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TROPICAL LIFE

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COMMENTARY



ANA VEGIANA-SUAREZ

aveciana@herald.com

Thumbs up to gamers (really!)

Ask my kids the one thing that invariably knocks me off my rocker: Video games. Their rhythmic beeping and boinging is enough to make me swoop down from my home office for an attack on the offending system. Me, the Avenging Angel of Gamers.

"Outside!" I sputter, pointing at the green grass and blue sky visible through our sliding glass doors. "You need some fresh air!"

I'm sure this screeching scene is repeated countless times around the country. For grown-ups of a certain age, there's something terribly irking about watching a healthy, strong child forgo the pleasure of physical play for thumb practice.

Well, this summer I was exposed to news that can be only translated in one way: *Game Over* for us fogies. Various studies prove that we, the generation that grew up playing hide-and-seek,

PLEASE SEE ANA, 2K

IN HUMID SOUTH FLORIDA, IONIC THERMAL RECONDITIONING OFFERS A PRICELY SOLUTION TO CURLS AND FRIZZ. BUT IT WORKS. REALLY.



STYLED

STRAIGHT

BY ANA ACLE-MENENDEZ
Special to The Herald

My hair is not unmanageable — it's just unmanageable for me.

I don't have the will to spend an hour each morning to pull or press my locks to get that salon-straight mane. I'm a working mom, constantly on the go. A typical morning for me means that, after I'm dressed and primed for work, my 2-year-old son lets me know that it's time once again to change his diaper and thus begins the sprint in the stiletto heels to get out the door to work on time.



BEFORE

GOODBYE, CURLS: Ruben Mendez, top left, straightens Ana Acle-Mendez's hair using a process that costs an average of \$600. At left, the five-hour process includes chemical treatment; the knot test, done every five minutes; the first blow dry.

So the thought of washing my hair and having it sit naturally straight and silky smooth on my shoulders without blowing it dry seemed like a dream. I'd heard about ionic thermal reconditioning from a friend. Then my hair stylist mentioned it — the Japanese technique introduced in the U.S. a few years ago.

"This is the first such technique specifically for Caucasian and Mediterranean hair," said stylist Ruben Mendez, owner of Georges Miret salon in Coral Gables.

Ionic thermal reconditioning already is resonating among the curly-haired, frizzy-locked in South Florida. Those who've gone for it say the miracle hair cure effectively combats the drastic humidity and incessant on-again,

PLEASE SEE IONIC, 3K



STRAIGHTENING TECHNIQUES

Ionic thermal reconditioning is the latest straightener to hit the market. There are three basic types, according to Ruben Mendez, owner of Georges Miret salon in Coral Gables:

► **RELAXERS:** Best for African-American hair, which tends to be more delicate than other types. The cost is about \$300.

► **ANTI-CURLS:** Works on Mediterranean or Caucasian hair, but doesn't leave the smooth and shiny texture of the ionic, says Mendez. Cost: About \$200.

► **IONIC THERMAL RECONDITIONER:** Best for Mediterranean or Caucasian hair, it leaves the hair with a smooth feel and shiny gloss. The process works to change the structure of the hair, attaching negative ions to positively charged wet hair, locking in moisture and getting rid of frizz. At-home products to keep the look include ionic blow dryers, ionic brushes, ionic shampoos and conditioners.

► **HOME STYLING:** Of course, doing it yourself is the cheapest way, but the outcome depends on how talented and skilled you are with your own hair. Flat irons, to press the hair, can cost anywhere from \$14.95 to \$150.

PHOTOS BY MARIKO CROWE / FOR THE HERALD

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THE LOOK

Star Quality
Madonna and Missy Elliott are the latest celebs to jump on board the growing number of stars endorsing clothing, 2K.

ETHNIC EXPLORER

From Russia With Love
In Northeast Miami-Dade County, Nino Armstrong serves up food from her native Georgia, 4K.



EDITORS: SHELLEY ACOCA SACOCA@herald.com 305-376-3494; KATHY MARTIN KMARTIN@herald.com 305-376-3663