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BUSINESS

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Fair Fashion Show & Dance (D.J. Tony)

Saturday, December 1, 1990
 5:00 p.m. Until

The Portland Travel Lodge

(Formerly Viscount Hotel)

1441 N.E. 2nd & Wiedler
 next to Holiday Park Hospital

Tickets: \$8.00 / \$2.00 discount with a donation of a gift suitable for a woman or child. Contributions to the Rafael House Shelter for Abused Women and Children.



"We're attentive to the customers and we work on finding out what's popular. We look at all the fashion magazines and magazine articles. Suppliers let me know what is doing well in other parts of the country."

Business Profile: Mrs. C's Wigs

BY CYNTHIA BROWN

Because she comes from a long line of small business owners (her mother and several aunts were beauticians and her grandparents were restaurateurs), it was only natural for Betty Cabine to start a business of her own. "I was working at the telephone company. I'd always wanted to open a dress shop but the opportunity of taking over the wig shop happened," recalled Betty. So, with the urging and support of her husband (and co-owner) Monroe, they started Mrs. C's Wigs.

Before she worked for the telephone company, Betty had been employed with Stevens and Sons where she polished her bookkeeping and merchandising skills, and prior to opening the doors of her own store, she visited other area wig shops to learn the business. "At that time [1975] wigs and hairpieces were very popular and we thought it would be a good opportunity. And we see the demand growing again now," said Betty.

The most popular produces these days are hair pieces for weaving which add fullness and extend a woman's natural hair. The extensions are bonded or woven under the real hair.

The wigs and extensions come almost exclusively from Korea. The majority are synthetic, but Mrs. C's also carries human hair products. "The Koreans do most of the processing," commented Betty. "We style them, put them on display and fit our customers."

What is the biggest challenge facing a wig shop? "Keeping up with the demands of running a business," said Betty. "Making sure everything's there and everything's running smoothly. It's harder now that we're growing."

What does Mrs. C's offer that other wig shops may not offer? "We're attentive to the customers and we work on

finding out what's popular. We look at all the fashion magazines and magazine articles. Suppliers let me know what is doing well in other parts of the country. It takes something six months to get to Portland after it's already appeared in New York or Los Angeles. No one in Portland wants to be the first. They wait until they've seen it several times in a magazine or on Mtv," said Betty.

Another plus is the variety of services available at Mrs. C's. "We carry a wide range of products. We have both hair pieces and beauty supplies including a full line of wigs and hair for weaving in any color and texture for all nationalities. And we carry a private label of Mrs. C's cosmetics which cater to darker skin tones," she added.

Betty also considers being a minority business owner a responsibility. "It's very important. It not only gives you self-esteem, but it's also something for young people to look up to. If I can do it so can they. I'm hoping the trend of small businesses grows. People are getting more and more education and want to work for themselves, so I think there will be more."

Betty enjoys living in Portland and being part of a growing community. "Portland is a small city with big city ways. There is always lots going on in art and performances. And it's a pretty city. It has the advantages of a big city but without all the people," she said.

Mrs. C's Wigs is a family affair. Two of Betty and Monroe's three children work in the shop: Wydell, 27 and Ronda, 25. Another son, William, is still in high school.

The shop is located at N.E. Seventh and Fremont and offers hundreds of brand-name wigs, as well as beauty supplies and cosmetics.