

Au Naturel

Personal and Salon Updates

As summer strengthened her foothold on Mother Earth, I felt satisfied that the rains had dissipated--allowing the creatures of life to re-emerge [cleansed](#) and restored. But, it is not wise to speak too soon! July 24th greeted my neighborhood with a barrage of hail stones and wind!! It looked like a tempest had her way with the trees and shrubs. Green leaves lay everywhere on the ground and the power was out! But thankfully, the house was not damaged. Grace is found manifest in so many wonderful ways.

Well, I for one am very excited as I open a new chapter of life by realizing a life-long dream!! I am shifting my day-time job to one that is more directly involved in women's and children's health needs in the international setting. It's rather funny because after years of pursuing this direction, I had a talk with God a few months back. While looking out my office window, I said, "You don't want me to do this, do You? Every attempt I have tried has roundly fallen flat. I need to relinquish this dream because it's obviously not what You want for my life. But WHY is the desire so strong?" The door was opened in a few short weeks!! I think I now understand why it happened this way. You see, I thought this vision was my own. I thought it was what I wanted to do and was going to make happen. God was simply reminding me that all things come through His hand and on His time. As I marvel at how expertly things are falling into place, I can't believe that it's been about 28 years since this desire was first implanted within me. I feel like I was Moses in the wilderness! [I now see that I was being prepared for the task](#). It will be challenging but then, I'm up for it. I will recall the process and the long wait when I feel exhausted from the effort of it all. The reminder will surely renew my commitment to press on!

These changes will not really impact salon operations however. Here at *Schatzi's*, the beat goes on. [This month, we have seen seven years of service to the Raleigh and surrounding communities!!!](#) We are blessed and want to express our deep appreciation for all who have supported us over the years! **In celebration, we're offering free deep conditions this month. In addition, we'll be giving away free Coconut or Tamarind soap loofahs from Thailand with all paid services (while supplies last).** This soap is but one of the wonderful complements to my evening bath. ☺

Well, this issue of Au Naturel is a largely reflective one. It is an echo of how I feel as a new chapter of life opens up to me. To see a long-held dream forming before your eyes is humbling, awe-inspiring, poetic, divinely beautiful.... I have several short articles relating to hair care and two new poems that I've penned over the past few weeks.

This issue is peppered with several songs by India Arie and other Neo-soul greats to add flavor and depth! And don't ask. YES!!! I have my birthday present in hand already— i.e. Oct. 29th tickets to see [India Arie live in concert at the DPAC!!!](#) I love that woman, as I see myself in so many of her words. My husband was visibly relieved that I had already purchased tickets as it took him off the hot-seat for birthday celebration "to dos". I'm really not that hard to please. But honestly, I think he likes her too. Hope you enjoy! ☺



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Amber Starks and the Legislature to the Rescue of Natural Stylists in Oregon State

In a recent move by the Oregon State Legislature, [A Natural Hair Care Act](#) cleared its final hurdle to be made into law on May 21, 2013. This is according to the [Sightline Daily](#)—an advocacy journal that targets outdated laws and regulations that make life unsustainable in the Northwest region of the US. The SD highlights the fact that the previous law required natural hair braiders to pursue training in Cosmetology in order to work in the state of Oregon. This requirement consisted of 1500 hours of training which could cost upwards of \$17k. This is surely no surprise to NC stylists as the

same requirement prevailed here until recently. The journal explains that the training requirement far exceeds the requirement for EMS and fire-fighters ! The truth is our culture and our routines from childhood don't quite fit the social mold (see photo). And that's cool.

The article goes on to tell the story of Amber Starks—a natural stylist who strongly advocated for this change in order to be able to practice her craft in her own state. I salute you Amber! The world needs more like you. For full article details, click [here](#). For more on licensing requirements in NC, click [here](#).

“The marvelous riches of human experience would lose something of rewarding joy if there were no limitations to overcome. The hilltop hour would not be half so wonderful if there were no dark valleys to traverse.”

Helen Keller

Summer Hair Care Tips

So with the wind, water, sun and fun, what should be done with those glorious tresses to facilitate a beautiful bathing experience? Here are some quick tips to consider:

1-There is nothing wrong with natural hair that requires a great deal of fuss. So why should a few days in the summer sun lying on the ocean's currents change that? Water is the single most important chemical catalyst for life in the universe. So, why should we fear that it will hurt our hair? The truth is, it won't!

2-Moisturizing prior to swimming is useful. If you choose this option, condition and rinse before bathing. Another consideration is to oil the hair before swimming. Oil will coat, lubricate and protect the hair while swimming and the effects won't be undone by the water quite as quickly as conditioner.

3-Wear a swim cap to minimize abuse to the hair. I personally don't choose to; but, it's useful. The hair moves a lot in water and curly hair binds so; a cap keeps the hair from tangling.

Poetically Speaking: Love Slave

On the morning of July 24th as my husband drove me to my bus-stop, he absent-mindedly said (unaware of how intently I was listening), “I wish we weren't caught in these people's matrix.” I smiled at his inner soul struggle because I feel him completely. His anthem is a most fitting complement to the poem that I had just penned the day before. If you're like many couples around the world, *workaholism* may be a most engaging and damning mistress/master. Or perhaps, something else grasps your passion and rides you to distraction. Whatever the case, grab the little foxes of life, and kick them out of your blooming garden! LIVE! I plan to.

[I am my lover's.](#)

He beckons my spirit with one turn of his brow, and I enter at his command.
I feel his essence pressed up next to my own.
And we lock in an embrace of beingness.
Holding on, tremors are the blueprints of soul intensity.
We live in this beautiful moment of time.
Thankful for the blessings of life.
And then, he returns to his commitments.

[And he is mine.](#)

I dive inward and rest, wading in an ocean with no boundaries to define space or time.
I stand transfixed beckoning him--longing, yearning for the touch of his hand.
And my lover adeptly swims out to meet me.
He masterfully clasps me and, I am grounded in him.
We tread, absorbed in our expression of love for each other.
Thankful for the miracles of life.
And then, I resume my commitments.

My heart aches when he touches me unawares
For I long to extend his reach for me into infinity.
I feel his heart quake when I touch him unawares
Because I am not my lovers'
And he is not mine.
Yet, I am committed to my lover as he is committed to me.
We accept the challenge of our mission.
And we vow to be better lovers for the life lesson.



Understanding our limitations

The photos above are of the beautiful Doretha. I did this style for her some time back in 2012. I like to look at these pictures to remind myself of my own limitations as a stylist. Don't get me wrong: the style was executed beautifully. It was flattering, had flava, etc. But, what is less obvious about this style is that I did it with a severe disadvantage: I couldn't see A THING!!! TRULY!! One story that I like to tell to get a laugh is of how I was in the salon one day taking photos of the stylists. I took a picture of one stylist, looked at the picture monitor and said, "Blurry. Okay, don't move. Let me try it again." Well after taking about five pictures in a row and cursing my camera the whole time for being a piece of CRAP!!, I magically extended my hands further in front of me than normal and noticed that the camera picture cleared up miraculously. It was a perfectly clear picture!! So, I scrolled back to view the previous images and they were all crystal clear! I busted out laughing!! And promptly put the camera down. It was time for someone else to take the pictures. I had just proven myself incompetent with the most simple of tasks.

Well, it was the same with this style. My usual cornrow queens were otherwise engaged so; I put on my design fashionista cap and went to town. Afterall, you can't be licensed in this state and NOT know how to cornrow. So, I parted by general feel and braided by intuition. Doretha knew nothing about the challenges I was facing as we were likely in the throws of some fascinating conversation. The result was poetic but, it only served to remind me that there's a time to hand the mantle over to the more fit and capable. Jamie and Martina are design style divas. And LaRhonda is rapidly joining their ranks. As for me, I style to the more classic looks which don't require a lot of parting—unless it's for locks. I DO enjoy making diamond parts for starting lock clients but somehow that's just not the same thing. So, if you ever wonder why you don't see more slamming design creations from yours truly, know this: I HAVE **NO INTENTION OF EVER WEARING GLASSES!!!** And so, vanity rules... 😊

Summer Lock Care Tips

If you intend to visit the beach this summer, the added effect of salt water and sand can prove challenging to maintain a well-coiffed look for your locks. Strategies to consider are as follows:

1) Braid your locks into larger sections before swimming. In this way, the base of your locks remains "in place" while swimming, and therefore is less inclined to unravel. (If your hair is inter-locked, this issue is less of a concern for you.) When swim time is over, be sure to thoroughly rinse all salt-water from your hair (or chlorine if at the pool) while keeping the locks braided. Give each lock section special attention while rinsing. It's also a good idea to oil your hair thoroughly at this time to counteract some of the dryness that will be nurtured by the sun and salt-water. When the braids dry (which may take a full day depending on the size of your sections), loosen them and you're good to go!

2) Invest in a swim cap. Depending on the length of your locks, they may fit under some of the new swim caps that are available on the market. Click [here](#) for an example. However, this is not an endorsement.

3) Plan your beach trip around the time that you will schedule your next lock maintenance service as your hair will surely require extra attention upon leaving the beach. Then, your hair can be properly shampooed and rinsed of all beach residues. It's advisable to do a hot oil treatment at this time as well, for the same reasons outlined in #1 of this section.

Please know with this advice that older, more established locks will pick up less sand than newly forming locks. This is because established locks are tighter and less porous than new locks. So, if you are just starting locks, I would advise you to consider this issue very carefully before deciding how to enjoy your beach stay. For this reason, I would strongly recommend a swim cap for the early years.

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Poetically Speaking: Discovery

When I reflect on my life, I realize that despite being rather conservative, I have lived life a bit on the wild side-- with a degree of aplomb. I've walked away from secure jobs where I have outstanding performance and more money solely for a new challenge and the opportunity for increased ingenuity. I dove into business with only my personal knowledge of hair care because I believed it was my destiny. And so, I dive into the unknown yet again with earnest anticipation, knowing that I will be a more rounded and complete being for the experience of it all, though likely shaken through continued trials and struggle. This poem is a small reflection of the fire within me as I embark on a new chapter of life. We live and learn. I give thanks for serenity, courage and wisdom!

I am not the woman that I was even one short year ago, let alone ten.
My roots have grown deeply with the trials of life; I stand a stronger, more grounded being.
I know what I value in life and with God's grace; I will hold and cherish it.
All the same, I still have much to learn on this continued passageway of life.
Momma always said, "A woman is to walk with purpose." And I do.
I remain open to life's lessons and feel blessed to have had great teachers.
My name means *treasure* or *love* and like both:
One has to dig to find the true depth of me and the reward therein.
After 22 years of marriage, my husband is *still* digging. ☺
I have never been called superficial.
Today, I would not say that I am fearless.
But, I'm as close to that reality as I have ever been before.
I don't speak [words](#) lightly and I don't undress before an open window
Without knowing the hidden desires that may be aroused in so doing.
So to every reader I say, "Be purposeful in your actions and *carpe diem*, my friend."
Apprehension has its place.
But for me today, it's rightfully elusive.

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