

CHAT ROOM



JONI HUBRED

Bifocals bring midlife into (fuzzy) focus

Fuzzy.

Clear.
Fuzzy.
Clear.
The optician bends the bow of my new glasses and asks, "How's that? Can you see across the street?"

Turns out I need to wear them a little lower on my nose, so that it's easier for my eyes to make the transition. That's what I'm calling these: my transitional glasses.

Before I turned 40, I scoffed at the term "middle age." I refused to have a mid-life crisis. Then my father died. I left a job I'd held for 10 years. My hair started turning a rather wiry gray. And the world's type-size master made a decision to downsize.

Fuzzy.
Clear.
"Let me see those just once more," the optician says.

These are the lenses prescribed by a 30-something eye doctor who said I was "within the normal age for needing bifocals."

I cringed.
"I should have said that differently," she said, with a patience born of coddling countless men and women who have balked at making this particular adjustment. "You're ready for transitional lenses."

That's what I've been calling them. Everybody else says, "So, are those your new bifocals?"

Friends can be so cruel.

Another transition

As I look down, I realize I now have to move my head instead of just my eyes. There's a fuzzy look to the bruises my knees acquired during last weekend's move - another transition.

I can better make out the words in a book I'm reading, a self-help book that purports to help me understand this transitional stage of my life.

In "New Passages," a follow-up to her wildly successful self-help tome of the '70s, Gail Sheehy points out that people live longer and healthier these days. Men and women alike start new careers or even whole new lives in their 40s, 50s and 60s, making the most of a Second Adulthood that could last another 30 to 50 years.

I would imagine this is my Second Adulthood, but in many ways, it feels like my first.

Putting down roots

At 43, I have finally traded the vagabond apartment life for a house, albeit a rented one. I am trying it out to see whether I might like to own one someday.

I have stopped looking so hard for happiness and found it right where I left it. I have learned the most about love by realizing I don't understand it at all.

I have seen value in driving my car until it drops from sheer exhaustion and buying a push lawn-mower for the exercise. Meijer and Wal-Mart appeal to me as much as - and in some cases more than - Marshall Fields or Parisian.

Household budgets, I've decided, are guides to be followed, not chains to be worn.

Being late is not a sin; neither are an untucked blouse, an unmade bed, gray roots or patchy lipstick.

My mother was right when she said, "If you keep a smile on your face, nobody will notice your shoes."

Wrinkles can, but don't always, signify grace and wisdom, tolerance and endurance. And stretchmarks are simply a sign of well-used skin.

So much less matters to me, but what's left matters even more.

Although my eyesight and most of my life seem to be moving daily in the still, certain tempo at which time marches on, I have found truth in the shadows and strength in accepting what is uncertain.

Fuzzy.

Or clear.

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Longacre offers monster course

BY MARY RODRIQUE
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In 90 minutes Thursday in a back room at the Longacre House, Farmington editor Joni Hubred was transformed into a decaying zombie, complete with rotting skin.

No flesh-eating disease or overstressed work schedule could be blamed for this transformation. Rather it was the artistic work of Jeff Ferreri, Longacre's program director and teacher of an upcoming course called Monster Makers, a pre-Halloween offering for kids ages 8 to 12.

On four consecutive Wednesday evenings at the Longacre House beginning Sept. 26, students will learn the secrets of special effects makeup. Simple, non-toxic, inexpensive supplies will be used to create the illusion of old age, injuries, monsters and aliens.

"I enjoy creating illusion," said Ferreri. "I enjoy showing people things they wouldn't normally see. Kids learn that what they see in the movies or on television is exaggerated."

Ferreri has had a lifelong passion for magic and make-up - both arts of illusion. As a pre-teen in the era before the Internet, he spent hours and hours researching trade magazines and library books to gain as much knowledge as possible.

Interested early

"I got hooked in junior high school, around 1976. If I'd been five years earlier, I may have run off to Hollywood. But I was just past the Hollywood gold rush era when hundreds of makeup artists were heading to California."

In the Detroit area where Ferreri grew up, he honed his skills in magic and special effects make-up technique enough to make it pay off professionally. He's performed as a magician for corporate clients including General Motors and Ford Motor companies, private parties and city-sponsored events in Detroit, Royal Oak, Huntington Woods, Berkley and Novi.

He's also performed as a clown since 1982. In addition to the special effects make-up classes he has taught for both kids and adults, he's led courses in drawing, painting, sculpting and other artistic endeavors at Longacre House and other venues, including the Boys and Girls Club.

As Ferreri talked, he worked methodically on his live model. Joni's face was a human canvas. With items available at any grocery store - food coloring and unflavored gelatin - he created a rough-textured fake skin for a foundation layer.

"Novelty shops sell the 'one size fits



Transforming: Above, a simple mix of food coloring, unflavored gelatin and glycerin; tools of the trade. At right, top, Jeff Ferreri paints deep blue circles around Joni Hubred's eyes. At right, Joni checks out her mirrored reflection - to the amusement of Mary Rodrique.

nobody' masks. This fake skin matches your face."

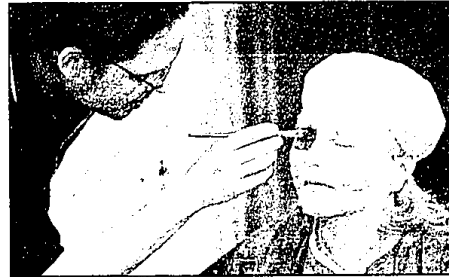
Ferreri's wife is a drama teacher in Wayne-Westland Schools, and he assists her by doing the make-up for high school productions. This year, the fall play is "Hamlet," and he knows the young actors will appreciate his gruesome caricatures. Ferreri also does custom make-up jobs around Halloween and for sci-fi conventions. Many of his clients have won prizes at costume parties for his one-of-a-kind creations.

He calls Dick Smith, author of *Do-it-yourself Monster Make-up*, "the Einstein of make-up and my mentor. He has a course for kids that's the industry bible."

Ferreri said his make-up course for kids stresses safety. That means you don't use Super-Glue to make a fake nose stick to your real skin, he said.

"The medical industry has given us a lot of the stuff we use. Things aren't usually made specifically for make-up. Even foam latex was invented for the auto industry."

He said foam latex doesn't make



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRINKLEY

good facial masks because "it acts as a sponge."

"As a make-up artist, you are an experimenter and a scientist. You must understand bone structure."

Blue on blue

Ferreri worked with a palette of colors to create a face mask using several shades of blue on his subject, Joni, who sat motionless through the process. There were dark blue circles around the eyes, medium blue across the neck and cheeks and lighter tones across the forehead and chin. The foundation gave it a bumpy look.

He tore a small circle of the fake foundation skin off Joni's forehead and painted the area white and then yellow to look like her skull. Fake blood made

from corn syrup and red food coloring filled the edge, giving it more depth and gore. Finally he gave a thin brush and black paint to create wrinkles and lines.

"I don't let my subjects see the results until the end. I love the startled 'wow!' effect," he said.

As for Joni, finally catching a glimpse of her transformed self in a large round mirror in a corner of the room, a short terrified shriek was quickly followed by "Oh, I like that."

Monster Makers runs from 6:15-7:15 p.m. Sept. 26 through Oct. 17. Cost is \$49, plus \$6 materials fee. To register, call the Longacre House at 477-8404.

St. Clare Church launches expansion



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRINKLEY

Good fit: Father Fred Klettner tries on his personalized construction hardhat.

Breaking ground:

Fr. Fred tosses the first shovel of dirt at the ground-breaking for the new building. Project manager Samy Naggar, archdiocesan director of building Cheryl Egan, parish council president Carol Roman, architect John Dziurman and general contractor Bill McCarthy join in the festivities.



Talk: Fr. Fred at left, talks with parishioner Rosalie Hebel.

and Samy Naggar of the architectural firm of John Dziurman Inc., general contractor Bill McCarthy of McCarthy Inc., as well as parishioners of the Roman Catholic parish.

Other changes planned include repositioning the altar and the pews so that the priest and congregation can be in closer proximity. A Eucharistic chapel for private adoration, a meditation garden and a bell tower with landscaping enhancements are included. A new electronic organ, a cry room and a multi-purpose preparation room are also in the plan. Completion is scheduled for early 2002. More than 300 families are registered at St. Clare.



View: Amy Hallochak, 7, stays dry and watches the ground-breaking through the window.