

*The Wichita Eagle*

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## **NEW STORES AND A NEW REPORTER**

While the rest of the world (all right, only half the population of Wichita) shopped the day after Thanksgiving, my 10-year-old granddaughter, Ashley, and I were busy checking out three new stores in town.

We weren't out to shop. We were reporters, and the junior reporter had a death grip on her notebook, ready to report.

First stop for me and my stringer was the old Dockum Drug Store location on the corner of Hillside and Douglas.

Epic Apparel is there now. It's a sleek boutique that looks like it was transplanted from New York City. A floor of super-wide planks and modern furniture makes a comfortable sitting area.

Owners Julie and Corey Rau have stocked the store with women's and men's clothing, with more to come. Within a few hours of opening the store, they decided on things to change.

"We carry sizes 0 to 10," Julie explained, "but I think we'll go up a few sizes." The Raus plan to get in a wider range of sizes and an even larger assortment of jeans brands.

This is their first retail clothing store venture, Corey said, "and it's been an adventure."

A constant stream of customers checked out the new kid on the block on opening day.

Ashley's favorite items were T-shirts with clever sayings. She wrote, "There is a cool new shirt that says, 'You're Just Jealous.'"

She noted the surroundings: "The sleek, black furniture is actually very comfortable."

Next stop was Kate Lane, a light, airy store full of trendy clothes and cool accessories in the new Waterfront development at 13th and Webb Road. It's north of the Red Robin restaurant and was opened by Lindsey Lane and her mother-in-law, Diana Lane.

Lindsey, who grew up in El Dorado, moved back from Los Angeles and wanted "to bring an L.A. feel to Kansas." The two worked on the 1,400-square-foot store that's full of trendy styles from Los Angeles designers.

Part of one wall has cubbyholes filled with sunglasses, handbags and jewelry that caught Ashley's eye.

Earlier in the day, she had done an imitation of a person who had had too much Botox injected in her lips. So we laughed when we saw the whimsical little bag that said "Botox Fund."

But back to business.

Lindsey told us that a hot new jeans line by Allen B. Schwartz will arrive soon with the label "A Denim." It's jeans with some sparkle trim.

And who is Kate in Kate Lane? Kate is Lindsey's middle name.

The third stop was Attitudes Dancewear Etc., 650 N. Carriage Parkway. It's a fun place chock-full of dance wear.

Although Attitudes has been open a few months, I hadn't taken time to check it out.

Just inside the door are oceans of pink tulle and a white Christmas tree decked out in pink marabou garland. Just walking in drew a big "Whoa!" from Ashley.

We were greeted by owner Beth Rea, who was a dancer for many years and also worked for Footlights, a dance wear store, now closed.

Beth said she enjoys going to market and buying the dance wear and dance-related gifts and accessories for her store, but she also loves to decorate.

She has unexpected items in her store - a pink dishwasher, a pink refrigerator, an antique dresser - covered with dance-themed merchandise, including jewelry boxes, stationery, Christmas ornaments and tote bags.

“Even though I don’t dance anymore, I wanted to be part of the dance world,” she said. “And I wanted to display my merchandise more like a clothing store.

“So much dance wear carries over to street wear, so I hope the store appeals to non-dancers, too.”

Then it was back to the newsroom where Ashley asked the question all reporters ask: “How am I going to get all this in one story?”

How, indeed.

It’s back! -Ebony Fashion Fair, the traveling fashion show locally sponsored by members of the Alumni Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, will be at 8 p.m. Tuesday at the Hughes Metropolitan Complex, 5015 E. 29th St. North.

The show features couture fashions from American and European designers.

Tickets are \$25 and are available at the door or by calling 214-2581 or 689-8803.

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