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“A Bit of Fluff”

by  
Tom Holbrook

For all you folks out there who really care... let it be known that Judy and I are new grandparents (our 14<sup>th</sup>.) My youngest son and wife, Marc and Lauren, residents of Greensboro, NC, called on March 14<sup>th</sup>, and announced the arrival of their first child, Tucker Hudson Holbrook, a 7 lb baby boy, at 3:12 pm, following 25 hours of labor. Mother, child and father are doing great. Don't clap, send money... we'll need it.

Now, on to the business at hand. I received a lot of response about a previous column concerning lack of proper grooming for men especially in the area of trimming nose, ear and eyebrow hairs. You can't believe the ideas men have about the necessity of doing that and why some of them don't. I never thought we guys could be so squeamish about something so seemingly trivial. Think about it guys, would you like to live with a woman who strained her soup through her nasal hairs? It's wouldn't be trivial then would it?

We recently had breakfast with old friends, Dick and Sue, who introduced us to new friends Steve and Kay, and the subject of nose hairs came up... don't ask me how. One would think we were talking about brain surgery concerning the intricacies involved with removing unwanted hair from the nose or ears... the nose specifically. “I don't want any rotor-rooter stuck up my nose,” was one comment, and “Just the thought of sticking those sharp scissors in my nose gives me the willies. Why don't they have scissors with rounded tips for that?” I told him he should have saved the pair he got in Kindergarten, and then mentioned that they made special electrical gadgets especially for the removal of nose and ear hairs but it fell on deaf ears. One of the ladies remarked some men's nose hairs she had seen would take hedge clippers to cut them properly. Another said she's seen some with such a large a growth of hair in their ears she expected a flock of birds to come flying out of the nest at any time.

This sparkling breakfast conversation moved smoothly into a discussion of facial hair, i.e., beards and mustaches and why nose hairs seemed to grow much faster and longer than the hair on a the face. One of the men said that letting his nose hairs grow longer was the only way he could ever hope to grow a mustache. The final consensus was that men should be more aware of just how unattractive those recalcitrant strands were and more attention should be given to bringing them under control.

Having put the titular head of the household in his place our friendly group of social engineers switched our attention to relatives who, at times, seem to be always marching to a drumbeat totally different than most of the family. We call this phenomenon the “middle child syndrome.”

**I don't know how many of you out there are middle children but your ears had to have been burning while we were slowly dissecting you in public. Actually, everything we said was in love... but also with a sense of wonder at how you manage to co-exist with those of us who must seem to you as if we can't even hear the *real* drum beat.**

**I'm sure everyone reading this, if not a middle child yourself, is aware of the difference between you and a brother or sister, or cousin, or in-law who is a middle child. They truly see things from a different perspective than we "normal" folk. This "middle child syndrome" manifests itself in many ways and one member of our group related how their family's middle child was not concerned about showing up late at family functions, if they showed up at all. It was said that at family dinners or reunions where each member was asked to bring a specific dish they always asked this sibling to bring devilled eggs because if they didn't bother to come they wouldn't be missed because nobody liked devilled eggs anyway. Aha.... Now I've just opened the eyes of a lot of you readers out there who have always been asked to bring the devilled eggs... you thought it was because your eggs were soooooo good, didn't you?**

**The discussion of food naturally brought about the idea of eating properly and to diet or not to diet. One of the guys said he decided to go on a diet for two weeks, just because he felt it was the right thing to do. At the end of the allotted time he discovered he had gained 6 pounds. Always the optimist he said, "It was a good thing I went on the diet... can you imagine how much I would have gained if I hadn't?"**

**I can't allow this recounting of our breakfast adventure to end without mentioning our waitress. She truly knows how to win tips and influence customers. When taking the orders, one of us began to get very specific about the cooking of the bacon, the type of butter wanted, when to bring the milk, etc., etc., ad infinitum... when suddenly our waitress, who had been taking down these specifics, stopped and yelled, "Hey, all you other 5 tables of customers I've got... I'll be with you in an hour or so as soon as I finish this book I'm writing." She then turned to another table of a mother and three small children just arriving and said, "Hey kids, I'll get to you soon... go ahead and start making a lot of noise if you want." Needless to say, she got a great tip from all of us.**

**My tip to you guys out there... keep active and keep smiling. See you next week.**