

Pro-Line: A head of difference

"A jelly-like, starchy-looking glop resulted from the lye and potatoes, and Shorty broke in two eggs, stirring fast. The conglone turned pale yellowish...Shorty said the first time's always the worst. You get use to it before long. You took it real good homeboy. You got a good conk." (1965 - The Autobiography of Malcolm X)

Grassroot News N.W. - Black hair styles has changed since our greatest leader was "Detroit Red." The Jerry, California and Designer curl is waving its way onto the heads of Afro-Americans as a contemporary hair design. There are many shops and professionals who engage in curling Black hair, but none quite as innovative as Pro-Line. Pro-Line, under the ownership of Virginia Bowen, has fused together a beauty shop, basket shop and retail beauty supply store all under one roof. Located in the center of downtown, its cosmetologist Winslow Caldwell and Gerald Taylor are experts in styling and applying curls to their customers of all ages and different nationalities.

Gerald Taylor gave some of the reasons for the popularity of the curls. "The curl grows Black peoples hair and they find it easy to style and manage. Another thing is that you can cut it into many different styles. The chemicals that are in the curl solution breaks our natural curl down and then put a new one in.

"The time it takes to dress your curl is really small which also accounts for the popularity of the curl." Taylor has worked in and around hair for years. "I always like working with my hands and being creative. This is one profession where I can do both." Taylor indicated that his goal was to get as good on Black hair as he can and many of his customers feel he already has.

Mrs. Alyce Robinson found the location of Pro-Line and Taylor's work to be ideal. "I first came in on my lunch time and Jerry did part of the work. Because I work downtown this didn't take long. I like my hair; it's the way I wanted it, and will come back again."

Winslow Caldwell wanted a job where he could be independent and chose hair designing for that reason. "Here I can set my own time. If I wanted to work eighty hours a week I can. If not, I find the time in-between to be my own. I think that people like the curl because nowadays time is important and the job market demands more of your time. Curls are easier to deal with and it takes less time to get ready."



Gerald Taylor styles Alyce Robinson's hair at Pro-Line. Winslow Cash takes special care with Gloria Cash's style. (Photos: Richard J. Brown)

Caldwell finds many of the hair styles of generations before coming back. "I did a woman's hair who was in her early seventies, and she's worn it that way for twenty-five years. But among the younger set, I do see the finger wave still there."

One of Caldwell's client's, Gloria Cash, found out about him when she came into the shop looking for hair oil. She indicated that she was satisfied with the style she was receiving from Caldwell.

The beauty shop is nicely set in the basement of Pro-Line with just enough chairs and magazines not to look cluttered. Upstairs is the retail shop managed by Sheryl Tapton. "We, as a salon, always advise our clients on products that will assist in the up-keep of their hair. Instead of sending them off somewhere to find those products, we service them from here. Also, Pro-Line is the only place downtown where you can buy ethnic products."

Caldwell and Taylor have built up a professional business in an area where they supply the demand. It takes hair artists like themselves to keep Black hair unique, stylish and convenient.

Ethnic, folk art celebrated

Laurelhurst Park will be the setting for a gathering to celebrate traditional arts and cultures and to honor the people who practice them. *City Folk* will take place on August 8 and 9 from 10 to 5, and is co-sponsored by the Metropolitan Arts Commission, the Oregon Arts Commission, and the Portland Parks Bureau, with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. It is the fourth in a series of statewide Folk Arts Festivals, and the first to be held in an urban area.

For the past several months, fieldworkers Mike Sweeney and Sandi Serling, along with consultants Thara Memory, John Tally, Isaac Shamsud-Din, Mark Levy and Jan DeWeese, have been working in

Portland's various ethnic communities. The success of their research has made the task of choosing a limited number of talented participants difficult!

Highlights of the two-day program will include Mien music, Hmong embroidery, Swedish dancing, Afro-American storytelling, waterdowsing, Japanese sandal-making, and Native American carving and beadwork. An Old Time Fiddlers concert is scheduled Saturday evening from 7-9:00. In order to place more emphasis on the creation and expression of traditional arts, works will not be offered for sale. Family-style meals will, however, be available.



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