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Florence Henderson might be campy, but she's also hot.

**By Kelli Dunham**

## The Woman Who Got My Bradys in a Bunch

I was raised by stoic Wisconsin farm people who taught me many important life skills: how to hoe beets, use a chainsaw at age 10 and (consequently) how to say, "Oh, it's barely bleeding at all," in both German and English. And, while my life experiences include both drinking warm milk directly from the cow and accidentally driving a tractor into a brick wall ("It's barely bleeding at all," came in handy once again), watching TV was not really part of my family-togetherness experience.

Therefore, my ignorance of pop culture is legendary: I only recently discovered that the Carpenters covered the Beatles' *Ticket to Ride* and not the other way around. My best pal says that being friends with me is like being friends with an exchange student.

But ask me any question about *The Brady Bunch* and I'll have a response faster than you can say "Marcia, Marcia, Marcia." The reason? Carol Brady.

After I caught my first glimpse of America's favorite TV mom, I began creating elaborate schemes to be at a friend's house at 8 p.m. on Tuesdays, when Mrs. Brady would appear in all her groovy polyester glory.

I wanted her to hit my arm and say, "Oh, Mike." I wanted her to hand me my lunch bag with a smile. I wanted her to kiss me passionately in the kitchen and the den, and on a camping trip, and at the Grand Canyon and, of course, in bed—even if we were both completely clothed in multiple pajama-and-bathrobe layers.

I should have known there was something amiss with my alleged heterosexuality when I kissed my first boyfriend and had to imagine Carol Brady in her jumpsuit to feign interest. Yet it would be nearly a lifetime before I came out, with some random steps (attending Bible college, being a nun) in between.

Fast-forward to 2009. I was watching *Broadway Backwards*, the New York Community Center's gender-bending theater fundraiser. Onstage, mere feet away, was Florence Henderson. She was perfectly coiffed, perfectly in step and perfectly hot. She belted out "There Is Nothing Like a Dame," grabbed the crotch of one the queeniest chorus boys and shared a no-less-than-20-second, open-mouthed kiss with one of her female backup singers.

Later, the master of ceremonies led the audience in a chorus of "Happy Birthday" for Henderson, who, as it turns out, was celebrating her 75th that very week.

The man sitting next to me whispered, "I hope I'm grabbing the crotch of chorus boys when I'm 75." Nodding in agreement, I realized I not only wanted to do Florence Henderson—I wanted to be her. ■

I wanted her to hit my arm and say, "Oh, Mike." I wanted her to hand me my lunch bag with a smile. I wanted her to kiss me passionately in the kitchen and the den, and on a camping trip, and at the Grand Canyon and, of course, in bed.

