

Entertainment

Ethel Simmons editor/644-1100



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Joan clones Lookalikes vie on show



DAN DEAN/staff photographer

Adrienne Ruby, an interior decorator who lives in West Bloomfield, was one of three finalists from the Detroit area who went to Hollywood to compete in the "Joan Clones" contest on "The Late Show Starring Joan Rivers." Ruby said people have been telling her since the age of 18 that she looks like the comedy star.

By Ethel Simmons
staff writer

BEING A CONTESTANT on the recent "Joan Clones" contest — a Joan Rivers lookalike contest — was an exciting experience for the three finalists from metropolitan Detroit.

Although none of them was among the five national finalists, the three area residents — two men and one woman — had an opportunity to attend the "Late Night with Joan Rivers" show and strut their stuff looking like the brash, blonde comedienne.

Two men and one woman? Robert Bruno, 33, of Southfield and Dennis Bykowski, 36, of Garden City were the males who happened to be selected in the competition sponsored by WKBD-TV, Channel 50, and Delta Airlines at 761-Twelve Mall in Southfield the Friday before the showdate. Both have worked as female impersonators.

"A lot of us — the males — were professional entertainers," Bykowski said of the lookalikes' appearance on the show broadcast live from Hollywood. There were 150 clones on the air.

ADRIENNE RUBY, 33, of West Bloomfield was the other local finalist chosen from some 50 contestants at 761-Twelve Mall.

"People have been telling me I looked like Joan Rivers since I was 18," she said. "My hair is not as white. It's blonde. I do wear my hair pulled back like she does. Since her (cosmetic) surgery, she looks younger, and we look more alike."

Speaking rapidly, Ruby said, "I speak fast and have a lot of her gestures naturally. Unfortunately, I don't have her personality. I don't have her talent and her personality." "All my friends said, 'Go on and try,'" she said, explaining how she



sketch by MARVIN TEEPLES

'I adore Joan Rivers. She's almost like an idol. I love her mouth — the cattiness, the rudeness.'

— Dennis Bykowski
lookalike contestant

entered the contest. Ruby was a contestant in another competition once, for Miss Livonia (she is a graduate of Clarenceville High School), but her own looks didn't make her a winner.

Married to a lawyer, she is the mother of a 4-year-old son and has two stepsons, 13 and 15. Her husband's name isn't Edgar like Joan's husband, but it is Ed.

Commenting on the show's five finalists, she said, "The girl who won really deserved to win." Ruby wasn't as convinced about the other four. (One was a big black man wearing army boots with a blonde wig plunked on his head.) "I think Bobby Bruno should have been in the top four. He was fabulous."

DENNIS BYKOWSKI talked about Robert Bruno, who is working out of town.

Bruno is now appearing at "A Night at the Le Cage" at the MGM

Grand in Atlantic City and is on leave from the Premier Center in Sterling Heights, where he was appearing in the show "Mirage." Both productions have all-male casts, and in both he emcees in his guise as Joan Rivers.

Bruno also has done female-impersonator shows at Las Vegas, Miami Beach and Atlantic City.

"It's prestigious. I'm blowing his horn."

Speaking about himself, Bykowski said, "I've done female impersonations since I was 15 years old." He also bears some physical resemblance to Joan Rivers. "I'm tall, slim, with a long face — the whole shot."

"I adore Joan Rivers," he said.

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