

Catching It From All Sides

Weekly Column By Kevin M. Schafer
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You're Going to Wash that Gray (hair) Right Out of Your Hair

I have a beauty tip that's just too interesting to not share. Upon reading it, some may shudder to think it, and some may think it's just plain gross. Let's see.

In case the question now arises, "What does this guy know about beauty tips?" I'll say right away, "Not much." Now that I think about it, what I have may be better classified as a hair care tip.

Back in 1989 while working at Industrial Air in New Ulm as a certified welder, times were occasionally tough and money was often scarce. Looking back now at those years, I can say wholeheartedly that my money shortages were my own making.

For work, I rented daily uniforms, as many of the line workers did back then. At the end of every week I owned five coat hangers from my shirts. Needless to say, I owned a lot of coat hangers.

It was one particular workweek when my paycheck ran out one day short of payday. As I do every night before going to bed, I was taking a shower. I was out of shampoo. I did what any single 21-year-old male would do: I washed my hair with my bar soap. It worked. In a twist of unfortunate events, I forgot to buy shampoo for the next two days.

After this, I asked myself if I really needed it. One night while standing in the grocery store aisle, I arrived at, "Nope." As the weeks rolled by, I noticed something pretty interesting. All those years while I was using shampoo, each morning while rewetting and combing my hair in front of my bathroom mirror, there would always be a few hairs left lying on my light-colored vanity sink. I was barely in my 20s and I was visibly losing a half dozen hairs from my head every morning. I could about imagine what I was losing during the day.

What I now noticed after using bar soap in place of shampoo is that my head hairs pretty much quit falling out of my scalp. Within a month of making the switch, I had one or two hairs—if that—lying in the sink that needed to be wiped away. Some mornings produced nothing. I didn't really care about my hair, but I remember thinking that I may have stumbled onto something.

It just so happens that when I began working for Herzog Printing & Office Supply, at the time located at 311 North Minnesota Street, there was a beauty salon right next door to the north. It was the fall of 1991, and it had been a good two years since I took up the bar soap concept.

The next door salon was called "Double Dimension," and was ran by twin sisters. During one of my haircuts, one of the sisters commented that male pattern baldness can sometimes be made worse by shampoo and conditioner residues, which can plug the individual hair follicles in a person's scalp. I remember thinking at the time that I had better not mention my method of hair washing. Perhaps I thought I would be told that bar soap would be the most damaging. I kept quiet.

I noticed my first gray hair at 26. It's now over 20 years since I stopped using shampoo and switched to bar soap. In case there's any curiosity, I use IVORY—from then to now. I've never used anything else.

Now, at 41 years old, the corners of my forehead have become a bit more pronounced, and I guess that goes without saying. There's an old saying that a man's hair will be like that of his grandfather's—on his mother's side. Well, for the most part, if that's true, I'm definitely an exception to the rule. My crop is holding steady and thick.

If all this that I've mentioned amounts to nothing more than plain coincidence or just plain bologna, then I will say that at least I've saved a ton of money on washing my hair.