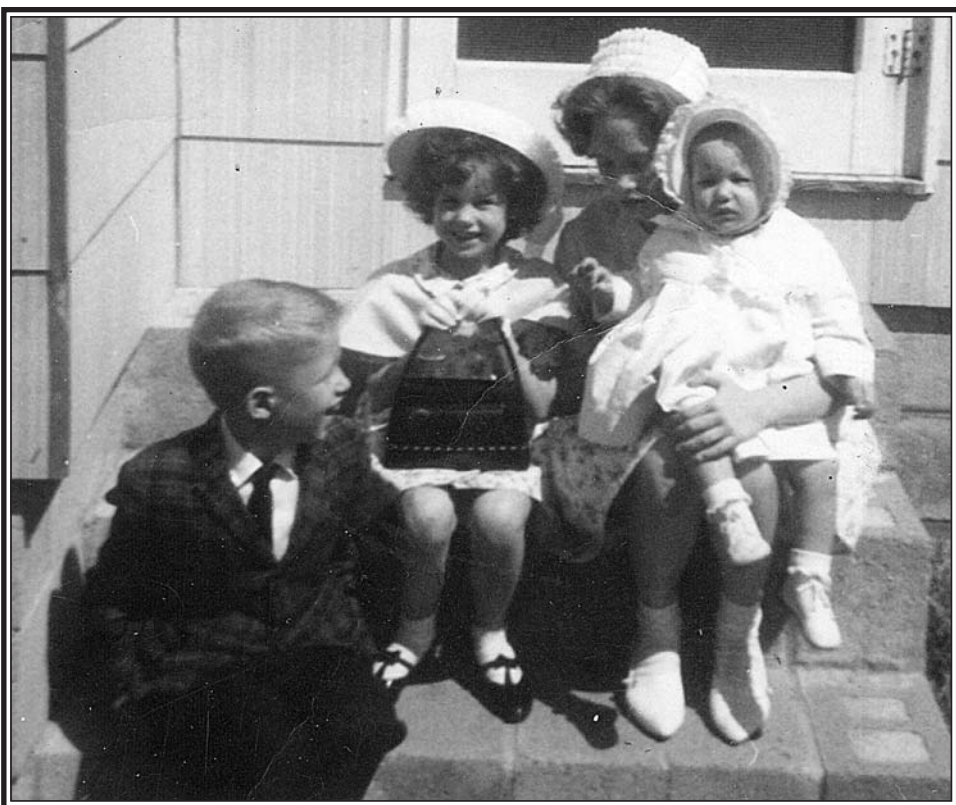


Wearing a Hat? Hats Off to You!



Author Melanie Morse shows off a big smile and a big hat. She is with brother Chip, sister Karen and baby sister Tammy on Karen's knee on Easter day 1964. Charles wasn't born yet. Their mother Betty Lockhart must have been proud!

My grandmother had a hat for every occasion now that I think about it and she wore them proudly with panache. There were big brims, gradual brims, and pastel to brightly colored caps adorning her hat tree which she retrieved for every appropriate occasion.

Each Sunday she would wear her choice for church services. Sitting in the same pew each week, she was accompanied by a small sea of hat heads, ladies who didn't mind getting fashionably dressed and topping off their Sunday best with the perfect punctuation mark, the hat. Fabrics common for spring included taffeta, dupioni silk, crepe, satin and linen. They were beautifully adorned with buttons and bows, rose curls and leaves, floral knots, netting, feathers and sashes to name a few and my grandmother and her friends had them all! Each Sunday the pews looked like they had been filled with little flowers in flower pots sitting neatly in a row. How pretty they were.

During that time hats were definitely more prevalent than today and the tradition included more than just Sunday headdresses. In addition there were bridal hats, mother's day hats, Easter bonnets, Kentucky Derby and garden party hats, cocktail and tea party hats, church social hats and even casual, straw hats for picnics and the like.

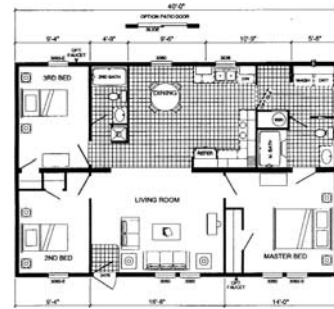
As a young girl I remember my two sisters and me wearing Easter hats. It was a special occasion and all the little girls were as serious about wearing them as our elders. My cousins and girlfriends participated, though ours weren't nearly as elegant as our grandmothers. Our choices included those decorated with lace and ribbons, petals and bows and were filled to the proverbial brim with frills, making each of us feel like the queen of the day.

Lately it is rare to see a dressed up lady in a beautifully adorned hat, except maybe for the Red Hat Society or some similar assemblage. But casual hats are worn by nearly every girl in town. Baseball caps are quite common and straw hats on the beach are typical. Even cowboy hats are making a statement. But, they just don't carry the same wallop hats used to. What a shame. I find myself missing the sight. Not that I would ever in a million years be an all-occasion hat-wearer. I've been told that my head is too small. But I've managed to muster up the nerve to go out donning one at least a couple of times.

There's nothing better than a warm toboggan on a cold, cold night. And what about the Ivy cap? If you haven't tried it you really ought to. It's cool, stylish, comfy and provides shade from the sun and warmth in the chilly air. I haven't found a Sunday-go-to-meeting hat yet, but I'm still in pursuit of the courage it takes to wear one if I do. If you think you could be a hat wearer, then hats off to you. Easter Sunday is upon us, spring weddings, graduations, and tons of appropriate outings are waiting for you to show off those beautiful bonnets. Be daring, be classic, be-utiful!

By Melanie Morse

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Tom Taylor is shown here receiving congratulations from Bobby Briley, the Sunday School Superintendent of Brown Creek Baptist Church. Taylor was honored for achieving perfect attendance in Sunday School for thirty-four years.



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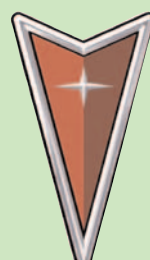
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