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Hold On To Your Hats

By Launa Coe


As humans, we are all allowed to ask stupid questions. How many times have we asked what time it is while standing directly in front of a clock? Maybe while admiring a baby, we ask what *his* name is before being informed that he is a *her*. A stupid question often asked in this part of the state is "Does the wind always blow like this?" All of us know the answer to this question because all of us know about the wind in Western Oklahoma. Instead of just chuckling and letting the inquirer die of curiosity, we should answer this question by revealing the several ways high winds affect Western Oklahoma.

It really perturbs many Western *Okies* that the credit for all the new styles in hair and clothing that come out is given to New York or California. This feeling is aroused because they know that many styles were started right here in this part of the country. The wind-blown hairstyle, for instance, wasn't started in some New York boutique. It was started right around here by these Oklahoma winds. Where else could we get a better excuse for wind-blown hair than to start a new style? Another example is the short, straight skirts women are wearing nowadays. Californians claim to have started the trend to show off their legs, but Western Oklahoma women know where it really got started. They got tired of fighting down their long, full skirts everytime a gust of Western Oklahoma wind caught them, so they said "to heck with this." They sewed them up and cut them down. Now isn't that practical? Men in this part of the state had a similar problem with neckties, so who but Western Oklahoma men could have come up with the bow tie?

Not only do these winds affect the way we dress, but they affect the way we live too. Experts say that some of the best drivers come out of Oklahoma's West, and this is no accident. It takes great talent to buck those fifty- to seventy-miles-an-hour winds while driving along a road. Western Oklahomans also use fewer clothes driers than any other place in the United States. After all, who needs an expensive clothes drier when he has absolutely free hot and high winds right outside his door (by the way, the clothes pin industry is booming in our locale)?

Anyone just passing through can see other effects of the high winds in Big W Country just by observing the natural environment. Our birds, for example, are much larger than those in other parts of the country. This, of course, is due to their fighting those high winds while flying from tree to tree. And speaking of trees, our Western Oklahoma trees are much shorter than those in other places. Their structure occurs simply because if these trees grow too high the winds will just snap them off. The same is the case with other vegetation as well. Even our weeds are bigger around and

tougher than those in less windy environments. So Mother Nature has ways of adapting to high winds.

The winds in Western Oklahoma do more than just blow. They affect us in many ways. So the next time someone asks a stupid question about Western Oklahoma, we shouldn't just laugh or act perturbed; we should point out our clothing or show him a bird. 



Launa (pn. Lonna) Coe is an eighteen-year-old from Hydro. A peanut farmer's daughter, she has lived all her life ten miles south of Hydro. She is attending her first year at SOSU; and this essay, a prize winner, was written as an assignment in a SOSU English Composition class during the 1986 Summer Session.