

## Len Zawodosky is His Losing Hair

04-01-2013 by Harry Zirkelbach

The University of Detroit had a respected Engineering School in the 1930s and 40s. The final three years were considered Co-Operative. The Junior and Senior years were lengthened to three, and students went to school every other month, no vacations. When not in school, the student were to work in an industry related to their projected degree. I enrolled continually for six semester, from Sept 1941 to June 1944 as an Engineering student, remained deferred from the draft.

Tuition was modest. There was no University housing. Students rented a room from neighboring homes, joined a student run eatery. Expenses were minimal. Income from the every other month employment, sufficient for living expenses and tuition

In the mid year of school, 1942-1943 I worked for the University's Aeronautical Department, operating the Wind Tunnel for commercial experiments, and student education and Theses.

Active minds of that generation were no different than those before or later. As Engineers they tended to be very inquisitive about the way the world works. They exchanged news, gossip, information, rumor in staggering quantities.

Yes this often extended beyond Engineering consideration, inquiries reaching into every aspect of life; why do boys blush; how to maintain eyesight when reading hours daily, the color of the sky, why was Michigan so flat, what was the purpose of this education, what should each expect to be doing any chosen time in the future, future propulsion systems, energy development, can birds really fly?

Some were personal. In the house where I lived that year, a Senior also resided. Typically when he worked I was in school, and the opposite, so we kept independent schedules.

He was Len Zawadosky, a few years older. He looked much older. Len had been losing his hair for years. He was in a constant battle with his head. He sought every possible procedure not just to stop that loss, regenerate pores from which hair had disappeared. He wasn't handsome, so more than self esteem was concerned. He wanted to be able to brush and comb a full head of hair.

His latest endeavor began when two box of goodies delivered to our house. Len anxious to begin using these tools.

Equipment., and many instructions. The largest piece, a vacuum pump. Size impressive, noise awesome. And oversize football helmet, red. Plus many pieces of black rubber hose, each piece the same length. Len attacked the assembly. Each hose was connected, vacuum pump, to one of the 200 teats outside the helmet. When operated every few seconds, the pump thru the tubes connected to the helmet, removed air from inside the helmet, massaging that small part of Len's scalp. It sounded plausible, a vigorous massage returning life to dormant pores.

A late Twenty Century marvel, looking a bit like Buck Rodgers gear mixed with Rube Goldberg contraptions.

Helmet on, Len would study thirty minutes, rest and repeat. Every day. Walking into the room with the contraptions operating was always a shock. The suction seeming to try to suck Len's head into the helmet, was deafening, Len unaware of nothing around him. His study world was all noise.

Len avoided leaving the house for hours after any application. His head a mass of red pocks caused by the suction.

Not gregarious naturally, Len moved a bit further into isolation. Then in a few months Len realized this as another failed experiment, discarded the pump and helmet.

Len was not drafted. With his natural inquisitiveness, and mechanical aptitude he was hired by a prestigious scientific company and remained there his business life.

That failed experiment became a treasure, reinforcing Len's concentration.