

UNCLE HEWEY SHOWED THE MEDLEY

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'Writer's Corner'

Uncle Hewey was laid to rest last year. As I saw him laying there, I remembered how his big secret came out in the newspaper 20 years before.

I grew up with Uncle Hewey. He was just a few years younger than me, having been Ma Haney's last child after a bunch of girls, including my mother, who was the first. Ma Haney's maiden name was Medley and she had several brothers, all of whom were bald. Baldness was a Medley trait. Ma Haney like to point out how much I looked like her baby brother Hack. She would say. "You got Medley in you. You will grow up bald!"

It didn't help to dispel that fear when my dad made me keep a GI haircut so I wouldn't look like to girly boy like Uncle Hewey.

When we were young kids, we watched "The Three Stooges." With our cousin, who played Larry, we would do their routine. I wanted to be Moe, but Ma Haney always overruled.

"You need to be Curly because you are a bald Medley." She would always stoke the chosen one's head of hair and say, "Baby Hewey has got such pretty hair, like Moe."

Even back then he had long hair like the Beatles, even before they broke out on the scene. Of course when the Beatles came along, he had to get him a guitar so he could be like them. He even went so far as to write his own song:

I'm a long-haired Medley
Sha Na Son

It was just two lines, but he would bellow them over and over again as loud as he could, shaking his head and strumming the guitar off key. Personally, I found the show ridiculous. But for some reason, the girls to Nameless found the routine a hit sensation. He was an overnight girl magnet. Half-a-dozen little gals wanted to become Mrs. Hewey Haney. All claimed he sang so pretty, and when he shook his full head of silky hair, their hearts dropped a beat.

The competition for his eye was fierce. All tried to be the one to sit with him at church on Sundays as his daddy preached. Most would take off with him after church for a wild time, but Edith, the plainest of the group, helped Ma Haney fix Sunday dinner. Then she played her ace-in-the-hole card and got with child. Uncle Hewey had to get married at 16 and his life took a different direction.

Over the next 30 years, the only time I saw Uncle Hewey was at the annual Medley family reunion. He wore his old ball cap with six inches of that pretty hair hanging out beneath it. As the years passed, the hair went from jet black to streaked gray on to white strands. No matter what, eating, praying, whatever, the hat never came off.

Pa Hewey passed away and his namesake missed the funeral. Ma Hewey said he was too broken up over his dad to show up. Then Aunt Zasu and several others passed with no appearance from him. The rumor began to circulate that he wouldn't go anywhere he had to take his hat off. That was the reason he quit church.

My dad laughed and would say, "He's showing the Medley."

Finally I got a chance to know the truth. Uncle Hewey was busted for welfare fraud and resale of prescription drugs. He had Ma Haney on Medicare and was taking her to three different doctors to get Zanex. He would ration them to her and then sell the extras to some good old boys with an addiction for them. He also had her on welfare. He cased her SSI check each month and kept her bank balance low enough to qualify. She got food stamps and he bought her the minimum amount and kept the rest for steak for his own table. Actually, she didn't need much food for her table since he got all the free food giveaway programs for her. What she didn't need, he took home for himself.

When the story broke, his picture appeared in the newspaper. The secret of the cap was revealed. The top of Uncle Hewey's head was a hairless as a billiard ball. The strands of long hairs were more like those of Larry and Moe.

As I sat there, feeling my full head of gray hair, I remembered all the times Baby Hewey said, "You show the Medley!" I finally knew who really showed the Medley.

*Read more 'Writers Corner' at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>