning hunt, assuring they come out just the way they went in.

In an act of desperation my husband decided he would be in charge of the socks, organizing, pairing and distributing. On his first sorting expedition, he declared it "fun" and likened it to a puzzle. I appreciated his enthusiasm and gladly handed the job over to him, telling him it was a puzzle I had no desire to solve. Apparently after three or four go-rounds, he feels the same about the mysterious challenge and at present has no desire to tackle the quagmire.

Before school started I vowed to start fresh. Everyone got eight new pairs. One for every day of the week, plus a bonus. I figured that would be plenty for the five mandatory sock days of the school week. Sixty-four socks.

The first week of school, everyone grabbed a new pair each day and we got out the door without incident. I thought things had turned around. This year would be different.

September's come to a close and I am left wondering, where have all the socks gone? I have found them abandoned and wet in the yard, crusty and hard and in the car, mixed in with Legos and Lincoln logs, under beds, behind toilets and in the dog's crate.

Despite my best effort, I am resigned to the fact that like my mother before me, I have neither the time nor the desire to conquer the socks in my house. Let them run, see if I care.

Sarah Banse is a writer and mother of four. She has been a Wayland resident for over 10 years.