

FEAR & LOAFING

Twin peaks

She's beautiful.
She's talented.
And she's got a handlebar mustache.



Karl Nilsson

According to a recent survey, Michigan high school students are gulping steroids at an alarming rate. Traditionally, male athletes like wrestlers and football players use anabolic steroids to increase muscle bulk and intimidate society.

Now, teenage girls are using the drugs a shortcut to a slimmer figure. Starting as early as junior high, co-eds take steroids to achieve the wasp waist and narrow hips so often associated with fashion models and famine victims.

Unfortunately, their suppliers fail to mention what steroids are — synthetic forms of the male hormone testosterone. So, as an unexpected bonus, the petite miss also gains a deep voice, facial hair and a powerful handshake.

But don't panic. Just because your teenage daughter looks like a man doesn't mean she won't be popular. In fact, some of our most popular leading men (Mel Gibson, Bruce Willis, PeeWee Herman, etc.) started out as pom-pom girls who dabbed in steroids.

Speaking of the gender confusion, if you've ever seen female bodybuilders on TV, you already know two important facts:

(1) Never watch this kind of program without an air sickness bag on your lap.

(2) Steroids cause a woman's breast to disappear.

I'M NOT QUITE sure how they judge these freak shows, but it looks like the gal voted "least likely to need both pieces of her two-piece swimsuit" wins the trophy.

We're not just talking fried eggs here. We're talking Flat Earth Society, Total mammary inversion.

How things have changed! Back when I went to high school, girls took pills to get larger breasts, not smaller. Reputable magazines like "Teen" ran ads for dozens of ads for potions, exercisers and vacuum pumps to increase bust size. Right there, beside the gizmos to remove nose hair safely, were products that wanted to produce triple D torpedoes or you money back.

And if you doubted the written claims, there was always undeniable, un-retouched photographic proof to convince you.

The "BEFORE" picture showed some sunken-chested wall slaving over a hot typewriter while her better endowed co-worker was being chased around the desk by three handsome men.

The "AFTER" photo showed the

STREET SENSE

Don't make waves with him

Dear Barbara,
I've never written a letter like this before. I guess you hear that often. Obviously, I am troubled or I would not be writing to you. I hope you can shed some insight.

This week I received a letter with a hand-cancelled postmark. It was done in such a way that I could not recognize the city that it was coming from. Inside it was a cartoon strip. The strip had two women talking to each other and one is saying to the other, "Alan is having an affair." A note was enclosed that said, "We thought you ought to know."

This is not the first time I have been told that my husband was having an affair. About a year ago, my oldest and dearest friend told me that he was, too. I didn't really believe her and have not spoken to her since.

I confronted my husband, who firmly denied it. I still don't believe he is seeing other women, but he does do suspicious things. He travels on business and says he doesn't know where he is staying. Often I don't know how to find him. I also travel often. We have both always had a lot of freedom. Our kids are grown and there isn't a lot of responsibility at home.

I do care if he is having an affair. I love him very much. I do not want my marriage to end.

Betrayed?

Dear Betrayed,

If you love him very much and don't want your marriage to end, then don't make trouble.

Barbara

Dear Barbara,
There has been so much in your column recently about smoking. I am 28 and quit smoking one year ago. It was hard, but I do feel better. I smoked for 15 years before I quit. (I started early.) Will the bad effects of smoking ever be gone? Will I have negative health effects for the rest of my life?

Ex-smoker

Dear Ex-smoker,
I don't know if you are a man or a woman, and in this situation, it does matter. Some research indicates that ex-smokers re-enter the normal mortality curve after five years. Other research indicates that it takes two years for men and three to four years for women.

Congratulations on quitting! Barbara



Barbara Schiff

If you have a question or comment for Barbara Schiff, a trained therapist and experienced counselor, send it to Street Sense, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

Dave Barry: Doing 'homework' pays off

Continued from Page 1

Q: YOUR COLUMN is syndicated throughout the Detroit area. Do you work from the Herald's office?

Barry: I work at home mostly. Papers are designed not to work in, as far as I can tell. Too many people, too much stuff to do that's entertaining as opposed to writing which I've never found entertaining.

Where I work at the Herald, the Sunday magazine is called Tropic. There's a conference room which is funny because, well, if you know the staff at Tropic, the idea of them having a conference room is funny. These are people who can't even have conversations... so they set up a ping pong table. So when I go to the Tropic, that's really what goes on — ping pong.

Q: You don't like writing?

Barry: No! Does anyone? People who have to do it never like it — that's been my experience. Which isn't to say that I don't like being a writer — I would much rather be a writer than have a job. But the actual part of sitting down in front of a screen and thinking "Well, now what?" — I don't care for that. Especially because I never have anything to say.

If I had some strong feelings about world events or some coherent political philosophy or even just musings, interesting experiences to relate, I think I would have more confidence. But I know for a fact that I have nothing to say. For years, I haven't and for the foreseeable future I don't expect to.

Q: How do you come up with ideas then?

Barry: There's a building/garage/office at the end of my yard. I go in there with my coffee and my two dogs and the three of us sit there and try to have ideas. Quite frankly, they're not holding up their end. Over the years, I've had a much larger share of the ideas than either of them. I just sit there — that's mostly what it is — sitting there and thinking, "Hmmm, this sucks."

Q: How about fan mail?

Barry: Most of it's nice, some of it's weird — just mail from Mary — and some of it's from what I call the "humor impaired" — people who read what I wrote and because it's in the newspaper take it to be literally true and are alarmed if it's not.

Q: You do sometimes seem like you're getting away with something — and to so many major newspapers?

Barry: Well, it wasn't like that right away. I wasn't accepted by very big papers at the beginning. When I first started syndication, I would talk to editors and they would often say, "Well, we like your column, but don't think our readers are really ready for it." Editors, I think, generally have a very low opinion of the IQ's of the reader because the ones who call in often are stupid.

Slowly, some of the larger papers started to run my column, then editors decided that it was OK. I don't think my column has changed much over the years. It didn't get any more tasteless, at least I hope not.

Q: So if we looked at one of your earlier columns, it would be pretty much the same style?

Barry: Yeah, pretty close. In fact,

it's the same column actually — about every two years I just start running them all over again. So far no one's picked up on it because I think a lot of my readers are heavy drinkers.

Q: How do you feel about your earlier columns?

Barry: The farther back I go, the less likely I am to like what I wrote. I think I could have done better. But, I'm always thinking that. I think that's why I'm a columnist instead of a novelist — because I don't care that much. I don't want to keep looking back. I want to get on with something else.

Q: Right after college, you were hired by the Daily Local News?

Barry: Actually, right after college I was a conscientious objector for two years. But, then I got hired by the News.

Q: Before that?

Barry: When I was young, I did write what I thought were hilarious essays for the high school and college papers. But I certainly wasn't a legendary stand-out in that field.

Q: What happened after your stint with the Daily Local News?

Barry: I went to the Associated Press which does not encourage humor writing. Sometimes, I wonder if it even encouraged brain wave activity. Then I left the Associated Press to teach effective writing seminars to chemists and engineers around the country.

While I was doing that, I started writing a column for the Daily Local News. I started showing people my

column and more and more papers started expressing an interest. By 1983, the Miami Herald was really interested and offered me a job.

I said no because I didn't want to get shot — not that everyone who moves to Miami gets shot, some of them get stabbed. So, I worked for the Herald but lived in Pennsylvania. In '86, we finally moved to Miami because we had come to really like it from traveling there, plus, by that time, we wanted to get shot and stabbed.

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STREET SEEN
Denise Susan Lucas

Our intrepid Street Scene reporter is always looking for the unusual and welcomes comments and suggestions from readers and entrepreneurs. Send those to this column in care of this newspaper, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, or call 591-2200, Ext. 313.



Touch of brass

Looking for something to jazz up a pair of sneakers? Promote your favorite rock group? Or just let the world know who you are? How about brass sneaker tags. The Town Engraver, 1270 S. Main St. Plymouth, has brass sneaker tags that can be engraved with anything the wearer desires. The tags cost \$5.25 a pair.

Elvis 'lives'

Another Elvis sighting? No, just Rock n' Troll, one of the curious troll dolls that charmed people with their Impish grins and distressed coiffures in the mid-'60s and are making a comeback. Manufactured by Norfin, the trolls can be found at Just Kidding in Summit Place Mall, Waterford Township. Prices range from \$4.95 for a small troll to \$39.95 for the larger figures.



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