

CALEidoscope



Cale Kenney is a journalist, writing instructor, guest columnist for Regional Mobility Ltd. and "real gimp" herself. Cale's column will at times provoke you and at times humor you. Comments and reactions to Cale's

viewpoints should be sent to Cale Kenney "My Viewpoint" C O Regional Mobility Ltd. 401 Linden Center Dr., Ft. Collins, CO 80525.

Last month I made a distinction between the person with an athletic injury and the "real gimp." This month's column is a commentary on the rarest breed of gimp, the supergimp.

In case you're not familiar with the term, gimps are humans possessing an abnormal walking style, commonly described as a limp, later bastardized to "gimp" to refer to both the gait and the person whose mobility is impaired. More recently the term has been used to describe anyone with an abnormal physical condition which "handicaps" its owner and differentiates him as "disabled" in relation to an able-bodied population.

Now, a supergimp is a peculiar subspecies and is unusually identified in terms of how well the characteristics of

a gimp are controlled, denied or overcome by the handicapped individual so that he/she actually appears even more able than members of the able-bodied population. Because of their chameleon qualities supergimps are not easy to spot in a crowd — unless it is a crowd of real gimps — but can be identified by the following characteristics.

Where real gimps have been known to inhabit hospitals, nursing homes, chaise lounges, wheelchairs, automobiles, and regular crowded streets, supergimps go where real gimps dare not tread. They climb 20,000-foot peaks, scuba dive in the Carribean one day and jet off to the Rockies the next, endure 40 below weather in Scandinavian countries in the dead of winter to win medals in contests among other super gimps, or skip across America and Canada on an artificial leg. Supergimps insist on walking to the grocery store. If they must travel by wheel, it's at 50 mph down a long track or road like the Boston Marathon's Route 9. In short the masochism associated with athletics is a perfect breeding ground for the supergimp.

"Do you need help?" "Does it hurt?" and "Did you ever cry over your loss?" are the three-question emotional test for identifying supergimps. If the answer is yes to all three the chances are you have spotted a real gimp. But if the answers are

no you have witnessed the powerful psychological tool of denial which is a supergimps greatest leverage. If he can convince himself he's not a gimp, he can convince others. And considering the amount of misunderstanding, negative disregard or just plain pity that each real gimp must endure, you can't blame the supergimp for trying — or denying.

Likewise, supergimps hate the term handicapped or disabled. "Physically Challenged" or "Inconvenienced" are preferred.

Where most gimps are embarrassed from time to time by the handicapping condition which seems to set them apart, the supergimp is perfectly comfortable and has even been suspected to flaunt his disability. With appliances like crutches with fur arm-pads (which match the owner's coat), or peg legs in a variety of sizes and shapes, including the goat-like hoof, the barber-pole, and the pipe with a piece of tire for tread, the supergimp defies public opinion.

Often decorated in paisly, stripes or prints, their artificial legs are sometimes worn outside of the pants, and some supergimps have special zippers sewn in the knee, so the leg can be easily removed, displayed or hidden. Now that supergimps have worn down public outrage over the hinged plastic knee, or the one-stockinged-and-one-bare pair of great legs under a tennis skirt, even real gimps have begun to feel comfortable wearing shorts.

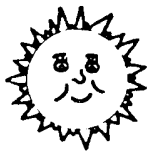
While female real gimps suffer the boring functionalism (not to mention shopping hassle) of the one-inch heel, her supergimp counterpart has 14 detachable heel sizes, including a flat foot with toenails for skinny dipping (wet the toes only, please!).

Indeed supergimps are showcases for the best innovative adaptive equipment and prosthetics. Where most amputees pay \$3,000 for an artificial leg, and moan because their insurance companies' schedule of fees only allows \$2,500 for an a-k prosthesis, the supergimp must pay upwards of \$5,000 to \$32,000 for a super fuel-injected XKE CAT/CAM, polycentric four-bar linkage modular unit with silicone injected socket. Batteries not included. Souped-up wheel-canted chairs with water or gel cushions for comfort are the corresponding equipment for supergimp para and quadraplegics.

Where every gimp learns through the pocket book that the old activities take more time and require more adaptive equipment once you become disabled, the supergimp gives the appearance of not only financial security, but financial abundance. The fact is that supergimps are either born of wealthy parents or they are one of three things: military veterans,

continued on page 7

We Shine When The Sun Doesn't



We Listen
We Help
We Deliver



Home Care Supplies
12 years experience
Quality at low prices
Professionally Trained Staff
3rd Party Billing
Phone order convenience
Direct delivery to your home

Medical Home Supply, Inc.

3070 S. Vallejo Englewood, CO 80110

(303) 762-1263

1-800-621-8385 Ext. 991