

## MENOPAUSE ADDS SPICE TO LIFE

Menopause makes my life interesting.

Not because I have it (although there IS such a thing as male menopause), but because LuAnn is going through it (a little early – the average age for menopause onset in women is 52).

Hot flashes, insomnia and mood swings seem to be the order of the day. I'm never sure when I return home if I'm going to find the Angel of Sweetness & Light or the Psycho Bitch from Hell.

Believe it or not, I'm starting to like it. How dull my life used to be when every day was the same as the last! No problem with that around our house these days.

Menopause is even better than P.M.S. – you could only rely on P.M.S. for a few stimulating days per month. Relatively speaking, menopause is forever (or maybe it just seems that way).

LuAnn says the worst part of it is that she's aware of it when she's overreacting to something, but she's helpless to stop it. I was recently amused when someone besides me got to experience this first hand.

You'll need a little background – about once a week LuAnn likes to order a take-out breakfast from a local fast food drive-up window. She also likes to sleep in on her days off, so she usually doesn't get there until after 10 a.m., and they stop serving breakfasts at 10:30.

Unfortunately, they often run out of breakfasts *before* 10:30, and LuAnn has to drive – fuming – to a different location or skip breakfast altogether if it's now past 10:30.

"I can't tell you how many times I've driven off literally shaking with anger when that happens," she told me.

Well, last week she said she was at the same place shortly after 10 a.m. to order breakfast at the drive-up microphone, and a voice coming out of the speaker told her, "I'm sorry, we're on the lunch menu."

LuAnn looked at her watch and said, "No, you're not on the lunch menu, you're still serving breakfast. It's barely 10 o'clock."

"We're out of breakfasts," said the voice.

"Excuse me?" said LuAnn, "Every breakfast?"

"I don't think you'd want what we have left," said the voice.

"What have you got?"

"Plain bagels."

LuAnn told me later, "I just snapped."

"YOU GET A SHIFT MANAGER TO THE PAYMENT WINDOW, AND YOU GET HIM THERE NOW!" she shouted into the microphone. She dropped her Chevy SS Blazer into gear and screeched up to the payment window, which was fortunately vacated just in time by the previous customer.

A young man appeared at the window and said, "May I help you, ma'am?"

LuAnn took a deep breath and said heatedly, "No, you *can't* help me. You can't help me because I'm trying to order breakfast and you are out of breakfasts, *Again!* If you expect that you might run out of breakfasts, you could at least put up a sign like the other breakfast places saying "10:30 or until we run out." *That* would be all right, but your sign just says 'serving breakfasts until 10:30.' Well, *are you or aren't you?*"

A guy in his car at the ordering station behind her in line could hear everything she was saying. He was leaning out his window yelling, "Yeah! Yeah!"

The poor kid at the window started to speak but LuAnn stopped him with an open palm. She said, "I realize that you're probably not the person responsible for this problem, but I'm never coming back here again and you're going to tell your manager why."

She continued, "This is the only one of your locations that consistently runs out of breakfasts before 10:30. I'm telling you it's a problem, the people behind me in this line can tell you it's a problem, and you need to get it fixed."

She accelerated away, leaving the kid open-mouthed and probably questioning the wisdom of his career choice.

Anyway, menopause seems to be an equal opportunity sort of crapshoot – you're never sure if you're going to win or lose, and you have the same odds as everyone else for a pleasant or unpleasant outcome.

But life is never dull.