

Lashing Out At Mascara

By Emeline Wood Bailey

(2009 CBW All Stars third prize winner)

What? Read the thirty page Owner's Manual? In your dreams! I hate owner's manuals, but I'm desperate because all else has failed. Guys, you apparently wrote this manual in a kazillion languages for your global market of gorgeous fashion super models but with only three words in English for us normal American women.

Can you believe that Maybelline (TM), the greatest, longest-lasting manufacturer of mascara in the history of the world, developed a product that has a pulsing, vibrating brush? My daughters flipped out when I showed them the one I'd rushed to the drugstore at 9:59 at night during a potential hurricane in August, 2009 (am I not the most current gal in town?) to buy the latest mascara the very instant it appeared in a TV commercial. Every time any cosmetic manufacturer worldwide has come forth, in my long lifetime, with a supposedly improved mascara, the result has been a change in the brand name and not a new formula to increase the thickness of and diminished clumps of mascara on one's eyelashes. I've been compelled on occasion to enter a so-called fine dress shoppe to buy beauty products from Paris at exorbitant prices. It's gotta' be great if it's from Paris, doesn't it?

Well. All those mascaras were virtually the same.

But this time I felt sure the improved model must be better, much better, inasmuch as it features that previously mentioned innovative, pulsing brush. Wowie! After much teeth gnashing and frustration, I found the magic spot on the wand that had to be mashed down (an old West Texas term) to activate the vibrating

mechanism. Okay, baby, let's go! It soon became evident that keeping the activator depressed under one's thumb whilst trying to apply the mascara to the eyelashes was a daunting challenge.

After I got the hang of it, though, I decided this mascara is indeed their best ever.

Just think how many mascaras I've bought since 1940 when I was a teenager. The first one I was allowed to buy came in a little red box with a brush that had to be moistened. (I'd rather not discuss what the brush was moistened with, if you don't mind.) I recently found a similar one in a New England store's catalog; it really wasn't as good as our contemporary mascaras. Girls, isn't that comforting?

Do you remember back in the eighties, I think it was, when every little grocery store check-out clerk kept batting her eyes and looking down so we'd all get the total effect of her faux eyelashes, pasted on crookedly more often than not? I recall reading a newspaper article about a lady in San Antonio who called the police because somebody stole her fake eyelashes, her Chanel Five, and her birth control pills. "Not to worry, Ma'm," the policeman drawled. "Don't think you had an intruder. Probably your fifteen year old daughter was the perpetrator." Funny how profound, world-shaking news stories like that remain in one's brain forever.

Now let's suppose the vibrating brush lasts for a couple of months and then quits twirling, or whatever it does. Will it require a new battery or something? Where can one be purchased and who in the world will be able to install it?

My husband is a miracle worker with everything mechanical, for which I'm thankful each and every day since we married in 2000. But Operation Pulsating

Mascara Battery Replacement might be too difficult for even my Mr. Wonderful.

Lately I've been thinking about all the aids that a lot of us now have in our aged, bionic bodies. I am not naming names nor citing the location of said miracle inventions that are keeping various organs chugging along somewhat close to normal these days: you know who you are and where these gadgets are located, so there's no need to go into it. But what happens if the battery in our mascara must be replaced at the same time all the other gadgets in one's bod flame out? Which one should be replaced first?

Forget the heart thingies, etc. We must get our priorities right, right?

"Hello. Is this the President and CEO of the Maybelline Corporation? Sweetie, (probably a kid about sixty years old) would you please be so kind as to send me a replacement battery for my pulsating mascara by overnight express so I'll have it by noon tomorrow?"

I recently called a hairnet company in Philadelphia asking them where to buy one of their invisible bouffant auburn hairnets (I'm staying with my 1950 classic hairdo as long as I have any red hair with white roots left on my head). Guess what? They sent me a gross ... for free! Do the math: I have enough hairnets for the rest of my natural life and many decades beyond, thank you very much. Should any hairnets survive, I must decide today which one of my lucky daughters, step-daughters, daughters-in-law, granddaughters, step-granddaughters, or ex-granddaughters-in-law should inherit said hairnets. Can't have the girls indulging in a free-for-all and filing multiple court cases lasting decades over such a magnificent legacy.

"Now, Mr. President, along with that little bitty battery, would you please deploy Joe, the techie

guy from India, to install it for me ... and also ...
can you spare me a gross of your fine pulsing mascaras?

"By the way, do you happen to know anybody in the
diamond business?"

"Thanks, Mr. President. You're such a doll."