

They're Not Just Barbers

By John W. Templeton
Staff Writer

The word barber evokes images of a man in a white coat with shears and clippers ready to do just one thing - cut hair.

But that image is fading away fast as black barbers are expanding their skills to perform tasks with hair one would normally associate with beauticians or hair stylists.

That's the view one got during the quarterly meeting of the N. C. Master Barber's Association held Sunday in the Hauser Student Union at Winston-Salem State University.

Instead of a demonstration of sharper clippers, the mixed audience of male and female barbers watched a joint exhibit of two of the most popular curl relaxers from Mr. Charles of Charlotte and Jimi Bonham of Winston-Salem.

"That's what we're trying to get into," said Johnnie Richardson, a focal barber who heads the association. "When we started showing styling at the meetings, we started drawing more young people."

"They're all doing the same type of work and they're trying to learn what's happening," added Richardson.

What's happening, said Mr. Charles, who uses R.B. for registered beautician "just like the doctors on my street use M.D.," is a demand from the public for more than just haircutting.

"Times are forcing a change," said the nattily-attired Charlottean. "People want more than a haircut, they want a lifestyle. Hairstyles become an expression of their personality."

"The problem with barbers is that they learn a lot of skills, but they only use one of them," he said.

"Today's barber is going to have to go into specialization, as any doctor would



Mr. Charles Displays Design Techniques

do," said Charles. "For whatever specialties he chooses, he will have to go back to school like a doctor and then practice until he's proficient enough to call himself a stylist or whatever."

Mr. Charles began a uni-sex parlor in Charlotte several years ago, and is now branching out into production of his own brand of products. His shop takes detailed histories from clients and puts their hair under microscopes before prescribing treatments.

He said of that personalized approach, "If you can't do it, you fall by the wayside."

The Afro hair style started the trend towards expressing one's personal feelings in the hairstyle.

"Now they're asking, can you curl it, can you design it," he said.

During his exhibit, one questioner asked Mr. Charles about competition from white-owned hair salons. He estimated that 50 percent of blacks in Atlanta go to such salons.

Later on, he noted, "Blacks are now beginning to move to the socio-economic level where they can get more than just basic hair care. The salons and the companies making hair care products want a piece of that \$44 million."

The day-long meeting attracted barbers from across the state for a luncheon, business meeting during which the effect of the "shampoo law" which allows hiring shampooers with just a health certificate was discussed and a luncheon before the exhibit.

Helping to pull the gathering off were Mr. and

Mrs. Harold Brandon, Mrs. Diane O'Neal, Richardson, Mrs. Odessa Rogers and Mrs. Nannie Wright.

Hughes Party

A surprise birthday party for Leo S. Hughes was held Saturday, July 28 at Staley's Restaurant Northside. About 50 people attended the 70th birthday celebration.

There was a two tier white birthday cake decorated with red roses and a reading, "happy birthday to father!" from his children.

Among the guests attending the celebration were his children and their families, Joann Alexander and Carolyn Price of Washington, D.C., Leo Hughes, Jr., Robert, William and Gloria Sheff of the city, along with many relatives and friends.

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Getting Along

Interracial Couples



Dr. James P. Comer

Dr. Alvin F. Poussaint

[Alvin F. Poussaint and James P. Comer are psychiatrists and the authors of the book, "Black Child Care." Dr. Poussaint is associate professor of psychiatry and associate dean for student affairs at Harvard Medical School. Dr. Comer is professor of child psychiatry and associate dean for student affairs at Yale University School of Medicine.]

Dear Dr. Poussaint: I am a 20 year old white female in love with a 22 year old black male who is wonderful.

We have discussed marriage, but since my boyfriend is now overseas we are still just writing about it.

His family seems to have accepted us and are all for it. My family could live with it but would rather not. My friends are all the same way. They dislike black people and would probably disown me.

I am not sure which way to turn. In order to gain a great husband, I'll probably have to lose some great friends and possibly my family.

If we were to get married, how would we be treated by society, and what about our children? Would they be accepted and treated well? Would my family finally come around to truly accepting it? They treat my boyfriend nicely now, but would it all change if I got married to him?

S.S.

Dear Dr. Poussaint: I am 16 years old and white. My boyfriend is also 16 years old and is black.

How do I go about telling my parents I am going out with a black guy? It doesn't seem that serious but they won't even allow me to associate with blacks.

I have talked to my boyfriend about this and he says that I should just tell them. But I want them to understand and I want them to know him before they say, "I like him" or "I don't like him." I want to open

their eyes to see him the way I do.
What do you think?

L.G.

Dear S.S. and L.G.: In an earlier column I outlined some of the risks and pitfalls of interracial relationships and the dangers of ill conceived motivations which may be tinged by the legacies of racism in the psychological makeups of both blacks and whites.

The main issue you must come to terms with is whether or not you wish to take the social pressures and potential rejections that will come with such a liaison. Fundamentally, both the law and spirit of our country confer on you the right to select a marriage partner (or boyfriend) regardless of race, creed or color.

Public polls indicate that Americans, especially whites, are growing more accepting of interracial coupling.

Both of you should discuss all the pros and cons of your relationship and, if you concur, then proceed opening with your dating or marriage. You should not hide the relationship from your friends or parents because they will find out sooner or later.

As you begin to catch more of a glimpse of their reactions, you will perhaps have more of an opportunity to test your commitment to your boyfriend.

However, do not stay together solely because you wish to be defiant. If you and your mate love each other and are mature enough to withstand some social disapproval, you should stick it out and stay together. Remember, even couples of the same race have experienced disapproval from their friends and relatives.

[If you have any questions for the doctors, send your letter to "Getting Along, care of this newspaper."]

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