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Best Friend of the Bald



Michael at work.

By RAYMOND WILCOVE (Central Press Correspondent) WASHINGTON — Otto Gustav Michael is practicing a dying art. Many of his customers pray for him in church. If anything should happen to Michael, who is 65, it would be a great personal tragedy for the bald people of Washington, and rumor has it that they include many important personages.

For Michael makes wigs, not mass-produced wigs but individual wigs to fit different heads—big heads and little heads, partly bald and all bald, men, women and children.

They all require individual attention and Michael is the only one who can provide it. That's why he is said when he talks about it, for he feels individual wig-making will soon be a thing of the past.

"Mine is a lost art," said Michael. "Nowadays most hair pieces are mass produced in New York. It is hard to find a place to get an individual wig made.

"I can't even find someone that wants to take the time to learn my trade. I haven't had a holiday in 50 years. My clients tell me they pray for me at church."

MICHEEL's wigs are a work of art. If put on right, they will not fall off, nor, in many cases, can you pull them off. Some men have worn toupees for years without their wives ever discovering it, and vice versa.

Many beautiful women and handsome men have come to him with their troubles—and left happy. There was, Michael recalls, the beautiful strip tease who bleached her hair so much it all fell out. The wig maker fashioned her a platinum blonde piece.

Michael said his clients are constantly asking him whether anyone will be able to tell they are wearing a wig and whether they can sleep in it.

"I tell them," he said, "that no one will be the wiser and that they can even go swimming with it. One of my customers is a life guard at Miami Beach. He looks great sitting there in my hair."

MICHEEL says that some bald people don't wear wigs because they are afraid they will fall off to their embarrassment.

For them he has this assurance: "It won't happen if it is put on properly. One of our clients, a young girl, once tried to jump from a building. Some one caught her by her wig and it held. Her own hair might not have."

Michael said he also makes wigs for bald children. He added: "Some mothers bring their kids back every six months to get one just a shade darker. This fools everyone."

The wig maker pointed out that anyone can lose his hair from a number of causes. A high fever or a blood disease might result in the loss of hair. Getting struck by lightning may often have the same effect.

Michael contends that in addition to covering up a bald pate, a wig may actually cause hair to grow.

"The only real hope for growing new hair," he asserted, "is to wear a wig, strange as that may sound. Sometimes, however, the kneading action of the constantly worn wig will stimulate the scalp. I have seen this happen," he added.

MICHEEL said his trade, which he has performed for 50 years, does not make him a wealthy man, but it nevertheless brings him great personal satisfaction.

"They come to him in tears," he explained. "They are desperate and we fix them up and they are happy. These unfortunate people that come to us are sad and feeling way down in the dumps. We fix them up and they are happy. It changes their whole personality and they feel normal once again."

Michael is proud of his handiwork. He defies anyone to tell whether a client is wearing a wig or his own hair.

How about himself? Is his hair real? He smiles but will not say. An observer would have a hard time telling.

JUNIOR MUSEUM OFFERS MENAGERIE IN PAINT Menagerie in Paint, the newest exhibit at the Wonder Workshop Junior Museum, will be on view for an indefinite period. It features drawings and paintings of animals in several mediums by three Westport artists.

Alice Harvey, a portrait artist who also has done cartoons for magazines, will be represented by pencil drawings. Leslie Randall, who has had several one man shows and whose work has been exhibited at the National Gallery and who currently has a one man show at the Kipnis Gallery in Westport, is now a landscape artist and also specializes in animal paintings in oils. William Griffiths, a commercial artist and magazine illustrator, will have opaque water colors on exhibit.

The program at 10:30 a.m. today will feature Mrs. Thomas K. Beggs, a former dental hygienist, in a program of chalk talks and slides called "Toothsome Tales."

The Museum, in the basement of the North End Library is open to the public without charge from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. Saturdays.

Halt's handicraft exports continue to mount, with a valuation of \$498,218 in a recent quarter. Fort au Prince learns.

TODAY'S RADIO PROGRAM

Table with columns for time slots (9 A.M., 10:00, 11:00, Noon, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00, 5:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00, 5:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, 9:00, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00) and station call letters (WABC, WJLA, WJXC, etc.).

DIAL SETTINGS table listing station call letters and frequencies (e.g., WJXC-1010, WABC-770, WJLA-1230).

Daytime Features

6:15-LOCAL NEWS. From The Post and Telegram WJXC. 10:05-YOUTH FORUM. If Youth Had the Vote is topic. WJXC.

Evening Highlights

6:30-CAPITOL CLOAKROOM. Livingston Merchant, assistant secretary of state for European Affairs, is guest. WJXC. 7:00-MASTERWORK ROU. Isaac Stern, violinist. WJXC.

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