

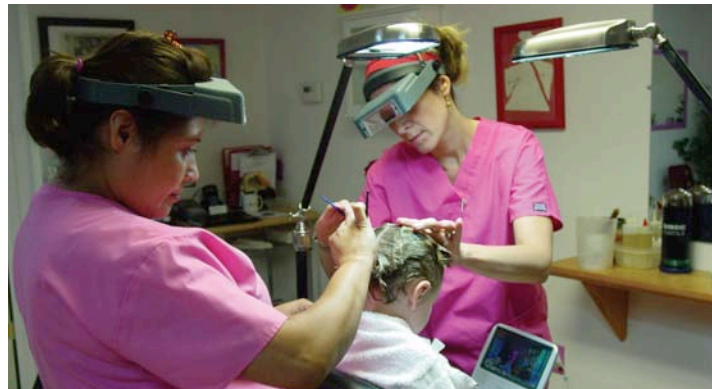
Got Creepy Crawlies?

By Sophie Braccini

With kids trying on and trading masks, wigs and hats, Halloween can sometimes bring “tricks” of the multi-legged variety. There are plenty of resources on the web for treating

head lice (pediculosis), using everything from Rid to prescription Malathion to olive oil – below is just a sample of an exhaustive list obtained from a Google search:

- <http://www.headlice.org/>
- http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/lice/factsht_head_lice_treating.htm
- http://familyfun.go.com/parenting/child/health/childhealth/dony79enc_hlice/
- <http://www.headliceinfo.com/>
- http://pediatrics.about.com/od/headlice/Head_Lice_Treatment_Guide.htm
- http://www.consumerreports.org/mg/free-highlights/manage-your-health/head_lice.htm



LoveBugs' owner Mailana Mavromatis (right) removes lice from Cole's hair with the help of Cecilia Alas Photo Sophie Braccini

If you'd rather not deal with head lice yourself, one unique Lafayette salon offers an alternative.

LoveBugs is located at 3746 Mount Diablo Blvd, Suite 203. The downstairs room is airy and pleasantly decorated. Funky music plays and toys abound. This is definitely a friendly place.

As owner Mailana Mavromatis explains, “Adults come here to be treated as well as children, but it's the kids who have to feel comfortable. Parents are less fearful.” Less fearful maybe, but not proud to be there; not one of the mothers who was in the salon

when we visited wanted to be identified in this article. “There is still a stigma about lice,” confirms Mavromatis, “but there shouldn't be any shame, lice are equal opportunists and I even think they prefer cleaner hair!”

What to Expect If You Go:

Mavromatis treats lice using a recipe that was originally created decades ago in Greece by her mother, and says that the magic potion is composed only of organic and non-toxic ingredients, including salts, olive oil, neem oil, anise and tea tree oil. First the dry hair is totally satu-

rated with the product, a shower cap is placed over it and patients have to sit for ½ hour. Then, one or two lice specialists wearing magnifying glasses finely comb the hair strand by strand to remove lice and nits. If the hair is not too long, it takes about an hour altogether. “The product does not kill the bugs,” explains Mavromatis, “it suffocates the live ones and allows us to remove the nits that otherwise stick to the hair.” Clients are given a list of home duties that includes the usual cleaning and vacuuming. One week later patients return, the situation is re-evaluated, and if the hair is not 100% clear a third visit will be needed. “Most clients come only 2 or 3 times,” says Mavromatis, “if they have to come more, then the problem is probably re-infestation.” The cost of the treatment is \$90 per hour. For more information go to <http://www.lovebugslice.com/index.html> or call 925-283-7700.

Lee Borrowman contributed to this article.

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