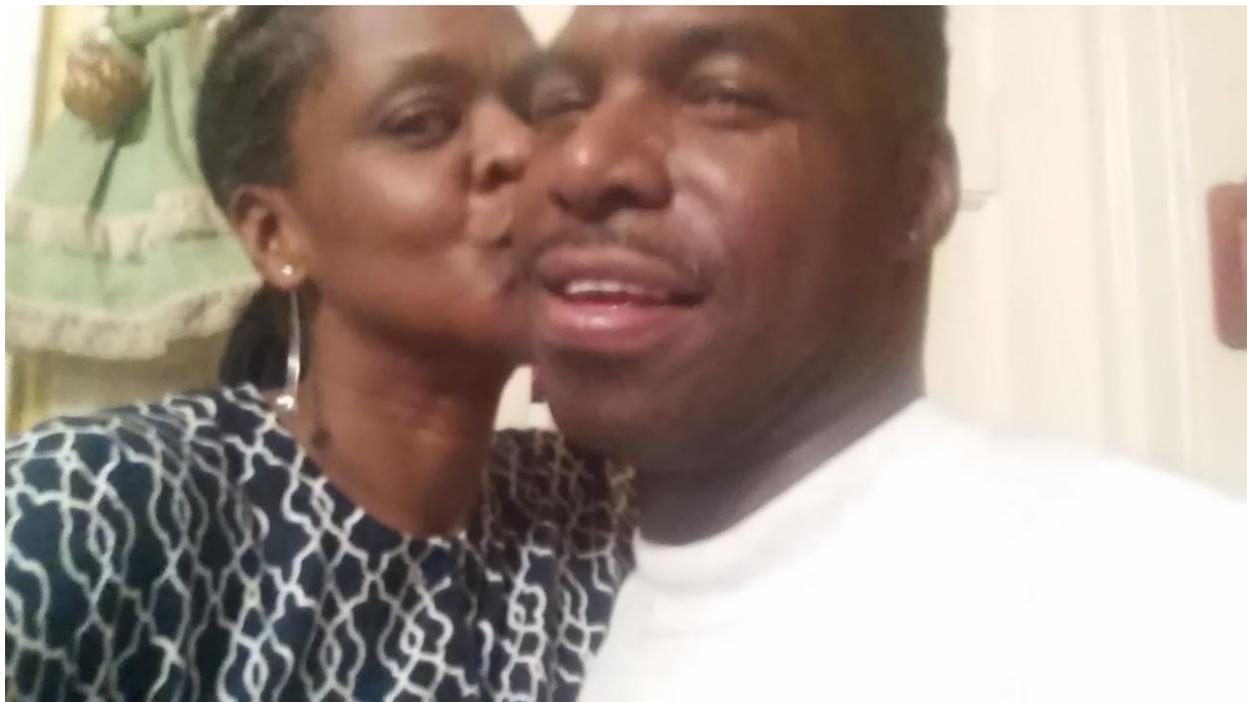




Au Naturel Newsletter

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Personal and Salon Updates



by [Schatzi McCarthy](#) on December 4, 2015

Well, 2015 is rapidly growing into the proverbial “old man” and is aging out of existence. But is he really aging or transforming? I prefer to see life as the latter condition. Age is a number for the body but the soul is immortal. So, we grasp the lessons of the day and pray that we can be a blessing to others as we navigate through the delicacies. The New Year is always a time of promise for the future. Prayerfully, 2015 was a blessed one for you despite the trials and tribulations that invariably come. The Black family has struggled this year my friend, with the men standing and falling in the face of the tempest and the women often bearing the load in

silence. [But, we were crafted for such a time as this](#). I pray that you found peace in all of your deepest moments of pleasure and pain in 2015. And like a [pretty bird](#), I hope that 2016 sees you fly to greater heights than you ever knew were possible!

As for me and mine, we got our Christmas miracle on Thanksgiving Day! The cover picture for this newsletter is taken with a dear first cousin of mine who had walked off the face of the Earth! I've spoken in this newsletter of his loving brother who buys me Skittles and curses like a poet but you've never heard me mention this cousin. Because frankly, we thought he was dead! The last anyone had heard of him was after 9/11! And then, he was gone. [He turned up on my grandmother's doorstep on Thanksgiving Day as surprised to see her as she was to see him](#). And so, a lost sheep has been returned to the fold and we give thanks for God's mercies and protection over his life. God is SO GOOD! We give thanks!!

Within the salon, things are quiet and peaceful—like I like them. I was pretty swamped the days before Thanksgiving so I scheduled Thanksgiving cooking very meticulously. Made all of my grandmother's favorites: Amazing Raisin Cake, 5 Flavor Pound Cake, and six sweet potato pies. That's in addition to the traditional bird and accompaniments. I have it down to a science now. So, it's really not stressful. But, it explains why I went Thanksgiving shopping on Monday morning and left all of my groceries in the car while I attended all day meetings at Duke University. (Thankfully it was cold that day, UNLIKE most days this Autumn season.) Then had dinner at Southpoint with a dear girlfriend who is having her 1st child at 50 years of age thanks to the miracle of modern medicine. She's a professor and medical doctor who has been very busy saving the lives of people living with HIV. Thankfully, God brought her a husband and now a wonderful gift of life!! She was radiantly beautiful!! Then, I did more shopping that night (to spread the wealth a bit), went home and started baking. I got it all done! My husband does most of the cooking in our house, so I can do holidays!! No Sweat!! So, I've been rather thankful for the peace and quiet of "the week after." Life is good!!

As far as the salon schedule goes, we go rolling merrily along! We were closed the week-end of Dec. 11th as I traveled to DC to chill with friends. My travels were all about catching up with another dear college friend. She too is a college professor who has been very busy helping to raise her brother's kids after the death of his wife. She never had children of her own or even married, but she's been a stellar, most exemplary aunt. Sometimes, God reserves our lives for other purposes that we would never have imagined. She's a beautiful soul. I wouldn't have gotten through my last year of college without her support and advice. At the time, I was very respectful of authority and thought I needed to listen to my advisor who was leading me down a rabbit hole. She taught me to NOT be afraid of side-stepping formal channels (and possibly stepping on some toes) to achieve my personal goals. I learned well!! The next time I saw that advisor, I was delivering my thesis to the UVA library. I never saw him again! That's God and good advice. I saw my dear friend Meiko as well. It's been a minute!! So, reconnecting with the past has definitely been a recurring theme in my life of late. I'll take it all and will enjoy every minute of it! I pray that Au Naturel readers will be equally blessed to reconnect with beautiful souls in your own lives. Happy New Year!

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THIS ISSUE'S
TOP STORY



Alopecia and Hair Breakage Woes and Wonders

by [Schatzi McCarthy](#) on December 4, 2015

As I reflect on the close of another year, it occurred to me that we are now in our 10th year of operation!! I think we're supposed to be celebrating or something!! But isn't every day a celebration?! Actually, the days before Thanksgiving were the most blessed for me of the year. I served many of my most regular clients and we tripped to [soulful music](#) (Check out this [must-hear](#) album!) [essential conversation](#) and [good vibes](#). That's how we roll! But as I considered what message to deliver to close-out the year, it was really all about finding our comfort zone. Everyone seems to be doing that in the best ways they know how. So to translate that message to hair, I decided to highlight some of the year's transformations with a focus on alopecia and hair breakage. These are issues that no woman likes to encounter. But, I believe that we are finding meaningful solutions. I don't want to paint a picture that we're able to solve every type of problem however. That's just not realistic. [Yes, sisters are realizing the awesome power of releasing the chemicals and embracing the curl with some pretty amazing results](#). But, there's no one-remedy-fits-all solution to alopecia. I think that's why most stylists simply see hair weaves as the most logical solution. Well, here at Schatzi's, we try to work with clients' unique challenges and desires in whatever way possible. Some sisters are grappling with some real challenges! The client pictured on the next page is an example of someone who I counseled after bad relaxer services murdered her beautiful tresses.

She was hurt because she visited her stylist like clockwork to ensure that this type of thing would never happen to her. Imagine her shock and horror to see the truth unfolding despite all of her sizeable investment of time and resources!! I felt sick but facing truth is the beginning of the end of disease. For this sister, I recommended the discontinuation of ALL chemical services, time,

massage therapy and prayer. Thankfully, she can pull her hair into a ponytail and doesn't have to wear wigs. Like a Bonsai that is trained to miniaturization through confinement of its roots, I believe wigs confine and choke the hair follicles, which need breath and sunlight. There was really nothing else we could do for this client. Time will tell if she is able to re-establish her previous crown of glory. I'm VERY hopeful!!



The cases that I'll highlight here are facing different challenges. I began working intensively with the first two of these clients this year. I highlight them for this issue to show women that there are meaningful solutions to alopecia. [Sometimes that solution is embracing baldness](#). Other times, there are different options to consider. For many women, alopecia or hair loss feels like a death sentence. I only encourage the mind to consider possibilities with an eye to the future. For me, alopecia is a challenge!! So I say, let's work. We can find solutions. But time and patience are integral tools of the trade. Let's begin.



The first client is a sister who was experiencing alopecia areata which is characterized by the hair falling out in round patches or by baldness in spots on the scalp or other parts of the body. (Sorry that the photo is a bit blurry.) It is unpredictable and rather frequent. For this client, it arose as a result of stress.

Trust me: If I was facing what she was dealing with, I'm not sure my own hair would hold up! In this before photo, the client's thick waist-length locks had fallen off completely or were very weak at the base. The hair was starting to re-grow after some time at the scalp but the short

“afro bursts” were a stark contrast to the client's longer locks. She was dealing with a lot in her life and just was not ready or willing to cut all of her hair off and start from scratch. So, we opted for lock extensions.



In the second photo, I used standard methods to extend the client's hair. While we had agreed on the type of human hair the client would purchase, the hair

sales business is NOT regulated. So, you never know what you're going to get unless you're paying A LOT of money. So, I had to work with what we had as she had an important function the very next day!! Because human hair is typically much shorter than this client's own hair, I had to innovate a technique to extend the human hair beyond 12 inches to as much as 28 inches to match the length of her hair. While it worked, I just wasn't delighted with the result mainly because the hair was too shiny. Locks don't shine.

For her next appointment, we changed to another type of hair and decided to add a little flavor. I color her grey hair with a beautiful red wine tone so we decided to add human hair extensions in this color just for fun. Using the same innovated technique, I extended the shorter human hair to a length to match her waist-length locks. I opted out of the prescribed "wrapping" step for lock extensions because it just made them look too heavy. In all, it added nothing to the final look; so, I threw it out. The result was a rather natural look that is light, very strong at the base and throughout the lock, and overall very beautiful. While one would guess that the colored locks are added in, they complement the client's strengthened black locks and look a lot like highlights.



Upon close inspection, you really don't know what's going on. The

extensions are made of human hair, and the client's locks, which are reinforced at the base, look like her own—and they are. If we had stuck with black hair throughout, the transition would be seamless. But the client is really not concerned about the opinions of others. She just wants strong, healthy locks. She now has that!! This final photo was taken after several shampoo and maintenance services, thus confirming the durability of the style. Her husband and sons LOVE IT!! That's always the proof of the pudding. So I'm happy with the result!



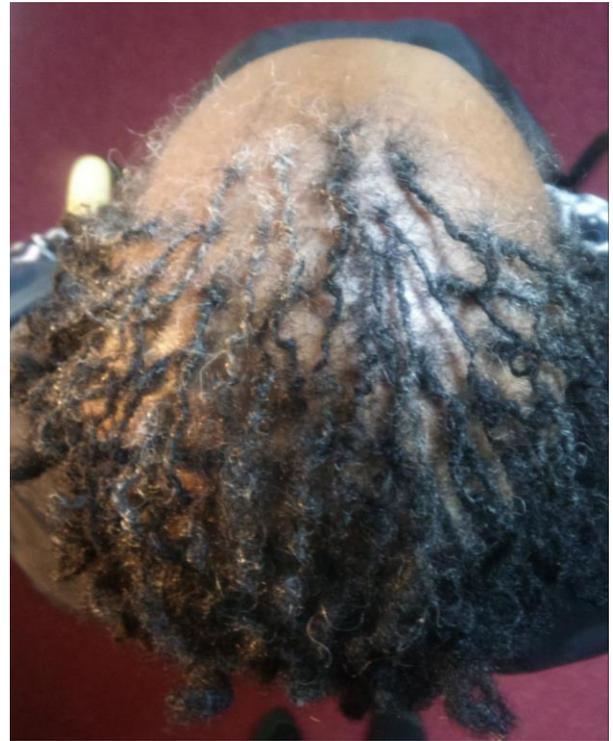
The next set of photos is of a client who is experiencing androgenic alopecia which is the result of genetics, age and hormonal changes that causes hair strands to thin much like baby hair and eventually fall away. Accordingly to Milady's Cosmetology, "By age 35, almost 40 percent of

both men and women show some degree of hair loss."

I have this condition along the edges of my hairline above my eyebrows. It's typically where men's hairlines start to recede. I've noticed it since about age 40. So, I treat the hair in this area with kid gloves to ensure that the



edges don't recede any further. Most people who know me would not notice. But, I do. That's what I do. At any rate, the client is in her 60s and has very fine, soft hair. She originally wanted extensions. I advised against it, as it would only add undue pressure on her already weakened hair follicles. With her fine, soft texture, she is not a good candidate for extensions, unlike the client mentioned earlier. Because I realize that this condition is a factor of age, I advised that the condition is likely not reversible. So, my strategy was/is to safeguard the hair that is remaining and to grow her hair to facilitate hair styling that can add volume to camouflage thin areas. My method of choice for this client has been inter-woven mini-locks due to the softness and thinness of her hair. In the second set of photos, I have styled the client's locks into an updo, which adds character and grace while the client's hair is growing out.



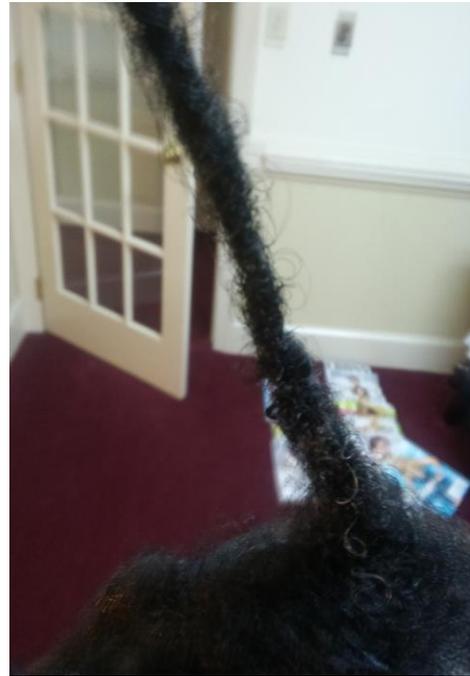
In the later photos above, the client is about 7 months from when we began. While she still has alopecia, she has much more hair to work with. She recently noted that a man stopped her on the street to compliment her on her Sisterlocks. She didn't even know what Sisterlocks are, but said "thank you." I assured her that she doesn't have Sisterlocks because I am not a certified Sisterlocktician. But, I do what I do. So, I was glad the compliments are now rolling in. This client has embraced her alopecia, and we've made some banging lemonade!!! Her growth process is naturally ongoing so inside of another year, I expect her to be receiving compliments DAILY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The final photos are of a client who has been experiencing some hair breakage with her locks. She has a stressful job and admits that she sometimes pulls her locks out when they start to show signs of weakening. This sister has a husband and daughter and is not fussy at all. Because she comes into the salon when she can, she admits that she sometimes does damage to her hair when she's been away. It's no problem. The second photo (on the next page) is about five minutes after the first. I simply reconnected the lock, and the final product is as strong, if not stronger than her original lock!! This solution does however require some preparation as the client has to hold onto locks that have fallen



away. But, it's definitely a more affordable option to purchasing human hair for extensions.

Overall, I can say that alopecia is a challenging condition to work around but it's definitely doable. I don't always know which strategy I'll take or know how the final result will turn out; but, I trust my instinct. And that's what makes natural hair care an art form. I don't consider myself a master designer though. Some designs are frankly stressful to the hair follicles, which is why I NEVER put pressure on my own. My gift is growing healthy hair. My sister works on canvas. I work on heads. But the result is an artistic gallery of beauty. Come to Schatzi's and embrace the beauty of you! :-)



Poetically Speaking: Triumphs of the Human Spirit

Over the past few months, I can safely say that I have been inspired by the power of the human spirit. God has created so many beautiful luminaries and has given each one a beautiful gift to share with the world. It's pretty awe-inspiring at times. So as we close-out 2015, I want to reflect on some of the amazing, lesser known people and stories that graced our social media pages. You will want to take some time to contemplate these stories and these lives. So, schedule some time to come back to these. The life messages are pretty powerful. For it is through the power of the Word and the hearing of the Word, that they are illumined yet again...

A Tribute to Australia's Finest

- [Psalm 116:15 - "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."](#)
- [Philippians 4:13 - I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me.](#)

A Tribute to Creative Fashion

- [1 Timothy 4:14-15 - "Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you. Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress."](#)
- [Proverbs 22:29 - "Do you see a man skillful in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men."](#)

A Tribute to Inner Light

- [Matthew 6:21-23 - For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if](#)

thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great [is] that darkness!

- Mark 11:24 - Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive [them], and ye shall have [them].

A Tribute to Corporate Moderation – Sounds like socialism to me (I’m just saying.)

- Romans 12:2 - "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."
- 1 Timothy 6:17-19 Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

A Tribute to the Indomitable Spirit of African Peoples

- Romans 8:15 - “For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption and by him we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’”
- Ecclesiastes 10:17 - Blessed are you, O land, whose king is of nobility and whose princes eat at the appropriate time--for strength and not for drunkenness.

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Embrace the Beauty of You.



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