

The Morning Call

Dad's day at the spa

Gift of pampering can make a man feel like a king

By Terry Larimer

I'm glad I don't have to buy me presents. It's not that I have practically everything, I just have everything practical.

I have a wall full of neckties, about 10 of which I never wear. There are power tools all over my garage and basement. There's a closet full of shirts and sweaters.

With Father's Day looming Sunday, my three sons and their wives – hopefully – are trying to come up with something I'll enjoy. Anyway they've just been through all of this since I celebrated my 60th birthday in early May. One of their gifts, I'd highly recommend for your dad, is to make him king for a day. Well, OK, king for a couple of hours.

I'm not the first guy you'd expect to enjoy a day at the spa. Grooming to me is a daily shower, a quick trim around my beard, a little deodorant and a rudimentary rerouting of my sparse hair. And I was a bit intimidated at the thought of someone I didn't know fussing all over me. Your dad might feel the same way. He'll get over it, trust me.

My son, Craig, was one of the few fellow employees of The Morning Call, who didn't either tease me about my day at the spa, or drop their jaws, bug out their eyes and say, "You? You're going to a spa?" But Craig and his wife, Pam, were to blame for all of this since they bought me the "Men at Work" package at American Male, a salon on East Third Street in Bethlehem.

Owner Tom McCormack opened the shop in the Polk Street building last September. He was a victim of a downsizing



at Agere Systems and explains, "I was looking for something different to do and decided to go to cosmetology school." There he was contacted by the Raylon Corp. of Reading, which is the parent of 14 American Male shops around the country. "They wanted to open a store in Bethlehem and asked if I'd be interested," he says.

McCormack says his shop's proximity to Lehigh University is a major benefit. "You wouldn't believe the amount of discretionary cash those kids have." But men of all ages use his services from \$18 kids haircuts to the \$95 Executive Package. Busy times are late afternoon to early evening. "And, of course, Saturday morning," McCormack adds.

I visited in the early afternoon and there was only one other patron. McCormack put me in the good hands of Karina Garrido, 24-year-old native of Chile, who is a graduate of Liberty High School and one of eight employees.

I might have some of this out of order since I made two trips to the shampoo sink, one before and one after I had my hair “styled.” Karina actually asked me how I wanted it done, but since she was working with what I’d guess is about three dozen hairs on the top of my head, I just replied, “Short.” Since she had so little work to do on the top of my dome, we opted to have her trim my beard. Why is hair so sparse on top of my head and so plentiful on my chin?

We started the afternoon with a hand waxing, where I dipped my hands in warm wax three times to build it up and she covered them up with a plastic bag and a sort of oven mitten on each hand. So I was at her mercy on the first shampoo. After that, she peeled the wax off and gave me a hand massage that almost made me wish I had carpal tunnel syndrome, just so she could cure it.

Karina is rather petite, but doing massages regularly has given her a very strong set of hands. Later, I had a facial and a face massage, followed by a hot moist towel, which I have no idea the purpose of, other than to make you feel sinfully spoiled.

She also did something called “hand detailing,” and I was happy to note that my cuticles had all grown back from the usual torture I put them through when I’m tense and chewing them to shreds. In fact, with Karina’s effort, my hands looked better than I ever remember them. I passed on her offer of nail polish, however. You can take some things only so far.

After the second shampoo, we went to the back massage chair for 10 minutes of heaven. To paraphrase Kevin Spacey’s character in the movie “K-Pax,” the back massage alone was worth the trip. I have a chronic problem with TMJ (temporomandibular joint) disorder and was experiencing a major flare-up in my right jaw when Karina started working on me. I

walked out of the shop pain-free, but it didn’t last long.

I’d better schedule another visit.



a full service salon for guys

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