

Blondness: It's probably not the real thing
Pamela Swanigan.

The Vancouver Sun. Jun 16, 2001. p. D2

Q: How many mice does it take to screw in a light bulb?

A: Only two -- the trick is getting them in there.

Q: What did the Zen Buddhist say to the hotdog vendor?

A: Make me one with everything.

See? Blonds aren't the only ones who get picked on: mice and monks come in for it too. But though the recently announced Blond Legal Defence Fund is now rumoured to be a hoax, peroxide grievance is a real phenomenon. In 1991, alpha-blond Donatella Versace decried the bad press blonds have received "through the ages" and declared (with a particularly blond turn of phrase), "It's time to redress the balance and fight our corner."

Still, it's hard to feel much sympathy for people who inflict their suffering on themselves. More than 90 per cent of fair-haired North Americans get their blond out of a bottle, and that percentage is increasing as global migration introduces dark-haired people into the few remaining populations with recessive Scandinavian colouring. Coming soon: the Endangered Blonds Club.

1976

Farrah Fawcett-Majors makes her appearance on Charlie's Angels and sends hordes of women rushing to get their hair done in broad blond pinstripes.

1980

Already entering a decade-long decline, blondness suffers another setback when Parisian fashion dictators declare the season's most desirable hair to be "generally the kind of red that goes with near-transparent skin and sea-green eyes."

1984

Though blond perms are practically de rigueur among the leg-warmered aerobics set, red remains the classy choice, with "gel hair blush" and cellophanes allowing even dark brunettes to acquire that coveted burgundy hue.

1987

Chemistry student Jonathan Haynes, taking umbrage at society's promotion of what he calls "fake Aryan beauty," shoots San Francisco hair colourist Frank Ringi. Says Haynes of Ringi, "It's the business of changing hair from brunette to blond that got him killed."

1990

Madonna's Blonde Ambition tour notwithstanding, women really aspire to be lissotrichous brunettes, since sleekness and shine-the season's chief criteria-show much better on dark hair.

1991

"I wonder what you would look like blond," a hair stylist remarks idly to model Linda Evangelista. Her ensuing bout with the Clairol bottle starts what Vogue magazine calls a "catwalk revolution" -- during which even holdout Kate Moss eventually succumbs to peroxide - and ushers in the blond decade.

1998

Bleach finally breaks the gender barrier when the entire Romanian soccer team shows up for the World Cup in a united shade of platinum. A number of macho athletes -- including Jacques Villeneuve, David Beckham and the Vancouver Canucks -- cement the new connotation of blondness, which psychologists have long said signals subordination.

1999

What are a few dark roots in a silicon world? The last obstacle to world peroxide domination falls as Asians, Africans and Latinos go blond and Japan becomes the globe's second-biggest market for hair colourants.

2000

New York writer Natalia Ilyin sorts out the bewildering proliferation of fair-hair categories in her trenchant *Blonde Like Me*, observing of Armpiece Blondes and Trophy Blondes, for instance, that "Like the verbs 'to lay' and 'to lie', you use them in completely different ways but they look identical in certain inflections."

Photo: (Donatella) Versace ; Photo: Farrah Fawcett-Majors ; Photo: Madonna ; Photo: David Beckham