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TURNING HEADS

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Braid brigades take on summer

The age-old hairstyle protects from heat and humidity

BY ANNE BRATSKER
Special to Newsday

'Summer is a disaster for me" says Aliza Licht, 44, a North Woodmere native who is a fashion executive and author. She's talking hair. "I become a Chia Pet, for real. My entire happiness is based on the percent of humidity that day. On bad days, I look like I've been

electrocuted, and I'm miserable."

Licht, along with many others, has discovered the beauty and the ease of the summer braid. With the help of a headband and the skills of a talented co-worker, Licht has been sporting a thick fishtail braid to tame her summer locks. When she wears the look, she says: "I feel put-together and chic. Every part of my hair is secure and humidity-proof."

For college student Eboni Porter, 18, of Freeport, long box braids help keep her cool and protect her hair, which she says gets, "really, really dry in the summer." Versatility is a selling point for her. "I get bored with my hair, and when it's braided, I put it up in a ponytail to wear to the gym, braid the braids or even add silver thread or beads for a different look. It's a fun way to change things up."

Added benefit? The cooling effect. "The air on your scalp feels so good," she says. For Porter, braiding can take up to 10 hours when done by a friend and a third of that time when she goes to a salon. And the process goes beyond hair, Porter says. "It's a bonding experience that's been passed through the generations. Every black girl goes through that. Your mom does it when you're little, and I remember wanting to spend that time with her. You braid when you sleep over at a friend's house. And even now, I do it for my younger cousins before we go out."

At K&D African Hair Braiding in Bay Shore, manager Nawa "Kandee" Kamate says she's seen "a definite spike in the popu-

larity of braids. They're a lot less work and a sun-protective style, along with being hip, fun and daring for the summer." And although it's "part of our culture," says Kamate, whose parents own the salon and came here from Africa's Ivory Coast, there are no ethnic boundaries when it comes to braiding. "We see folks from all types of cultures here — African-American, Latina, Asian, whites and even males."

At her salon, braiding can take anywhere from 45 minutes to six hours depending on the complexity and length of hair. "Feed-in corn rows like the ones appropriated by Kim Kardashian are the quickest," Kamate says. Not so fast: braids Beyoncé wore in her "Lemonade" music video. "The length is dramatic, and you need an eye for symmetry and shape," Kamate says.

The twisting trend has caught on at nuBest salon and spa in Manhasset, too. "We're doing a ton of braids right now," says owner Jamie Mazzei. "It's an easy thing to do and there are a lot of fun styles out there, other than the traditional French braid."

Mazzei thinks that HBO medieval drama "Game of Thrones" may have spurred the trend, but for summer, he says, "it's a collision of style and practicality. Fitness is part of it. People are wearing braids at the gym to keep their hair in check and tame, but you can also look great at a party with a braid and, no question, they're a shield for humidity."

Although they've done men's braids at nuBest, they're not quite as popular, says Mazzei. "It's rarer on a guy, though it's possible that the man bun may be morphing into the man braid."

Fashion executive and author Aliza Licht of North Woodmere uses a fishtail braid to control her humidity-sensitive hair.



LANDEE DADDONA

Floria Kaidirmanglou of Islip gets a braid at K&D African Hair Braiding in Bay Shore.



NUBEST SALON AND SPA

NuBest salon and spa stylist Faye Kakouras models a pull-through braid, easy to do and very stylish.



LANDEE DADDONA

Daphney Jean of Bay Shore shows her box braids by stylist Dee Diallo.

ON THE COVER Regina Paolotti of Bay Shore models a goddess bun at K&D African Hair Braiding in Bay Shore.



Eboni Porter of Freeport keeps cool and protects her hair from summer heat and sun damage by wearing box braids.

KRISTEN KUMI

Man braids, plait cool, style and practicality



LANDEE DADDONA

Nawa "Kandee" Kamate braids cornrows for Marquis Hall of Babylon at K&D African Hair Braiding in Bay Shore.



NUBEST SALON AND SPA

Brandon Maranzano of Lynbrook wears tight cornrows.

Teacher **plus** makeovers

We know — summer's just getting started. But now's the time to treat a hard-working teacher to a makeover. Newsday is looking for teachers who want a new look for the fall. You'll get a revamp at a salon, advice from a professional stylist and a photo/video fashion shoot in which you'll model the season's trends. It's a little slice of fame (last year's winners, pictured) — and a lot of fun.

NOMINATE YOURSELF — OR SOMEONE WHO FITS THE BILL.

Go to newsday.com/teachermakeover or email a paragraph about why you or your nominee needs a makeover along with a recent photo to exploreLI@newsday.com.

NOMINATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY JULY 23



BRUCE GILBERT

Best dressed: Daphne Charles-Brown, Sabrina Brosnihan and Teresa Rich amp up the fashion factor.



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