

A briefs intrusion

SouthCoast model joins in effort for annual [Underwear Day](#) survey

By CURT BROWN, *Standard-Times* staff writer

ACUSHNET -- Ever have that dream where you show up for work in your [underwear](#)?

Acushnet native Keith Kirkwood is living it.

Only it's not a subconscious manifestation of anxiety.

It's his job.

Today, the 22-year-old will be one of the 24 male and female models participating in the third annual [National Underwear Day](#) -- an event held at some of New York's busiest locations to highlight the changes in male and female [underwear](#) fashion.

Wearing nothing but their [skivvies](#) and their smiles, Mr. Kirkwood and the other models will approach men and women in Times Square and Penn Station, ask their [underwear](#) preferences and solicit signatures for a petition seeking support for a [National Underwear Day](#).

"I'm hoping to have a fun time and give some grandma type a thrill," he said yesterday in an interview.

The event is about educating people about the choices they have in [underwear](#), said Kate Barnett, a spokeswoman for [freshpair.com](#), an Internet retailer of men's and women's [intimate apparel](#) and the sponsor of [National Underwear Day](#).

"There have been a lot of changes, from [boxers](#) to [briefs](#) to fashion items," she said.

Ms. Barnett said the event will get some air time on Fox's morning show "Fox & Friends."

Here are some of the more (ahem) revealing [underwear](#) facts [freshpair.com](#) has uncovered, based on a sampling of 20,000 people.



PETER PEREIRA/The Standard-Times

Keith Kirkwood of Acushnet will be modeling today on the streets of Manhattan -- in his [skivvies](#). Mr. Kirkwood and other models will conduct a survey on [underwear](#) preferences.

- Married men change their [underwear](#) twice as often as single men.
- In 1935, the first men's [briefs](#) appeared. They had a Y-shaped front overlapping fly on knitted drawers and came in both short and long styles.
- [Bras](#) didn't exist until 1913, when Mary Phelps Jacob tied two handkerchiefs together with ribbon. In 1928, Maidenform introduced modern cup sizes.
- The [thong](#) first gained popularity in Brazil in the 1980s as a swimsuit style. By the 1990s, thong [underwear](#) became popular and today is one of the fastest selling styles.
- In 1991, the average [bra](#) size in the United States was 34B; today it's 36C.

When he's asking people about their preferences in [underwear](#), Mr. Kirkwood, whose role model is Elvis, said his attitude will be similar to "a Roman god."

Despite his appearance, he said his actions will be strictly professional. "I'm not going to have a beer or get 10 girls' numbers," he said. "I'm excited about doing this. I'm looking forward to it."

He said he won't feel weird about approaching women clad in only his [underwear](#). "You're in New York. Things are very open in New York. It's going to be a good time," he said.

He said he is confident about his appearance.

"I wasn't born with six-pack abs. I have to work to look this way." Mr. Kirkwood has only 3 percent body fat on a 5-foot, 11-inch, 162-pound frame.

He spends two hours a day, six days a week, at a Dartmouth gym, is careful about what he eats and takes dialect lessons.

"You have to be confident. You have eyes. If you go to the gym every day, you know you look good."

Part of his efforts at self-improvement are focused on perfecting his charm. "Looks get you in the door. Personality gets you the job," he said.

For a young man who has been seen in his [unmentionables](#) on billboards in Naples and Malmo, Sweden, embarrassment was overcome a long time ago, he said.

He said he gets kidded all the time about what he does, but it doesn't bother him.

Friends give him a ribbing, saying he should "get a real job," or they want to know "how much of that is air brushed?" when they see him in an ad.

His grandfather, Willie Case of Cobb Hill, Ky., has also teased him that he's going to take Mr. Kirkwood's body and put his face on it.

Mr. Kirkwood is happy he was chosen to wear [underwear](#) for the fashion show in Manhattan later today as part of [National Underwear Day](#) activities.

He lives in Acushnet at his grandmother's home and takes the train to New York three or four times a week for work.

The 2001 graduate of Old Colony Regional Vocational-Technical High School, Rochester, who studied computers, a couple years ago dreamed of being a big time male model.

He caught the eye of modeling scouts at a talent show in Fairhaven two years ago and modeled in Boston for 1½ years.

About six months ago, he broke into the New York market and is excited about the



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prospects of earning a minimum of \$650 an hour.

He has traveled all over the United States and to parts of Europe. He says he has met owners of Fortune 500 companies and has rubbed shoulders with the likes of Jessica Simpson and Nick Lachey, Paris Hilton, Ice-T and the rap duo the Ying Yang Twins, and worn \$1,500 jackets and \$3,000 suits lined with diamonds.

"You bump into celebrities all the time. You're an equal with them because they're at your shows. They're coming to your house," he said.

Mr. Kirkwood said he's still a rookie by modeling standards in a society that treats models like rock stars.

He knows his time in the modeling business could be limited, but he's enjoying it for now.

"I'm pursuing a dream and the dream is actually coming true. You can do it as long as you have your hair and you stay in shape."

For more information about Mr. Kirkwood, he can be contacted at his e-mail address [">Lexbmx@aol.com](mailto:>Lexbmx@aol.com)

Contact Curt Brown at cbrown@s-t.com

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