

Billy Defends \$1 Haircut But Deplores \$1.25 Trim

by Billy Arthur

I had a nice speech prepared, but the barbers didn't invite me to address their convention. Therefore, here I come to you defending the \$1 haircut, because I revolt at the thought of paying \$1.25 for them.

The art of barbering is ancient and essentially human. Other animals may vie with or surpass us in some of the pursuits of life. The rabbit and the mole are our masters in all that relates to shafts and tunnels. Our nose are no match for the spider's web, and our engineering skill is poor beside that of the honey bee and the beaver. But to man alone belongs the art of barbering.

We find the first glimpse of the barber in old Egypt. The paintings and sculptures on obelisks and in temples and tombs show lock by lock, those towering diadems of hair, the pride of Egyptian men and women.

The barber was a slave and usually a Greek, because the wit of the Greek was preferred to the more solemn characteristics of other nationalities. And I have read that it was in Greece itself that the barbering profession first acquired a reputation for liveliness, talkativeness, and inquisitiveness that has stuck to its members in all climates and in all ages.

Men of the same calling are often strangely alike; thus the barbers of today and those of "Arabian Nights" are identical. What if one barber wears a white cape and another a turban? For all those trifling differences, they are twin brothers, smart, pert, human, rabbit-hopping through life, prying into dark corners where secrets lie hidden, then chattering about them. That is substantiated in the old story of the Athenian Boet returning — defeated — home, and of the decision of the government to keep the defeat a secret. But a sailor entered a barber shop for a shave, and talked. The barber ran swiftly into the city and spread the news, bad as it was.

"Barbers have to know something besides how to cut hair," I was told recently by one. "We have to keep up with everything because every customer starts talking the minute he hits in the chair. If the customer finds that the barber is not well-posted on everything, he'll take his shaggy hair elsewhere."

And in Chapel Hill, where I reside, they are well-posted. In fact there are specialists. We have barbers who evidently have made a study of sports, who can tell you what's wrong with the Dodgers, how a basketball game should have been played, and what the football prospects are. There are others who are just as astute on foreign policy and domestic politics, gardening and income taxes. They are specialists. Several of the regular customers wait for particular barbers, no matter how many people are ahead of them, just because they like to hear the particular barber's views.

Let's retreat into history again. With the early Greeks and Romans the barber was the prime minister of the bath. We domesticated moderns, on whom radio and television would have you believe the merits of soap and water are just beginning to dawn, can hardly imagine what a bath was to people in the old country.

To them the system of daily soaping, shampooing, oiling, rubbing, scolding, shaving, curling, and joint-cracking were necessities, second only to bread

and seeing people being thrown to the lions. Never, perhaps, were barbers so plentiful and the demand for their services so great. And they were no longer slaves. They were members of that ancient and respected society of barber-surgeons.

At their doors hung burnished brass basins, and above them a red rag, to remind those who wanted to be bled that the practitioner within could use the lance. And as bleeding was the approved remedy for every ailment from low spirits to a bad cold, the lance probably brought more grieve to the mill of the barber than did the shears and the curling tongs. He was a dentist too and exercised a rough dictatorship over the aching jaw of his afflicted neighbors. Thus, the barber was a person more important than entertaining. But as civilization progressed, the barber-surgeon lost the more lucrative of his callings.

Then he started selling rhinoceros marrow and ostrich grease to hold the hair in place. But drug stores soon stole that source of revenue.

So, what's a poor barber to do these days? He can no longer practice medicine. Indoor plumbing has taken baths out of the barber shop. Double edge blades and revolving machinery now do the shaving. Crew cuts lower the number of trips a man makes to the barber shop. And newspapers, radio and television have reduced the barber's value as a news dispensing medium.

About all he has left to support his family with is the hair trim. He's got to get \$1 for that. But \$1.25? Never! If he insists, men will put a pair of hair clippers beside their razors, and the barber's art will be lost forever.



I have just received a copy of the N. C. State Fair catalog which reminds me that many community and county fairs will be held during the next six weeks.

Every gardener should take an interest in the local fair and also the State fair. If you have anything worth exhibiting, you should take pride in showing it. How many times have you stood in front of a prize winning flower, vegetable or fruit at a fair and said, either to those with you or to yourself, "I've got a better one than that home in the garden right now."

You may be absolutely right. Only, having it winning a blue ribbon on the show table and having it growing in the garden are two entirely different things. The point is to get from the garden to the show table and still have it good enough to win over the other entries.

Before you enter an exhibit, read over carefully the instructions in the catalog. Be sure to enter the exhibit in the proper class. Have it properly labeled. If the class calls for a plate of 12 specimens be sure that you have twelve — no more and no less.

In vegetable exhibits, specimens should be of best marketable size except where the catalog calls for the "largest," as in the case of pumpkin. Where the class calls for a plate, tray, peck or bushel, the individual specimens should be as nearly alike in size, shape and color as possible, and they should be free from blemishes and have the true characteristics of that particular variety. Potatoes need not be washed unless it will improve their appear-

ance. However, if not washed they should be brushed with a soft brush or cloth.

Flower exhibits call for perfection. Good stems, healthy foliage, and a perfect bloom are essential. It is important to have flowers in good condition at the time of judging. A rose bloom should be from one-half to three-fourths open — a tight bud will not be considered by judges.

Fruits, such as apples and pears, should have true varietal characteristics, should be well colored

and not over-ripe. They should be free from disease and insect damage. Stems must not be removed from apples and pears. All specimens in a plate or tray should be uniform in size, shape, and color.



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