

OCTOBER 12, 1972

Last Sunday my wife started wearing her blanket. When an Indian woman starts wrapping up during the moon of the falling leaves, you can bet that the winter will be long and cold.

Autumn was already making her restless. Way in the nights; she was singing and chanting the Squaw's Losing Song. As our wedding anniversary drew closer, she became sullen and out of humor. It seems that every year she takes our wedding date harder.

Disappointed wives have been common in the area. Some of the white eye models haven't tried to conceal their bitterness. I overheard two of them talking the other day. The oldest said she was glad she'd broken a mirror, because now at least she'd know that her luck was going to match what her marriage had been.

Newspapers have reported numerous incidents of violent marital disagreements. Also, several citizens have been wearing black ringed eyes that didn't look like the results of a door and head collision.

The trend looked so bad that I sawed all the mop and broom handles into at least three pieces. I took the boys' scout hatchets to the ranch 10 days ago.

Squaw men can't take chances that the straight breeds can. Growing careless around the lodge will get us a tomahawk wound to use as a reminder.

But of all the tricks that an Indian woman can pull, I believe I fear scalping as much as any of them. It must have been something that happened to me as a kid that makes me so afraid of having my hair lifted. Men my age lose their hair faster than a young barber can shave a peach; nevertheless, every time she says I need a haircut, cold chills block the fluid in my spinal column.

I really lose control when she starts carrying a butcher knife to bed. It's awful on those nights. Her tomcats howl and the dogs wail out in front. Moonlight streams through the windows and then she starts answering the night owls that live on the hill next door.

On one of those nights, I touched a toy truck that one of the kids had left on the bed. Thirty-six hours had passed before my system would settle down enough to dissolve a nitroglycerin pill.

For six months thereafter, I slept less than 17 minutes a night. Doctors prescribed sleeping pills, but the stomach gastric juices were so strong that they'd break the medicine down before it'd do any good.

General Custer could have spent his last days at the old soldiers' home if he'd studied frontier mixed marriages. The gallant old warrior would have been better prepared if he'd watched the scouts living in their tepees.

Squawmen learn footwork that'd make a fencing coach think he was wearing rawhide hobbles. You can't hit one on a dry track. They learn more of war medicine in a month than a West Point Cadet does in four years. The reason more of them aren't professional boxers is because the ring would bore them.

Living so close to constant danger adds zest to married life. I wouldn't trade one minute of the time for the best truck stop cafe in the country.

You get so you like dodging broken glass and side-stepping pieces of swinging chain. After a few years of it, the sight of fresh blood makes you homesick.

I don't know what's getting into the wives. They all have plenty to do without sapping their energy fighting.

Whatever it is, it's going to have to be stopped. Just this morning, I saw my wife's tomcat jump a Siamese twice his size. The country's too small for both the cats and the women to be out of sorts at the same time.