

Hair-Brained Ideas

Women have a special love/hate relationship with their hair. We invest in all manner of product and time and endure much heartache to arrive at the shimmering locks we crave. That's especially true in the South, where big-hair jokes are no laughing matter.

I've always had what mothers and grandmothers describe as "naturally curly hair." Let's face it—"naturally disastrous" best describes the frizz ball that crowns my noggin. Drench my hair in the wet air that we Southerners call summer, and it becomes an entity independent of the rest of my person. My hair is so wild that if it could drive, it would run away from home.

I once made the mistake of letting a roommate enrolled in beauty school try out her newly learned skills on me. Delighted, she enthusiastically soaked my head in "permanent" solution. Thank goodness that proved a



My hair is so wild that if it could drive, it would run away from home.

misnomer. Remember the *Saturday Night Live* character Roseanne Rosannadanna? Comedienne Gilda Radner wore a wedge-shaped frizzy wig that sprung a foot from her face in every direction. That wig looked better than my hair after the beauty-school-in-training fiasco.

I've spent most of my life striving for the kind of smooth, silky hair you see bouncing its way through shampoo commercials. During my teen years, I tried gigantic pink plastic rollers. These were not the tiny pink foam curlers your mother made you wear the night before Easter service. No, these curlers of mine could substitute for monster truck tires. Large orange

juice cans served as valid substitutes.

Step 1: Dry your hair to a crucial point of dampness. (Too little and you risked frizz. Too much and you suffered bobby pin imprint, ruining your goal of a smooth coiffure.) Step 2: Separate hair into three solid hanks. Step 3: Carefully roll each swath around a curler, and pin to the top of your head. Step 4: Vainly attempt to sleep while a pink version of Mickey Mouse's ears gouges you at every toss and turn.

If all went as planned, you awoke with hair that vaguely resembled the sleek tresses of that seventies hair icon, Cher. Never mind that I was a mousy brunette, short, pale, with glasses and braces. In my dreams, I thought if I

suffered enough pink-roller nights, I would emerge looking like Sonny's better half: tall, willowy, olive-skinned, and, best of all, with gobs of glossy hair I could insouciantly toss behind my shoulders as my heroine did.

The days of the pink rollers are long gone, but I still crave smooth, silky locks. Plus, I'm happy to say I have finally found the perfect cure for the frizzies: winter. When Jack Frost nips, my coarse, wiry hair hibernates. I can run my fingers through it freely without feeling as if I'm plowing through an alfalfa field. Alas, there's only one kink in this hairy solution. Winter in our region is brief. I hear it occurs on February 8 this year. In the South, that's really what we mean when we say "good hair day."

—NANCY DORMAN-HICKSON