HAIR-IT-IS

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Shy Locks, said the sign over the store on South Washington Street in Alexandria, Virginia. That's a clever name for a beauty parlor, I thought, but I wonder how many people get the Shakespearean reference. Still, I mused, it probably doesn't matter -- what does count is that the proprietor has created an attention-getting name, one that just might bring in an extra customer or two. Thinking further about it, I was sure that I had seen other beauty parlors with names that played on words -- The Clip Joint and The Razor's Edge came immediately to mind. That evening, I looked further into the matter by turning to Beauty Parlors and Barber Shops in the yellow pages of the Maryland Suburban telephone directory, and to my astonishment found at least twenty more (including the title of this article, without hyphens). And so the idea for another Word Ways article was born.

Over the next couple of months, I scanned 100 yellow pages directories of the largest United States cities. I was amazed at the creativity shown in beauty parlor and barber shop nomenclature. True, 95 out of 100 were of the Dave's Barber Shop or Betty's House of Beauty genre, but the imaginative gems that turned up more than compensated for the dull stretches. After awhile, I got into the spirit of things and tried coining suitable names on my own; then I watched for them to turn up. Sooner or later, nearly every one did -- my only unused ones were Cut 'n Run, Locks Box, Hairy Krishna, LockLustre, and Hair Pollution. (Admittedly the last two have a negative connotation, but equally unpropitious names did show up: who would think of naming his establishment The Chop Shop, The Guillotine, The Electric Chair, or Stalin's Style Center?) A Nutmeg State barber with a taste for really far-out wordplay might want to consider Connect: I Cut.

To avoid being overwhelmed by wordplay, I established certain ground rules on what I would include or exclude. Interesting examples seemed to fall in one of three categories: rhymes, puns on words or conventional phrases, and literary allusions. I rejected as less interesting punning or literary allusions of a more general character, throwing out legions of beauty establishments like Valley of the Dolls, My Fair Lady, Black Beauty, Beau Jeste, Guys & Dolls, Vanity Fair, That Girl, and The Happy Looker. Also, I omitted word blends such as Beautopia (= beauty + utopia) or the many melded owner names.

In what follows, I do not reference the locations of the commoner names; however, if (say) eight or fewer examples were found, I note
the directories with a numerical code (keyed to the list at the end of this article). Also, I have not attempted to include the full or exact name of the establishment -- merely that part that is germane to the pun or rhyme. Small variations in punctuation are not usually indicated (Hair Power, Hairpower), nor are capitalizations (Swirl 'n Curl, Swirl-N-Curl); however, alternate spellings are noted with a slash (Clip/Klip Joint), and added words are in parenthesis.

Rhyming Wordplay

Rhyming wordplay is especially evident in names consisting of two one-syllable words, the first pertaining to the treatment of hair and the second to a location:

Hair Fair, Hair Lair (15, 21, 27, 41, 79)
Cut/Kut Hut (17, 62, 68)
Mop/Mopp Shop (4, 38, 42, 63, 81), Chop Shop (82), Top Shop (26, 27), Crop Shop (25, 56, 87)
Head Shed/Shead
Face Place (19, 26, 36, 67, 77, 91, 96)

I did not see Groom Room, a common name among pet washing and grooming parlors, but the near-miss Grooming Room occurred (19, 31). One beauty parlor pulled out all rhyming stops with Crop Mop Shop (52)!

Much rhyming wordplay revolved around the permutations of curls, swirls, twirls and whirls:

Curl/Curls & Swirl/Swirls TwirlaKurl (8)
Swirl 'n/& Curl Swirl Curl (36)
Curl-N-Twirl (23) Twirl & Swirl (21)
Twirl & Curl (16) Curlawhirl (65)

Many other rhymes are possible:

Jet Set Fash'n Lash (35)
Net Set (28) Blow-n-Go (56)
Get Set (62, 80) Dip & Flip (62)
Plush Brush (82) Fluff & Stuff (17)
Wave & Save (52) Hip Clip (74)
Tease & Please (27, 74) Aisle of Style (87, 96)
Snip 'n/& Clip (67, 77) Girls n' Curls (67)

One of the most puzzling rhymes was Heads 'n Threads (39, 71, 76, 82, 92) -- do these beauty parlors sell clothes as well?

Undoubtedly the most common rhyme word is hair; besides the already-noted Hair Fair and Hair Lair, I found:

Hair Affair/Affaire, Hair-A-Fair, Affair With Hair
Hair Bear (8)
Hair Care

Hair Affair/Affaire, Hair-A-Fair, Affair With Hair
In the August 1977 Word Ways, F Juniper defines various prosodic resonances: rhyme (love/shove), alliteration (love/light), assonance (love/duck), consonance (love/live), deliteration (love/nave), and insonance (love/luck). So far, we have given only rhyming examples, but others are possible:

**Consonance:** Sit & Set (6); Snip Shop (25,34); Tip Top (Shop) (8, 36,85,98)

**Assonance:** Cuts & Such (87,99); Fox Shop (28); Hot Locks (21); Fluff 'n Such (88); Crazy Razor (79); Cat Shack (12); Scissors/Scissors Wizard/Wizards, Sissors Wizzards, Wizard's Scissors

**Insonance:** She's Chic (72); Follicle Follies (44); Coffee n' Coffeure (21)

Alliteration, such as Cut & Curl, Wash & Wave or Shear Shack, is much too common a type of wordplay to merit separate attention; on the other hand, I failed to detect any examples of deliteration, the complement of rhyme. Perhaps this resonance is too subtle.

Rhyme games can also be played with specific names; I noted Fancy Nancy's, Crazy Daisy (and Lazy-Dazy), Cook's Nook, Hairy Larry's, Toes by Rose, Sally's Alley, and Fred's Heads. Others are possible, though I didn't notice them: Dave's Waves, Bess's Tresses, Pearl's Curls.

**Puns on Words**

Turning from rhymes to puns on words or phrases, one enters a vast (well, half-vast) field of wordplay. By far the greatest number of beauty shop examples are associated with hair.

The phonetic similarity of hair and air leads to almost endless wordplay. Air itself appears in a few, and the field of radio inspires others:

**Hair Shaft** (21,22,25,26,27,32,35,48)
**Hair Conditioner** (41)
**Fresh Hair** (22,35,88)
**On The Hair** (47)
**Hair Time** (52)
**Hair Break** (13)

Unquestionably the best of these is the beauty shop in Londonderry, New Hampshire: Londonderry Hair (43).

To judge by names, beauty shops have a close affinity with air.
travel and the aircraft industry:

Hair Port/Porte
Hair Force
Hair Power
Hair Plane (98)
Hair Born (67)
Hair Corps (63)
Hair Craft
Hairways (22, 25, 74, 80)
Hair Lines
Hair Express
Hair Base (41)
Hair-Ship (6)

Several of these were extremely common; Hair Port appeared in about half of the telephone directories. I liked best some of the elaborations on this theme:

Haircraft Plant (63), Hughes Haircrafts (27)
Royal Hair Force (47), U.S. Hair Force (21, 63)
United Hairlines (6, 63), American Hairlines (68), California
Hairlines (85)

The German word Herr, or 'Mister', and the common English word hare are exact homonyms of hair; however, neither one seems as suitable for punning as the approximate homonym air. A few examples, however, were seen:

Mein Hair (78)
Herr (78)
Der Herr Haus (24)
The Wild/Wilde Hair/Hare (19, 32, 46, 51, 68, 79)
The "Hare" Cut (68)
Hare Shoppe (28)
Fox & Hair (31)

Hair and heir are phonetically similar, leading to Hair Apparent (12, 25, 77).

The phonetic similarity of hair to here produced many names:

Hair For You (71)
Hair 'n There (14, 40)
Hair's the Place (5, 69, 92)
Hair's my Place (19)
Hair's the Answer (65)
Stop Right Haire (29)
Hair It Is
Hair Today
Hair (a) Now
Hair for Now (67)
Hair to Please (54)
Hair's Hope (97)
Hair She Goes (31)
Hair We Go (56)
Hair's Whats Happening (49, 92)
Hair's What We Can Do (17)
Hair I Am (14)
Hair We Are/R
Hair You Are (19)
Hair Together (35, 67)

Hair-it-is, which sounds like some sort of medical condition, was used by a shop in Houston (35).

When beauty shop entrepreneurs start substituting hair for hair-like syllables, the results can be outrageous. Three of the commonest (and mildest) puns encountered were Hairloom, Hairitage (Hairatage), and Hair-Em (Hair'em, Hair-AM, Hair-um, Hairem, Hairum,
Hairem, Hair'm). Others include:

- Hairem (85)
- Hairress (85)
- Spiral Haircase (42, 44, 88, 92)
- Some-whair Else (24)
- Hairison/Hairizons (48, 68)
- Hairacy (100)
- Hairphernalia/Hairphernalia
- Hairpoon (16)
- Hair-O-Scope (8, 27, 67)
- Hair-O-Iks (16)
- Hairphernalia (27, 35, 48, 68)
- Hairtakers (26)
- Hair-O-Iks (16)
- His & Hairs (92)
- Hair-B-Dashery/Hairberdashery/
- Hairismatic (52)
- Hairberdashe ry/
- Hairtakers (26)
- Heads You Win (32, 45, 95)
- Head/Heads First (8, 85)
- Head Start (29, 52, 63, 74)
- Hole in the Head (17)
- Headstone Cutters (74)
- Head In (14)
- Heads Together (6, 90, 98)
- Heads & Tales (44)
- A miscellaneous assortment of other head-names:
- The Hair Clip (25, 91)
- Cliptomania (80)
- E-Clips (52, 54)
- One barber apparently capitalized on his surname with Roach's Clip (88). The only other reference to the drug world that I encountered was Cannabis Haircutters (52).
A Cut/Kut Above (the Rest), The Cut Above and One Cut Above (23) are variations on an extremely popular theme. Cut Up/Ups, also seen as Cut 'n Up (89,90), is less common, as is Cut Away, Cut-Away and Cutaway/Kutaway. (This latter name has a clever echo in a Chicago dog grooming parlor, Coat 'n Tails (21).) However, Cutting Corners (14,73) sounds like a place to avoid. Food-lovers would be attracted to The Prime Cut (Prime Cuts, Prime Cutter) or Center Cut (23), prizefighters to The Uppercut, and mobsters to Syndicut (22,38,82). To round out this selection, consider Kutting Edge (73), Clean Cut (23), The Cutting Board (8) or the Cutting Room (3,25,67,70), alluding to butchers and film-makers. (Chop In Block (21) or Chopping Block (88) provide an interesting, if somewhat gruesome, variant to The Cutting Board.)

The phonetic identity of shear and sheer provided a blizzard of puns:

Shear Magic  Shear Pleasure
Shear Joy (41,71,76)  Shear Pleasure
Shear Bliss (27,35,85)  Shear Delight (3,6,8,18,47,62, 71,85)
Shear Imagination (25,54)  Shear Charm (16)
Shear Excellence (36)  Shear Elegance (23)
Shear Ingenuity (52)  Shear Expression (14)
Shear Perfection (8,34,51,60, 73,87,90)  Shear Energy (14)
Shear Artistry (18,19,25,68, 69,73,92)  Shear Happiness (28,89)
Shear Beauty (19,21,27,30, 34,57,70)  Shear Impressions (79)
Shear Power (25,45,87,96)  Shear Fashion (7)
Shear Knowledge (55)  Shear Honesty (50)

No doubt there are several that I have overlooked. However, I liked Shearcroppers/ShearCropper (14,30) the best.

Brush and comb, the tools of the trade, provided a few puns; I noticed Brush Stop (39,70) and Honeycomb (Honeycombe, Honey Comb and Honey-Comb). The word razor has been punned in Hair Razors (52), Hair Raising Adventure (98), Hair Raisers (24,74) and The Hairaiser (6). Shears is remembered in the excellent Blood, Sweat and Shears (21,36,94).

For scissors, the only punning name I noted was the extremely clever Scissors Palace (23,30,32,41,47,52,74,81). (The closely-related Julius Scissors is rumored to be in the New Brunswick (N.J.) area, but I was unable to confirm it in the telephone directory.) When the Nevada-based company Caesar's World wanted to open a casino named Caesar's Palace in Atlantic City, they found that this name had already been taken by a beauty parlor in South Orange, New Jersey. Thwarted by the owner, Caesar Crimi, who refused to change the name, they brought suit to prove that he had no right to it in the first place (N.Y. Times, May 21, 1978). Editorial sympathy strongly favored the beauty shop -- a small entrepreneur bullied by a giant corporation -- and the suit may have been dropped; at any rate, the name was unchanged in the title of the book.
in the October 1978 Suburban Essex directory. Still, I think I would have been tempted to switch the name to Scissors Palace!

Curiously, locks, a special descriptor for hair, provides relatively few puns, mostly of poor quality: Interlocke (35), LockeShoppe (63), Locksmith/Lockesmitl (23, 25, 27, 29, 78) and Lock Snips (30, 70). All pun on the double meaning of locks as 'hair' and 'protective devices'. Curl, another descriptor, came up with several much better puns:
The Curl Friend (67) Curl Talk (18)
Curl Harbor (59, 67) (We) Curl Up and Dye (36, 47)
Country Curl (83)

I consider the last one, a double pun, to be the finest of my collection. Wave is represented by Atlantic Waves (49), found, appropriately, in a seaside town, and Making Waves (21). Set is usually found in Smart Set, but Fashion Set (63), In-Set (74), Sunsets (48), Swing-Set (23) and Set Sational (2, 87, 96) were also seen. Finally, mane is found in Mane Line (27), a pun that would have been even more appropriate in Philadelphia, Mane Attraction (23), Mane Event (14, 16, 25, 35, 98), and Mane Street (23, 30, 52, 54, 89, 92); all exploit the homonymy of mane and main.

Beauty shops deal with other parts of the body besides hair. This is reflected in the name Lady Fingers (21, 35, 41, 98) or its variant La-d-finger (67), in Hands Up (21), and in Nailphile (98). For the face, how about Face Up (21), Let's Face It (85) or About Faces (8)? Or, for the total woman, how about Body Shop (77, 82)?

I round out this discussion of beauty parlor puns with a few hard-to-classify outliers: Barbary Coast (23, 60, 63) and Barbary Cutter (85), B-sharp (28), Blow Out (16, 46), The Hair Pen (56, 59, 88), Kream of the Krop (8), Hair Rappers (92), The Better End (50), The Livin' End (54), The London Bobb (92), and the Wig Wam (86).

**Literary Allusions**

This type of beauty shop wordplay can be divided into two categories: puns on well-known names in literature, the arts, etc., and allusions to literary or operatic works in which hair plays a role, either in the title or the story.

Beginning with the second genre, the most common literary allusion is The Razor's Edge, referring to W. Somerset Maugham's novel; over thirty different barber shops have appropriated this name. (One enterprising barber, evidently named Ray, modified the name to Ray-zor's Edge; a less imaginative barber used the near miss Scissors Edge.) One beauty parlor is named Roots (83), probably after Alex Haley's novel of this name, or the immensely popular TV adaptation. Shakespeare's "The Rape of the Lock" is remembered in a chain of beauty shops in suburban Maryland (91), and a curious echo is found in Shyape of the Lockes (34). Shylock's Hair Design (88) was noted
in Seattle. One play, Eugene O'Neill's "The Hairy Ape", is found in a beauty parlor name (48). Biblical scholars will not be surprised to hear that Sampson & Delilah is often found, and opera-lovers will patronize (Mozart's) Figaro or (Rossini's) The Barber/Barbers of Seville (25, 27, 41). One of these was appropriately located on Seville Avenue.

Children's literature is also represented. Goldilocks (88) and Rapunzel (77), the latter being the princess locked in a tower who let down her hair, were each seen once. Beauty and the Beast might seem to have negative connotations (in fact, a Denver dog grooming parlor uses the name), but that didn't stop several beauty parlors from appropriating it (6, 25, 46, 86, 88). The Aesopian fable of the tortoise and the hare is not forgotten; I saw Tortoise & the Hair (88, 89, 94), The Hare and The Tortoise (84), and the excellent Tortorice & The Hair (69), evidently owned by a barber with the surname Tortorice. Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland is the inspiration for The March Hare (67), also spelled The March Hair (85) and Marsh Hare Barbers (25), found on Marsh Lane in Dallas.

No establishment has appropriated the obvious Occam's Razor, but I noted a near miss with Occam's Edge (68).

Turning to puns on literary or artistic works, we find From Hair to Eternity (8, 29, 65) mimicking James Jones's novel From Here to Eternity. The Broadway musical "Oh! Calcutta!" is echoed in Calcutters (92), Cal Cutter (74) and O' Cal Cutter (98), all in the greater New York region, and Hairs-A-Poppin (27) or Heads A Poppin' (7) must refer to "Hellzapoppin", the long-running Broadway musical of a generation ago. Is Mr. Snips (52) a takeoff on the movie "Good Bye, Mr. Chips" about a kindly college professor? The TV personalities Sonny and Cher appear in Sonny & Shears (21) and Sunny & Shear (98).

L. Frank Baum's The Wizard of Oz is transposed into Scissors of Oz (98), Sizard of Ahs (67), and Wizards of Ahs (6). Jack the Ripper becomes Jack the KUpper (89), and Women's Wear Daily changes into Women's Hair Daily (55). I save for last the most ingenious of the literary allusions -- the conversion of Sherlock Holmes to Shear-Lock Holmes. Alas, the two examples of this are flawed: Shear Locks Home (52)', and Hair Lock Holmes (38)! There's still a chance for an enterprising barber named Holmes to take the grand prize in hirsute humor.

In Son of Giant Sea Tortoise (Viking, 1975), a compilation of New York Magazine competitions edited by Mary Ann Madden, one chapter is entitled "Classified Directory", a listing of apropos business names dreamed up by readers. Checking this, I found three examples more or less duplicated in this article, but applied to businesses other than beauty parlors: Sunny and Share (Florida Condominiums), Hair Apparent (Toupees), and Surelock Homes (Security). To paraphrase a bromide, reality is more inventive than fiction.
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