

Mom's Eye View is like a gossipy neighbor (although you hate yourself for it...you just can't stop listening). It focuses on bits of everyday life. Taken from personal experiences (the author's, yours and everybody else's) the stories in this book will make readers smile and nod their heads in agreement. With a talent for "keeping it real", Mom's Eye View helps readers see the humor in the mundane, as well as the beauty in the obvious.

**Mom's Eye View....Life From A Mother's Perspective, A
Collection of Thoughts and Observations**

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Mom's Eye View

Life...From a Mother's Perspective
A Collection of Thoughts and Observations

By Debra Colby-Conklin

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Belly Dance Beginner

When I saw the ad in the newspaper, I did something I don't usually do; I immediately called the number and told the person who answered that I'd be there, in two weeks, for the first class.

I'm not typically a joiner...of anything. I don't like being in a situation where I HAVE to be somewhere at a certain time, on a certain day. I prefer my free time to be my own and not dictated by outside forces. This though, was something I'd always wanted to try. I thought it would be a hoot and a lot of fun to learn. So, I made the decision to sacrifice four of my Wednesday evenings to participate in a belly-dancing class.

Belly-dancing? Me? Yep. Those of you, who know me, know I can barely walk down a street without falling over a pebble, how was I going to learn to belly-dance without tripping over the veils? Still, I've always been fascinated by the women who can roll their hips in such graceful, smooth motions and use the veils and cymbals as an extension of the dance. I guess I have "grace envy". Wanting something I've never had.

When the night of my first lesson finally arrived I was excited and a little nervous. I'm always this way when doing something for the first time. Thankfully, the instructor was late, because it gave me and the other women a chance to get to know each other. It's always weird doing something new in front of strangers, but finding out that they were also first-timers, made me feel less uncomfortable. There were only two women who had taken the class before and they each guaranteed us that we would have a blast...once we got the moves down.

Got the moves down? How hard was this going to be anyway? It was just shaking your hips, wasn't it? I've always considered myself a pretty good dancer who can shake her hips with the best of them, why should this be so difficult to learn?

That was my first mistake and my own misconception of what belly-dancing really is. There's a big difference between simply shaking your hips to loud, banging, dance club music and the controlled movements of belly-dancing.

The first thing our instructor did was to give each of us a hip scarf. This is the cloth that's wrapped around your hips and makes all the jingling noise during the shimmies. We did stretches before we got started which included a hip circle stretch. After stretches we launched right into Figure Eights, a kind of swaying back and forth in a figure eight motion. This move was familiar to me, it was the exact kind of move I used to do, many years ago, when I stood and rocked my babies back to sleep. I was feeling pretty confident about the moves until the instructor stepped things up a bit. Our next moves were Hip Snaps with arm movements. This brought me back to full alert. The snaps were so snappy I think I literally snapped something in my hip.

V-Pattern Snaps came next. This is where I lost any of the coordination I thought I might have had. The hip-snaps combined with a little fancy footwork, overhead extensions that included keeping the arms in sync with the hip movements, and all the while keeping my wrists facing outward, was a lethal combination. I lost step so many times I looked like the person in a line dance who keeps going in the opposite direction, and is always two steps behind everyone else.

When the instructor finally moved onto the shimmy, I was grateful. I dropped my extended arms with relief. Shimming seemed to be my forte. It required no fancy foot or arm work, just standing in place and shaking your backside. This was something I could do, so I shook my jangles and made them jingle for all they were worth. I wonder though, is four classes going to be enough for me to learn to "shake it like a Polaroid picture?"

DEBRA COLBY-CONKLIN

Country Music Musings

Has anyone really listened to country music? I've been listening to it on a semi-regular basis for years, along with classic rock — you know the stuff from the 70's and 80's that our kids seem to think is theme music for the CSI franchises or truck commercials? Well, yesterday was a country music kind of day for me, why I don't know...it just was. As I was listening I found myself subconsciously going through a range of emotions; from melancholy to depressed, to silly then independent, then happily toe-tapping, to eventually wanting to jump in my truck and go to the nearest juke-joint to get tanked on more than a few beers and kick up some sawdust from the dance floor. That's exactly what country music is supposed to do — at least *good* country music anyway; pull at every single one of your emotions until you feel as though you've been put through the wringer on a psychiatrist's couch.

This in itself should make any novice country music listener limit his/her listening time to only a few hours of radio air play. Anymore and a burst of emotional overkill will surely follow. Only dedicated country fans should be allowed to listen on a full-time basis. They've become immune to the lyrics; to them it's purely background noise; something familiar and comfortable to help them get through the day.

After listening for the day, I came up with these conclusions regarding country music lyrics:

Regrets...life is too short for regrets, accept the past and learn from it...but it sure was fun while it lasted, wasn't it?

Love...it happens over and over in life, if one relationship falls apart...there's definitely another one waiting on the next barstool.

Marriage...the lucky ones last forever...for all others a trip to Vegas makes the annulment easier.

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Religion...everyone has a right to their own beliefs...just don't come knocking on my door in the middle of the day because I won't answer, I'll be ducked behind the sofa until you leave.

Redneck women...we're everywhere...and don't even ask me to take down my Christmas lights.

John Deere tractors...I'm painting my bedroom green and yellow...hey, I'm a redneck woman and I've heard that a Deere tractor is sexy.

Dogs...cats are a lot more self-sufficient, but not as loyal...they tend to cheat on us with the first person who offers better food. Dogs will stay with us no matter what kind of garbage we put in front of them.

Pick-up trucks, ATV's and snowmobiles...how else is a country boy/girl supposed to get around?

Living Beauty

A friend recommended a recent beauty book, raving about how informative it was and how much she learned from it. She felt I might gain insight from it. After taking a look at it, I wasn't sure how to take her comments though. I realized the book was about how to use make-up to increase beauty potential, makes me wonder if my 'friend' was trying to give me a subtle hint?

After reading a few pages, I started to feel less offended and more intrigued. My make-up routine hadn't changed since I was a teenager. It worked then, why wouldn't it work now? That was wishful thinking. The book said that as we grow older our skin changes and a whole host of issues begin cropping up that a two decades long make-up routine won't fix.

According to the author of this book, she believes our faces and skin change over time, just like everything else and we have to rethink how we care for it. As we get older our skin loses elasticity and collagen, which is the fate of all forty plus women. And because many of us were sun-worshippers, we also have to contend with brown spots and deep wrinkling, a big make-up consideration.

So, I flipped through these biblical pages of make-up and beauty answers to seek guidance on what I could do to turn my time-worn skin back into a semblance of youthfulness. One item caught my eye, how to eliminate under-eye circles and blackness. The solutions were simple; more sleep, less stress and no smoking.

Unfortunately, according to the book, there's nothing that will get rid of these circles, but we can "brighten" our eyes by using a lighter shade of concealer and a "pop" of blush on our cheeks to "distract" from our black eyes. I was disappointed, I wasn't looking for a distraction, I was looking for a way to

make them disappear. I was even more disappointed with the before and after photo. The woman's transformation seemed unbelievable. The photo made her look like she'd not only gotten a good night's sleep, but had been cryogenically frozen for twenty years. It was hard to believe it was just make-up and not some wonderful photo retouching.

There were even suggestions for quick-fix clothing emergencies.

Use pre-wrapped wipes to remove make-up stains on clothing. In my opinion, if you have on enough make-up to cause stains on your clothing, then woman, you've got on way too much make-up.

Safety pins — for fixing a dropped hem or broken necklace clasp. Why not just take the hem down on the other pant leg to even things out? Why fix a necklace? They cost ninety-nine cents at the dollar store, chuck the broken one and buy a new one.

Keep a small bottle of hand lotion in your purse for ragged cuticles. A small bottle of hand lotion isn't going to help my cuticles; I'd need an extra-large bottle of the stuff.

And the final chapter was a big section on menopause and dealing with, "The Change" beautifully. I haven't read this chapter yet. I'm less than enthusiastic about "The Change" and prefer to put off even thinking about it, much less dealing with it..."beautifully".

This isn't to say this book wasn't helpful or informative, it was. I did get some wonderful tips on what I should be using for make-up at this stage of my life...*if* I could afford laser resurfacing, laser skin rejuvenation, a professional chemical peel, or Botox.

Poke-mon

My son is obsessed with Poke`mon, so when I ask him to tell me more about why he loves Poke`mon, he had a difficult time sitting still and his words tumbled over one another. We decided on a little question and answer regarding the game. Here's a small sample of it.

Q-Why do you love Poke-mon?

A- Because you get to battle them and get their money.

Q- Who do they battle?

A- Poke-mon trainers.

Q- What do you buy with your money?

A- Poke`balls, potions, full restore and full heal.

Q- Are the battle trainers good or bad?

A- Both.

Q- What is the point of the game?

A- To get all eight badges.

Q- What are badges?

A- Badges are what you get for defeating gym leaders.

Q- What is your favorite thing about the game?

A- You get a legendary Poke`mon after you beat the elite four including your rival.

Q- How long do you think you'll play this game?

A- At least until I'm ten, maybe eleven.

O.K. readers, is this making sense to you? Are you ready to play the game? Me neither and he's been trying to get me to understand it for two years now. And according to most parents this game is a boy's game; maybe that's why I hadn't heard of it before now. I had a daughter and her fascination with toys began and ended with all things Barbie.

This game was introduced to my son via a good friend of his at school. They were in second grade and his friend showed him his Poke`ball with a Blastoise inside it. It naturally followed

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that my son came home begging for one of his own. This led to a must-have pack of cards...then another and another and another, until he had enough to fill a Poke`mon collector's tin box.

To try and understand my son's fascination with these characters I even subjected myself to watching one of the movies, Poke`mon Heroes the Movie. I was much less enthused about it than he and came away from the movie even more confused than when I started watching it. To tell the truth, though, I couldn't get past the wretched screeching of Latios and Latias (bird-like creatures who are trying to help save the city from total destruction-I read this off the back of the movie box, it wasn't because I actually knew what was going on).

Now, I'm simply waiting him out. Waiting for the next fad or trend to catch his attention, but it's turning into a long wait and I suspect I'm going to have to keep buying cards and balls for at least another year or two. Oh well, it's a small price to pay for childhood.

Mom's Eye View is like a gossipy neighbor (although you hate yourself for it...you just can't stop listening). It focuses on bits of everyday life. Taken from personal experiences (the author's, yours and everybody else's) the stories in this book will make readers smile and nod their heads in agreement. With a talent for "keeping it real", Mom's Eye View helps readers see the humor in the mundane, as well as the beauty in the obvious.

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