

ANNE STEYER

# Hair grows in strange places

I have some gray hairs. I'm not really very old yet, but I have gray hairs nonetheless. Some of my friends love to point them out; others offer to yank them.



**Yech. Armpits are a sweaty, smelly place. Even without perspiration, armpits are not pleasant places to be. With that in mind, why would hair want to grow there?**

I think this condition is contributing to my obsession with hair. All kinds of hair. My hair, my boyfriend's hair, Rainbow Rowell's hair — hair and hair alike.

Since my new fascination with hair began, I've become more aware of how strange hair really is. I don't mean all the bad dye jobs and sad 'dos out there, but the strangeness of hair itself, especially body hair.

Haven't you ever noticed the body parts strangely covered with tufts of hair?

Big toes, for example.

Why on earth do people have hair on their big toes? I'm not saying I have hair on my toes, of course, but I know some people who do. It doesn't seem to fall out by itself, big wooly socks don't seem to wear it off. But it doesn't seem to me that big hairy toes are necessary to protect feet. It seems instead that big hairy toes would only deter one from taking off socks and receiving the oh-so self-indulgent pedicure.

I know it would stop me from my year-round toenail painting.

Hair on toes serves absolutely no purpose — I wonder why the whole natural selection process didn't just evolve that hair away. You go Nair it, Charles.

Then again, men have nipples — and hairy ones at that — which also serve no purpose, so maybe the natural selection business isn't a solvent one.

But I'm talking about hair here. To continue: Armpits — now there's a crazy place for hair to grow.

Yech. Armpits are a sweaty, smelly place. Even without perspiration, armpits are not pleasant places to be. With that in mind, why would hair want to grow there?

American women have been socialized to shave those pits, but I don't

mind. I like a smooth, cool armpit. In fact, I think men should shave them too. Nothing less enticing than sweaty clumps of armpit hair, drenched with perspiration and bits of white deodorant.

It would be so much easier if none of us had hair there. So Nair it, fellas.

What about them hairy knuckles? Woowhee, give me a home where the hairy knuckles roam. Another completely strange place for hair to grow. It's a rarity to see hairy knuckles, but try taking your eyes off them when they do appear.

Of course, if everyone had hairy knuckles, it would all make sense. Hairy knuckles would protect fingers from constant friction from pens and pencils, the need for gloves would fade away and massages could take on a whole new meaning.

Still, I'd rather have no hair there.

Turning around, now, there's the oddity of back hair. Ooohh, my favorite. I used to think a hairy back was the most disgusting thing that a man could possess.

Until of course, I developed an enormous crush on a manly bartender, only to discover one summer afternoon that he had hair on his shoulders. Then I began to think of it as a rather endearing attribute — don't ask me how cow eyes changed my views, but they did.

It's still a strange thing, that ol' back hair. I prefer it on the front. Not that I'm crazy about chest hair, it's just a little more common. I'm used to it, I guess. Maybe those beastly backs could share some hair.

There used to be an old saying, "no

chest hair means much butt hair." Now there is definitely a strange place for hair to appear.

Apparently though, that saying's just a myth. Mademoiselle magazine's "Anatomy of a Boyfriend" article said that old nasty rumor is a false one.

That's good to know. And that's enough about that derriere hair.

I think the strangest place for hair is a terrible toss-up between ears and moles. It seems ear hair would make cleaning difficult and make speech and other audibles come through all fuzzy.

Then again, it's pretty strange for hair to be popping out of moles. Of course, I don't have any hair sprouting forth from my moles, but some people do.

In some cultures and religions, the hair coming from a mole is symbolic of something, although I'm not sure what.

I'm not sure I want to know what. I'm just glad I don't have hair I can braid coming out of a small brown spot on my face. Hmm, scare hair.

But I've never understood the practice of plucking, and I don't think I'd ever encourage anyone to pluck.

Everyone has seen someone who has obviously been unhappy with their too-heavy or too-close together eyebrows and they went plum pluck crazy. Now they're bare hair.

And it looks like it must have hurt. On that note, I'll take my gray hairs and run.

Steyer is a senior English and history major, a Daily Nebraskan arts and entertainment senior reporter and a columnist.

MATT ZIMMERMAN

# Say no to politics of negativism

At the risk of buying into one of the most trite and contrived lines being batted around the political arena these days, I find myself agreeing with Vice President Al Gore that among the most destructive forces in the country today are the politics of negativism, the politics of fear and the politics of blame.



**We have diverted all of our creative energies from trying to change the problems of society to trying to justify the way we live and to explain why our ways are the best and only ways.**

All right, Gore didn't exactly put it in those terms, and the last time he used it was for his NAFTA campaign — but what the heck. Once a good slogan, always a good slogan.

As clichéd as it may be, the essence of the idea remains true. We've become a nation that thrives on group polarization, feeds on its own insecurities and, more often than not, jumps at the chance to blame others for perceived injustices.

At the same time we are hurtling toward the promised land, the great technological age of the 21st century, we also are putting the brakes on social advancement and beginning to reverse the achievements of the past. Evolution and progress seem only to be able to occur in science and technology, while the trend in societal issues is regression. What seemed to be an inevitable movement toward acceptance and coming together a few decades back has now done a complete turnaround.

We don't care about righting wrongs any more. We think everything is OK the way it is. We've decided to reject the philosophy of an outstretched hand, and instead we've crawled back into safe, correct, self-affirming social groups.

Another way to look at it is as the "dumbing down" of the nation. Take a look at practically any popular newspaper, news broadcast or television show, and what do you see? Today's news in full color. Factoids that shape our life. The obligatory good-news segment. "Important news out of the nation's capital, but first... is your pet psychic?"

We have diverted all of our creative energies from trying to change the problems of society to trying to

justify the way we live and to explain why our ways are the best and only ways. And to show how everyone who dares question them is wrong. Anything to divert attention away from the real issues.

It is rather ironic that the two best-selling authors in the country right now are Howard Stern and Rush Limbaugh. When it comes down to it, both are preaching the same things: the belief that what "we" believe in is right, that you don't have to justify your actions to any contemporary consciences and that you don't have to listen to any argument from the other side. The goal: the un-thinking of America.

We all have a good time, now and then, attacking the ridiculous extremes of political correctness. What tend to be lost as a result, unfortunately, are the very real issues and concerns beneath the extremes that are struggling to come to the surface. Around here, it seems, no one can talk about racism without being slapped in the face with a PC label. As the editorial pages of local papers will attest, looking at the recent arrests of the jaywalking Omaha Central High School students as possible racism, whether true or not, is just an example of those darn PCers acting up again. Those minority groups are just whining again, a few letters actually said. Again. As if racism were something that could, or should, be dismissed so easily.

Feminism seems to be a common target as well. As every good ditto-head knows, feminists are the cause of everything from the destruction of the traditional family to the loss of morals in society to global warming. The

obvious fault in this position that has become abundantly clear is that practically everything that has to do with women's rights is labeled feminist. And the term feminist has been manipulated to the point where it is associated with extremists who want to take more rights and privileges than we are willing to give.

When it comes down to it, though, who are we to "grant" these rights and to pretend that we are the keeper of the sacred trust of all humanity? It's rather hypocritical to say you support some aspects of the women's rights movement but don't approve of others, since an underlying theme of women's rights is achieving power to make your own decisions and not being forced to rely on the traditional power structure to make decisions for you. Demoning feminism is an easy way to justify our own attitudes and policies and to keep at a safe, arm's-length distance from the very real issues it raises.

We have to start ignoring the cynical, self-righteous attitudes that pervade our culture. We have to restructure our mindsets to ones that actively seek out the many problems that exist today instead of putting on permanent happy faces that keep us ignorant of what is really going on. We have to start rejecting the politics of fear and negativism. We're cutting ourselves off from each other at an alarming rate; and unless we change, we'll end up with problems that are too large for anyone to overcome.

Zimmerman is a junior English major and Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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