

DITCHING THE DYE

Baby boomers are breaking the coloring cycle for health and safety reasons

By Lynne Cobb

It seems to be all the rage – ditching the dye and going au naturel. Gray is the hottest hair color trend this year; even celebrities – Jamie Lee Curtis, Toni Morrison and George Clooney, to name a few – have embraced their natural color.

For a host of reasons, baby boomers are breaking the cycle of coloring and root touch-up. Janet Koprince, D.O., a Royal Oak dermatologist, explains that though rare, allergic reactions do occur, and depending upon a person's sensitivity, some reactions are more severe than others.

Linda Anger, 64, a writer and editor from Rochester Hills, shares her experience: "I've always been sensitive to chemicals in skin and hair care products. After decades of dying my hair, I had an allergic reaction."

Not long after her reaction, she found out she had cancer.

"After cancer treatment, my hair grew back in, totally white at first," Anger says. "After a month, the roots turned dark again. I am now salt and pepper, and I love it."

THE DEFINING MOMENT

Susan Dorsey, 53, of Howell, had her defining moment at a doctor's office.

"I came to the decision when I noticed this beautiful, silver-haired woman, about my age, in a doctor's office waiting room. I complimented her on her silver hair. She encouraged me to go for it. I made the decision that day," says Dorsey, a paraprofessional at Howell Middle School. "The most difficult part of my decision was wondering what my silver would look like. My hair is light brown naturally, so I wasn't sure what my silver would be."

Others have found the upkeep of the coloring process to be a futile effort and expensive.

"I knew that once I stopped coloring it, it was a commitment. It would take awhile to grow out, and I'd have to do it sometime," says Diane Mazurek, 52, a restaurant server from Royal Oak. "Sometimes I colored my hair at home, but more often, at a salon. The cost of a good color was becoming prohibitive."

Diane says that gray has given her a certain freedom to be herself, though she admits she does occasionally flirt with the idea of going blond again.

'CELEBRATE IT'

Local stylists are seeing this trend and offering support.

Joanne Strzalka of Azena Salon in Birmingham says she understands that going gray is a

personal decision; she respects and guides her clients who make that choice.

"There are no rules on hairstyles, and they change so much," Strzalka says. "None of the old wives' tales still exist about having shorter hair if you're older."

She does suggest several ways to transition, either by cutting hair really short while waiting for the gray to grow or highlighting during this time.

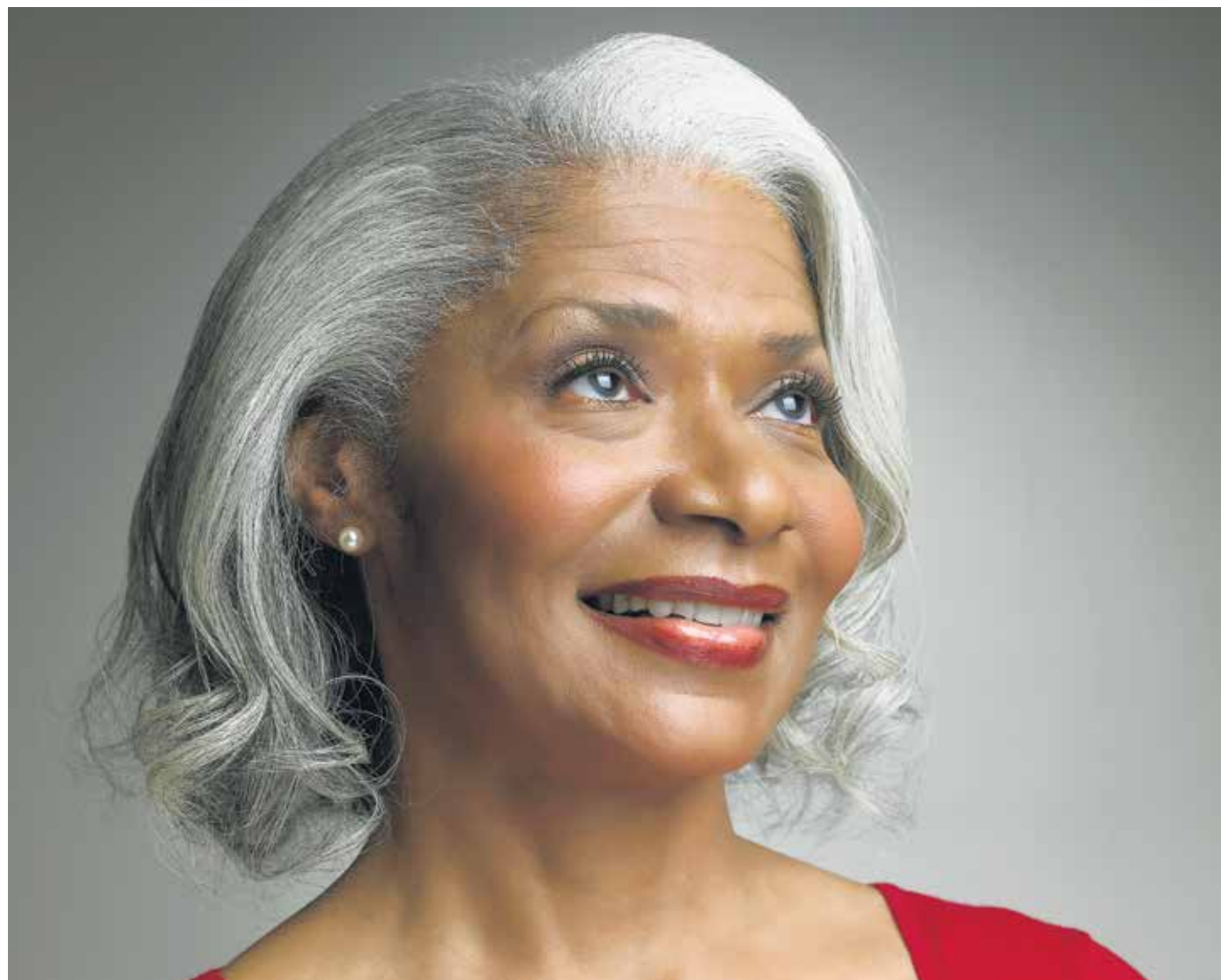
"The hair's texture will change; some softer and some more wiry. You may want to consult with your stylist on changing products during this time," she advises.

Jason Rice, certified colorist and co-owner of Changez Salon in Royal Oak, embraces this change by looking at the whole person –

not just the hair.

Rice guides his clients by suggesting flattering colors to wear in both clothing and makeup because of the change in their hair color. He also advocates healthy hair by using a good pH-balanced shampoo, conditioning, staying hydrated and keeping the cut up to date.

"Physically, the hair will change. As it gets lighter in color, it loses the ability to have light bounce. We can add richness by adding a rinse or a clear gloss," Rice says. "I encourage women to redefine their idea of beauty. This is a time for change. Be really open; it is a time to discover yourself. Be gentle and celebrate it." 🌸



Ditching the hair dye and embracing your natural color can be beneficial to both your wallet and your well-being.