

AU NATUREL

PERSONAL AND SALON UPDATES

Where in the world has all the rain gone...and other showers of blessings

Since opening the salon, I've seen 20 spring seasons come and go. Throughout this time, I don't think I've EVER seen a drier one. It could be that I've taken up gardening so I'm more inclined to notice the weather patterns. That is likely one part of it. But truly, the lack of rain that we are experiencing in NC is disturbing to me. The yard dirt is like sand. I am watering everything consistent with Raleigh water restrictions. But what concerns me most is that I'm constantly tracking rain on the 7-day weather forecast. And week after week, as we approach the day earmarked for rain, the forecast revises, and rain is off the table. Most people are unaware of this truth, but Raleigh, NC gets more

rain than London, England and Seattle, Washington. Who knew? That's considering our annual rainfall averages. How do we perceive that those cities have the highest rainfall in all the world? Because their rain is more likely to be misty or light rainfall. When it rains in Raleigh, it rains in buckets. We are doused by the clouds and then

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we get sunlight until we get the next dousing. We have a lot fewer rain days than Seattle but more rainfall. Our year-to-date rainfall totals are between 7.8 and 10.5 inches. Juxtapose that against our typical year-to-date average of 19 inches and you see the problem. I haven't seen anything that compares to this feeling that God is turning His back on

NOMINATION FOR RALEIGH'S BEST

For the 5th consecutive year, the Raleigh Community has nominated our salon for the Raleigh's Best contest hosted by the Raleigh News & Observer. It is truly an honor to be recognized and nominated. I feel like I have an idea who the person is that keeps nominating us, but I honestly can't be sure. And I would never ask. I will just graciously accept the honor and express my sheer joy in the nomination. The contest has all sorts of marketing and promotional assets that you can purchase to increase your vote count and likelihood that you will win. But, I've never engaged in that way. The nomination is truly the win in my mind. So, I am grateful. All the same, I will be sharing the voting link on our website blog and our Facebook page when it becomes available. We have been at this game for a minute, and we want to believe that our presence is making a difference in people's lives. So, the nomination says we are and that is enough. We give thanks. I extend that thanks to any and all current and past clients, stylists, aestheticians, massage therapists and Au Naturel readers who have supported this journey or cheered us on from the shadows. We appreciate you, and we embrace the beauty of you.

you. Water is life. And we take SO MUCH for granted. I pray for our famers because [their mental health is already severely compromised](#). I pray that this drought ends soon, and the summer brings relief. But somehow, it feels like judgment. Only God knows why it is the way it is.

I have been remiss in my writing responsibilities because March-May is my crunch time at work. I submit our annual report to our federal funder at UNC, so that takes highest priority. The report is usually about 50 pages of graphs and writing so after submission, I frankly don't feel like writing ANYTHING but maybe an email. Couple that with the war in Iran and the pending oil crisis, and my mind is far from discussing hair issues. But, I have found my second wind. That coupled with the fact that some collective of diehard readers is out there patiently waiting to hear WHAT'S UP?! Well, the biggest news of the year is that I have found a long-lost Vietnamese sister! Yes, a biological sister. A lady reached out who helped my sister with her Ancestry DNA results. The lady is a distant cousin, but she reached out to me because my sister has two first cousins on her profile who are my first cousins. My cousin Fred referred the lady to me because she was looking for someone who served in Vietnam in the early 70s. When she sent the first photo of my sister, I knew we were related. She looks just like my grandmother. My eldest saw this photo and said: "Yep! I believe it!" But just to be sure, I asked my uncle, my Dad's brother, to take the DNA test since he is the closest match to my Dad. The results came back with her as a 27% match to his DNA! Likewise, she popped up on his profile as "niece." So, it's official!! As my oldest sister Cynthia says: DiNA don't lie! The children of former Vietnam-era service members were given permission to migrate to the US. So, she came here in the early 90s with her Mom and siblings. She told me that her Mom was two months pregnant when Dad got orders to leave Vietnam. So, he told her, "All I can do is give you money." According to my sister, "He gave her A LOT of money." She then noted that her Mom has four children. She is the youngest. She said: "I was treated the best because of that money." My eldest son was pretty upset to learn about these events. But, I told him and my sister that I have nothing but respect for her Mom. I noted: "My job is to sit in front of a computer for 8 hours a day. His job was to kill people that look like her Mom. If he brought someone close to him to remind him of the humanity of the "other", I don't doubt that she helped to save his humanity and his sanity." My eldest sister did not like the fact that he was married and was clearly unfaithful. But, I noted; "And yet, she was the means through which her entire family was allowed to



come to the US! So, God knows why it was the way it was." My new sister said the embassy asked her extensively how she was treated by her Mom and siblings. She told them well. So, the agents allowed them to migrate with her. They told her if they had treated her badly, they would NOT be allowed to come. So, only God knows why it was the way it was. I was not there. So, I reserve judgment. But, I have NOT told my mother and don't plan on doing so. My sister speaks English but her native tongue is Vietnamese and Cambodian, so I will need to study Vietnamese a bit. Cousin Fred is planning a family reunion so we prayerfully will be able to meet face-to-face before too long, with God's help.

As for me, I am just grateful that we all found each other. It was only through modern technology and DNA testing that she could EVER have found us. I recall last year when Fred called me excited that he had his DNA results. He texted me some of the DNA findings regarding African ties. I was indifferent if I can be honest. I know I'm African. How exactly and by what percentage doesn't mean much to me. It just feels like a lot of information that I can't do anything with. I embrace ALL of Africa. That is enough for me. But finding a sister!! It would not have been possible without Fred's journey into our

collective chromosomes. So, I am grateful for his curiosity.

WHEN MINI-LOCKS ARE NOT A GOOD OPTION

Knowing when to say “No”

A client recently came in for a consultation for mini-locks. (Most people call them Sisterlocks but I have long explained that the Sisterlock technique is a patented methodology so the name cannot be used unless the tools and techniques have been learned from patented program.) Mini-locks are functionally the same as Sisterlocks. In short, it is a style that mimics the look of loose hair by locking extremely small, threadlike sections of hair throughout the head to create a full, attractive look. By locking the hair in these miniature sections, the hair behaves and grows like locks while giving the appearance that the client is NOT wearing locks at all. In essence, the process of locking the hair nullifies the effects to those unique characteristics of natural hair which make it the anti-thesis of mainstream:

- It's coily-ness is neutralized as locks grow in straight lines rather than curls.
- It is less prone to frizzing up in rain and humidity,
- It can be shampooed without tangling and becoming unruly.
- It can easily grow down to your waist and beyond.

In other words, if you want the look of bone-straight, long hair that grows past your waist, you can have it without a wig, extensions or the look of locks! All you need is the money, time, a skilled practitioner and patience. I can't tell you how many times I've spoken to women over the years who said they would NEVER wear locks, but who now are wearing mini-locks. The reasons for not wanting to wear traditional sized locks is varied but there is one common denominator that all of these women share in common—they are in professional, often high paying jobs and therefore prefer a natural look that is low maintenance AND ensures that their hair is not a topic for discussion by ANYONE. Mini-locks fit the bill. So, are they for everyone?

Well as the title indicates, they are not. The client that came into the salon last week is an older woman with aging hair. That is not what precludes her from wearing this style. The challenge faced is that the density of her hair is very low. In other words, if you take one square inch of hair on her scalp, you may find 100 strands of hair therein, whereas someone else's hair might have 300 strands in that same square inch. As a result, when parting her hair for the mini-locks, you may only be able to create 4 small locks within that area whereas the thicker head of hair would have about 12 twists within that same area (assuming each lock holds 25 strands). The net effect is that the thinner hair will show more scalp than hair. Because the hair density is low, you can only get so much mileage out of the hair before you just run out of material to work with. And what remains is a style that is unbecoming to the client. The objective was to create a full look. But persisting with this style, which is inappropriate for the client, winds up accentuating the thinness of her hair. In this instance, we advised that it's better for the client to wear her hair loose to work with the natural curl's propensity to expand and create volume. It's tough love but it's not always good to give people what they ask for. Here at Schatzi's, we prefer to support you to a more becoming look rather than to take your money for the one you requested. After further dialogue regarding these limitations, the client admitted that she was diagnosed with a condition which is severely thinning her hair. So, we encouraged her to focus on medical care and nutrition in the interim with the hope that arresting this condition can lead to a fuller head of hair that can in fact be mini-locked in the future. Without our recommendation to try a different style, I'm not sure that the client would have confessed to the state of her health. Honesty is always the best policy on both sides of the stylist chair. Embrace the beauty of you.

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