DEAR ABBY:

I am 39, married, and a professional woman with a good income. My best friend, "Barbie," and I both went to work after high school without completing our education. However, after several years I decided to go to college and get a degree so I could change careers. It turned out to be one of the best decisions I ever made. My income has more than doubled.

Barbie is obviously jealous of my new life, which affords me opportunities to travel, take vacations, and have the money to buy things I couldn't afford before. She and her family barely make ends meet. Although we have been like sisters since childhood, I now feel as if I must walk on eggshells around her — guarding my conversation lest I mention a new purchase or having time off. If something does slip out, Barbie becomes defensive and sarcastic.

Abby, I shouldn't have to apologize for my new lifestyle. I worked hard to make a change for myself. What can I do? I really like her, but this is becoming difficult.

An example: We went shopping last week. She bought only a gift she had to have for a birthday — nothing for herself. I felt uncomfortable with my purchases, even though they weren't extravagant. She made a comment to the effect that "it must be nice to be able to buy something so frivolous."

I should mention that Barbie's parents are still willing

DEAR ABBY

to send her through college or a tech school, even at the age of 39, but she chooses not to make the effort. — *TIRED OF FEELING APOLOGETIC*

DEAR TIRED: When your friend commented that it must be nice to be able to buy something frivolous, you had an opening to tell her that before you earned your degree you couldn't either, which was one of the reasons you decided it was time to change your life by returning to school. Your friend is fortunate she has parents who are able (and willing) to pay for her college education. How sad that she lacks the determination and drive to get one.

As things stand, the nature of your friendship with Barbie must change. If the relationship is to continue, you will have to forgo the shopping trips together and any references to your new lifestyle. Otherwise, they will be perceived as bragging, and the comparisons may be painful to her. Be prepared to be sensitive to that, or move on.

DEAR ABBY:

I am the owner of a small boutique for women. My only full-time employee is everything an employer could ask for. However, she often comes in looking like she just crawled out of bed and doesn't own an iron.

What can I say to help her become more aware of her appearance? I don't want to hurt her feelings. I jokingly told her to "retire" a pair of slacks she frequently wears because they are too tight and the rear end is shiny. But this week she came in wearing them again — so evidently, she didn't get the message.

Please help. Thank you. — *ANNE IN MISSOURI*

DEAR ANNE: Because your employee didn't take the hint, you must be more direct with her. Explain that you expect her to dress more carefully for work because: 1. Her attire represents the image of the shop, and 2. a salesperson who is sharply dressed inspires customers to shop. Then tell her exactly what you expect from her, and offer to help her coordinate some acceptable outfits — perhaps by giving her a discount on some items from the store.

If that doesn't work, consider putting together a "uniform" for her to wear when she's working. It's what some of the top designers have done in their stores.

Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Dear Abby is written by Jeanne Phillips and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. The column is distributed by the Universal Press Syndicate.

LIFESPAN CENTER ACTIVITIES

General information

The Coles County Council on Aging offices are located at the LifeSpan Center, located at 11021 E. County Road 800 N., Charleston (northeast of Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center).

The telephone number for the Coles County Council on Aging and LifeSpan Center is 639-5160. The telephone numbers for the programs are: Coles County RSVP, 639-5165; Telecare, 639-5166; Family Care Giver Resource Center, 639-5168; TRIP, 639-5167; and Dial-A-Ride, 639-5169 or 1-800-500-5505.

Lunch at LifeSpan

July 9-13

Lunches are $3 per person. All ages are welcome. Reservations are required.

Monday — Taco salad, Spanish rice, pea salad, snickerdoodle bar.

Tuesday — Southern catfish fillets, macaroni and cheese, vegetable blend, lemon angel bars.

Wednesday — Country-fried steak, mashed potatoes w/gravy, broccoli, pudding.

Thursday — Roasted chicken, sweet potatoes, peas, Reese's peanut butter cake.

Friday — Meatloaf, au gratin potatoes, Pacific vegetable blend, cookies.

Calendar of events

July 9-13

Monday — 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Bob Ross painting class, $40 registration required, all supplies included.

Tuesday — 9-10 a.m., men's coffee, discussion and doughnuts; 9-10 a.m., Arthritis Foundation exercise class; 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Tees 'N' Towels, appointment required and bring towel; 10 a.m., blood pressure checks; 10:30 a.m., bingo; 1 p.m., movie, "Treasure Buddies" (family, PG); 1-3 p.m., Mattoon/Charleston Art Guild.

Wednesday — 10-11 a.m., Lake Land College Japanese art class; 10 a.m.-noon, ladies game of pool; 10:45 a.m., bingo; noon, flowers for Mel drawing for lunch participants; 1 p.m., card games; 1-2 p.m., Lake Land College Art Gone Wild class; 1 p.m., movie, "9 to 5" (comedy, PG); 3-4 p.m., Lake Land College One Day to Cooking Fame class; 3-5:30 p.m., United Way board meeting.

Thursday — 8:30-11 a.m., RSVP Advisory Council new member orientation; 9-10 a.m., Arthritis Foundation exercise class; 9:30-11:30 a.m., Rules of the Road; 10-11 a.m., birthday party with cake; 10-11 a.m., Bible study; 10:45 a.m., bingo; 1 p.m., movie, "A Little Bit of Heaven" (romance, PG-13); 1-2 p.m., Lake Land College Floral Design Class.

Friday — 10:45 a.m., bingo; 1 p.m., movie, "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" (Classic, PG).

Dial-A-Ride

Dial-A-Ride services are available from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Saturdays and 12 to 9:30 p.m. Sundays.

All locations in Coles County are available. Fares vary. Call 639-5169 or 1-800-500-5505 for more information.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Bridge results listed

The results of the bridge game played Monday are as follows:

North/south: Joanna Hebermehl and Milt Van Reed, 1A; Bill Morgan and Betty Miller, 2A, 1B; Keith Wilhour and Ron Diehl, 3A; David Stevens and Grant Sterling, 2B.

East/west: Dan Dorney and Rich Brummer, 1A; Jonell and Leo Comerford, 2A, 1B; Lois and Paul Hartke, 3A, 2B.

The next game will be played at 6:45 p.m. Monday, at the First Christian Church in Charleston.

Blood drive planned Sunday

The Westfield community

za from noon-4 p.m. Saturday at Spanky's Bar and Grill, 1920 Oak St., Mattoon.

The event will have booths, prizes, drawings, Mystery Walk, Wheel of Destiny, dunk tank, balloon darts, and Cardinal tickets.

Herb program to be presented at Charleston library

A Grow Your Own Herbs Master Gardening program will be held at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Charleston Carnegie Public Library, Rotary Room B. Master Gardener Marsha Carr will be the presenter, providing tips and information on starting an herb garden.

For more information, call 345-4913 or visit www.charlestonlibrary.org.

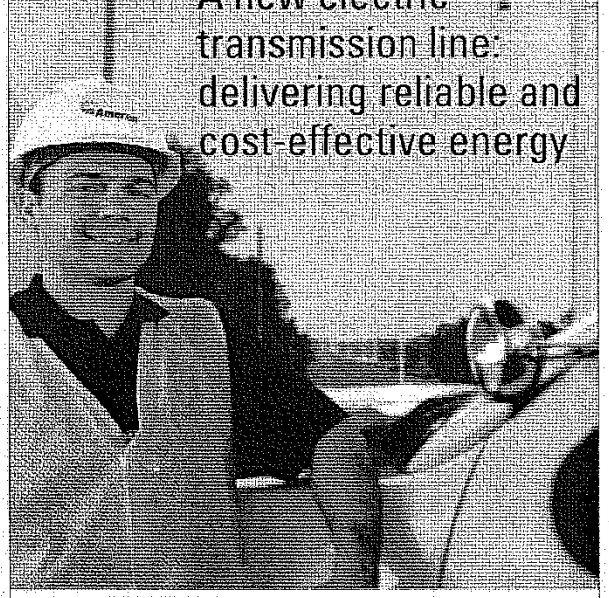
Shop locally

AND SUPPORT AREA MERCHANTS

Classes will cover Word, Publisher, Excel, Access and PowerPoint.

Classes meet from 6 to 9 p.m. today, Tuesday, July 12, size, and the cost of the classes is $100. Call 254-2796 to register.

The teaching center is a community outreach ministry Creative Teaching Center uses the education building of Real Life Community Church, 2220 Champaign Ave., Mattoon.



Please join us for an open house—because your input matters.

The Illinois Rivers Transmission Project will improve reliability, provide more access to renewable power and bring economic benefits to our area. And your opinion is vital as this initiative takes shape. At our open house, you can learn about the need for this new transmission line, share your thoughts on best possible routes and get answers to your questions.

Unique Suites Hotel
5 – 8 p.m. July 26
920 W. Lincoln, Charleston, IL 61920