PREPPY HANDBOOK

"Look, Muffy, a book for us."

The first guide to *The* Tradition. Mannerisms, Etiquette, Dress Codes, The Family. How to Be Really Top Drawer.

The Legacy of Good Taste, Proper Breeding & the Right Nickname.



MUMMY



DADDY

The Crucial
Element.Top-Siders,
Loafers, Tassels.
Cuffs a Must.
The Sock Controversy....... PAGE 138



EDITED BY LISA BIRNBACH



Winning with Ease and Losing with Grace. Lacrosse, Squash, Crew, and Field Hockey. The Sailing Scene. Flotillas, Regattas, Yachts and Yacht Clubs. The Sporting Life. Tally Ho!...PAGE 100

Essays on:

THE VIRTUES OF PINK & GREEN
REGULATING THE CASH FLOW ORIGINS OF THE PREP SCHOOL THE OLD BOY NETWORK
CLUBS AT THE BIG THREE
BASIC BODY TYPES

PREPPY HANDBOOK

LISA BIRNBACH

JONATHAN ROBERTS

URITERS
LISA BIRNBACH
JONATHAN ROBERTS
CAROL MCD. WALLACE
MASON WILEY

PHOTOGRAPHY ROBIN HOLLAND

OLIVER WILLIAMS

WORKMAN PUBLISHING NEW YORK

Copyright © 1980 by Lisa Birnbach.

All rights reserved.

No portion of this book may be reproduced-mechanically, electronically, or by any other means, including photocopying without permission of the publisher. Published simultaneously in Canada by Saunders of Toronto, Inc.

Cover and book design: Paul Hanson

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Birnbach, Lisa. The official preppy handbook

Preparatory schools—United States—Hand-books, manuals, etc. 2. Preparatory school students-United States-Handbooks, manuals, etc.

LC58.7.B57

I Title. 373.2'22'0973 80-51892

ISBN 0-89480-140-6 (pbk.)

Workman Publishing Company, Inc. 1 West 39 Street New York, New York 10018

Manufactured in the United States of America First Printing September 1980 10 9 8 7 6 5

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

any, many Preps assisted me in the preparation of this book. You might say that The Official Preppy Handbook is living, tangible proof that the Old Boy Network works. Ask one Southerner for help, and he coops another friend, and before long you wonder how the Confederacy ever lost.

Grateful as I am to everyone, there is simply not enough space to enumerate every contribution as I would like. There are several, though, who must be thanked especially. Gail MacColl, Jonathan Roberts, Carol McD. Wallace, Mason Wiley, Paul Hanson, Robin Holland, and Oliver Williams worked tirelessly on this project, their enthusiasm as unflagging as their energy. I would also like to thank Richard Smith, Sally Kovalchick, and Peter Workman for their support, encouragement, and good

Many thanks are also owed to: Bradford Warren Agry, Wendy Avrett, Jonathan S. Birnbach, Maks L. Birnbach, Naomi S. Birnbach, Norman D. Birnbach, Steven Bloom, Scott Borene, Kathleen McCabe Bovers, David Breskin, Mark Charles, Leslie Citron, Arlene Meyer Cohen, Alison Verity Collins, Jacqueline Collins, Brenda, la Comtesse de Morelos, y Guerrero, Mary Lou Dinardo, Katy Dobbs, Ellis Duncan, John Eding, Edward "Trip" Emerson, III, Kay Evans, Bruce Feirstein, Stephen Fenichell, Scott Fields, David Finkle, John H. Friedman, Janie Hawkens Furse, Donald Gettinger, Erica Gjersvik, Steven Gottleib, Jon J. Gould, Elissa Gretz, Priscilla Haack, Jeffrey Harper, James Sherwood Harrison, Edward Herbert, Richard Hawkins, Rodney Hobbs, Marcia Jacobs, Evelyn Konrad Jereski, Freeborn Garrettson Jewett, III, Susan Kane, Ronnie Kent, Gregory Kiernan, Joan Kingsly, Susan Knopf, Beth Mudd Kotelec, Charles Kreloff, Nancy Krueger, Joe Laun, Norman Lefkovits, Dana Levenson, Amy Lewis, Anne Beals Lewis, Barbara Livenstein, Mary Anne Maloy, Mike Marden, Deborah Matlovsky, Mary McCarthy McDevitt, Ellen Meltzer, Frederick R. Newman, Richard E. Newman, B. Gregory Palitz, Steven Paradis, Stephanie Pierson, Stephen Pollack, Louis Postel, Christopher Power, Jeremy Richard, Sara Risher, Raymond A. Roel, Jennifer Rogers, Randall A. Rothenberg, Susie Schwartz, Erich Segal, Kibbe Smith, Nancy Stone, Frederick Morgan Taylor, William Neville Tifft, Laurie Anderson Stewart Swimwear, Foot-Joy, Thorp, Thomas Ruffin Vandeventer, Bart Walker, David Sporting Goods, Leon Levin

I would also like to thank the following suppliers for the use of their products: Capezio at Lincoln Center, Elisabeth

Weeks, Betsy West, Tad Wise,
Thomas Caine Wynbrandt,
Craig D. Wynne, Jeff Yablonka.
Sportswear, Lord & Taylor,
and Scully & Scully, Inc. And
my special thanks to Burton
Ltd. and Burton Ltd. Ladies' Division for their clothes, accessories, support, and friendship.

L.B.

CONTENTS

Initiation	Keepers of the Flame: The Status Quo	
CHAPTER I	Institutions 27 THE HORSE PHASE, 28	
RIGHTS OF THE BIRTHRIGHT	Prep on All Fours: The Proper Pet	
The Years at Home	Well-to-Dos and Don'ts 32 IN DADDY WE TRUST, 38	
The Family 15 THE ANCESTRAL	Before Truth, the Right Fork: A Preppy Value System	
GALLERY, 16 1 GAVE BIRTH TO A PREPPY, 18 NICKNAMES, 19	CHAPTER II	
Prep Persona No. 1 20 Of Mahogany and Macrame: Decorating Haves and Have Nots 22	THE ROOT OF ALL PREP The Years at School	
THE DUCK MOTIF. 23 The Den of Inequity: A Model Family Room 24 Never on Thursday: Help in the House 26 THE LOOK FOR LIVE-INS. 26	Second to None: Origins of the Prep School 41 Preparing to Prep: Picking the School for You	

Prep Persona No. 2 48 Prep with a Capital "P": The	CHAPTER III
Primary Secondaries 50 Getting In: Interview Dos and Don'ts 54 The Staff 56 A Touch of Class: The	THE BEST YEARS OF YOUR LIFE
Curriculum 58	The College Years
PREP I: THE BASIC READING LIST, 59	Getting In: The Application Form 83 The College of Your Choice 84 THE IVY LEAGUE
all and a substitution of	DILEMMA, 86
Corpore Sano 60	The Four-Year Plan: Collegiate Life 88
For Extra Credit: Outside Activities	THE 8 LEADING GUT COURSES, 88 DISCOVERING PREP, 89 13 WORDS FOR THE PERSON WHO IS WORKING, 96 THE GENTLEMAN'S "C" OR HOW TO CHOOSE A
Breaking the Rules: The Importance of Getting Kicked Out 69	Transforming the Dorm Room
CAMPUS TROUBLE SPOTS, 70 REAL-LIFE HOLDEN CAULFIELDS, 72	Exclusive: Clubs at the Big Three
Bohemia Academe: Education for the Organic Preppy 73 THE LEADERS IN BOHEMIA, 74	THE IMPORTANT PARTIES, 95 GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN, 96 FRATERNAL INSTINCTS, 97
Time Off: Holidays and Summers	Prep Persona No. 3 98 The Sporting Life: What to Play, What to Watch 100 CREW: THE SPORT OF PREPS, 101
WHERE TO GO, 76 HOW TO GET THERE, 76 Quo Preparavisti?	Prep Sex: A Contradiction in Terms
Closing Remarks: Quiz	20 WAYS TO EXPRESS DRUNKENNESS, 108

Deviant Behavior	Sweaters
FOR VOMITING, 113 Getting Out: Graduation and Beyond	SHOES, 139 SHIRTS, 140 TROUSERS, 142 SUITS AND JACKETS, 143 ACCESSORIES, 144 CUMMERBUND GEOGRAPHY, 145
The Grand Tour 116 Hail, Alma Mater! Quiz #3	Summer Wear
CHAPTER IV	Where to Shop: Stores 151
DRESSING	R.I.P. THE LATE GREAT STORES, 153
THE PART	Where to Shop: Catalogs . 154
The Basic Look	POSTAGE RATES TO FREEPORT, MAINE, 155
The Bush Look	The Virtues of Pink and
	CHAPTER V THE REAL WORLD
Fashion Fundamentals: The Ten Underlying	The Young Executive Years
Principles for Men and Women	The City as Suburbia 157 A Home of Your Own (Almost) 158 Pinstripes in the P.M 160
gramming: When Your Own Initials Will Do 124	THE COOK'S REPERTOIRE, 161
Basic Body Types 126 Mummy Knows Best: The Look for Women 128	The Cocktail Party 162 Winding Up to Wind Down: The Prep Weekend 164
SHOES, 129 SHIRTS, 129 DRESSES, 131 SKIRTS, 132 PANTS, 133 ACCESSORIES, 134	MUSIC TO SLUM BY, 164 THE PUNK-PREP CONNECTION, 165 MUSIC TO BOOGE BY, 166 MUSIC TO DRINK BLOODIES BY, 167

THE BLOODY TRUTH, 168 VACATIONS: A SEASONAL GUIDE, 169

Prep Persona No. 4 170
CONTENTS OF THE
PREPPY PURSE, 171

10 THINGS BRIDESMAIDS SHOULD NOT FORGET WHEN PACKING FOR AN OUT-OF-TOWN WEDDING, 179

Displaying the Loot 180 10 WEDDING NO-NOS, 182 A CAUTIONARY TALE, 183

Honor's Choice: Quiz #4 . 184

CHAPTER VI

YOU'RE ALL GROWN UP NOW

The Country Club Years

Life in the Slow Lane 187
THE CLUB CAR, 187
A SAMPLING OF
SUBURBS, 188

In Pursuit of Pursuits 189
THE PREFERRED HOBBIES,
189

Greener Grass: The Country Club 190 IDENTIFY THE RACQUET, 191

Prep Persona No. 5 192 GO-TO-HELL PANTS, 193

The Old Boy Network: How it Works 194



The Prep Pantheon 196 FOR ALUMNI ONLY, 199
Off the Wagon: The Tailgate Picnic 200 Doing Good While
Looking Good: Charities and Charity Events202
THE FAVORED CAUSES, 202 THE JUNIOR LEAGUE, 203
Prepmobiles
Summer Is a Verb

CHAPTER VII

PREP SPOKEN HERE

12 FOREIGN PHRASES, 221 8 EXIT LINES, 223 THE ABBREVIATED VERSION, 224

Initiation

It is the inalienable right of every man, woman, and child to wear khaki. Looking, acting, and ultimately being Prep is not restricted to an elite minority lucky enough to attend prestigious private schools, ust because an ancestor or two happened to arrive here on the Mayllower. You don't even have to be a registered Republican. In a true democracy everyone can be upper class and live in Connecticut. It's only fair.

The Official Preppy Handbook will help you get there. Within this book lies an abundance of detail that would make even the most knowledgeable Preppy gape—advice on parents, choosing secondary schools and colleges, picking careers, finding a fiancée and planning the wedding, decorating dwelling places from the first dorm room to the suburban living room, what to wear, how to throw a party, what to drive, where to vacation and, finally,

what to say and how to pronounce it. All this, and more, in seven chapters as neatly arranged as a sit-down dinner for twelve.

You'll be able to travel from crib to coffin, from desk to date, from the city to the island without one false step, knowing full well that whenever emergencies arise, you'll know what to do, be it gatoring, debuting, or choosing a charity. And you can wear lime green

all along the way.

So stop thinking you're a lost cause simply because you've never been to either the Harvard-Yale game or Martha's Vineyard. Even Preppies had to learn at one point not to wear socks with loafers. Remember: Preppies don't have to be rich, Caucasian, frequenters of Bermuda, or ace tennis players. But they do have to read this book (Monarch Notes not yet available). It's the preferred self-help. It's key.