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Dubin: Northbrook salon wants your lice

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December 4, 2009

A few weeks back I wrote a column about my least favorite subject -- lice. Yuck! And now, here I am discussing it (and itching while thinking about it) again. This time, however, it's for a very positive reason.

It seems that right around the time of my other column, Buffalo Grove residents Lisa and Steven Weisberg and Alana and Ricky Max opened up their very own lice-removal salon. As soon as I heard this I thought, "Eeewww, who would want to be around lice all day?" About three seconds later I thought, "Why didn't I think of that? They're geniuses!" They even came up with an adorable name -- The Nit Pickers. Don't you just love it? And who would even think the word "adorable" and "lice" could be used in the same sentence?

The first thing I did was check out the Nit Pickers extremely informative Web site (www.thenitpickers.com). There were so many interesting facts regarding those awful creatures, I found myself reading the entire thing. And I was so enthralled my head didn't even itch. It turns out that there's an actual world-renowned "Guru" in lice removal, named Katie Shepherd, and Lisa Weisberg went to Florida to train with Shepherd in her school, The Shepherd Institute for Lice Solutions. Can you imagine being so gifted at removing lice that you actually open up a school for it? I never even knew that was a career possibility!

Anyway, after studying the Web site I spoke with Lisa and Steven Weisberg. "Our daughter came home loaded with lice but we didn't realize it," says Lisa, whose entire family then came down with lice. "It was winter. Everyone's skin was dry. And unless you know exactly what you're looking for it's easy to miss. We were completely overwhelmed and tried every removal remedy with no success."

"Finally, we all went to a salon in the city," says Steven. "They did a good job removing the lice for us and we were happy. The only problem was that it was so far away and extremely expensive. At that point we all said, 'This is a great business idea.'"

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The Nit Pickers took about nine months to get off the ground and opened in September. "(Buffalo Grove resident) Wendy Wilk of Wilk Design Group did a beautiful job designing the place," says Steven. "Not only did she make the place look great, she saved us a lot of time and money. We opened up so much quicker because of Wendy and her crew."

So, are the people that work at The Nit Pickers paranoid about getting lice? "We all wear our hair completely off our faces," says Lisa, who works as head-technician. "98 percent of all lice are from head-to-head contact so we're fine."

So, are the people that work at The Nit Pickers paranoid about getting lice? "We all wear our hair completely off our faces," says Lisa, who works as head-technician. "98 percent of all lice are from head-to-head contact so we're fine."

Regarding the actual lice removal, "Our products are non-toxic and safe to use every day," says Steven. "We're actually just coming out with a preventative shampoo/conditioner that has a 78 percent chance of you not getting lice even though everyone around you might have it - like at camps, schools, gymnastics -- or even if your family has it.

"When clients come in for liceremoval, our educated technicians are there to help ease everyone's anxieties," adds Steven. "Lisa and the other technicians are very calming and take the time to answer questions. Our technicians are also very 'nit-ticulous' going through each and every strand of hair."

"All clients get a certificate when they're done," says Lisa. "The kids even say 'I hope I get lice again so I can come back and see you' and the parents are like, 'Are you CRAZY?!'

"It's truly so rewarding," adds Lisa. "We don't want anyone to have to go through the overwhelming situation we had when we went through it. So many clients have said it really takes the stress out of the situation. I have a really good eye for the bug thing. It's really just patience. You just have to go through the whole head. Even in between appointments. I still check my kids all the time. I even look on strangers' heads all the time. I don't even realize I'm doing it."

"Our business is similar to that of a funeral home. You never want to think about using our service, but we're here when you need us!" says Steven.

The Nit Pickers is located at 3000 Dundee Road, Suite 409 in Northbrook. For more information call (847) 513-6999 or email info@thenitpickers.com.

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