

S'fld agency

Women have business, will travel

By SHIRLEE IDEN

Liz Bradley and Bernice Martuneac once did their share of complaining about what they'd do if they were boss.

But for these two, the "what-if" suddenly became a reality.

It was August, 1978, a busy time in the travel industry. Both women had worked eight years as sales representatives for Elkin Tours Inc. when they went to work one morning expecting a sales meeting.

"Instead of a sales meeting, we got an announcement that the place was closing, just like that," said Mrs. Bradley.

The women had to move immediately to protect the accounts they had lost served.

"We were selling to sales incentive organizations, employee organizations, professional groups and others like that," Mrs. Martuneac said.

"We were left in a very uncomfortable situation. Some of those accounts had been our personal clients for several years and it was too late to book space."

They hurriedly moved to place their presold groups with other operators. But they couldn't place groups whose destination was Santo Domingo, a market served exclusively by Elkin.

"We actually had to contract for five aircraft from a New York operator to come into Detroit for those trips to Santo Domingo," Mrs. Martuneac said. Now, a year later, they are still the only travel people in the area selling Santo Domingo.

Mrs. Bradley is a West Bloomfield resident, married to Milan Popovich. Mrs. Martuneac lives in Bloomfield Hills.

When the sudden notice that Elkin Tours had folded came to them, the

two were concerned only with salvaging what they could of their travel accounts.

"We worked out of our car trunks for several weeks," Mrs. Bradley said. "And when we rented office space, two lawn chairs were our only furniture."

Their company is called Worldwide Specialists and is located on Greenfield in Southfield. Although their business is mostly wholesale, they can service other potential travelers.

"We have to travel more than most people," Mrs. Martuneac said. "We take clients to various destinations to show them hotel facilities and the islands as well."

BOTH WOMEN work regular hours in the office and out in the field calling on clients.

When they started on their own, it was just the two of them. Since then they have had to hire another person, expand the office space, and increase from two telephone lines to four.

"The first person we hired was a woman who never had worked before in her life," Mrs. Bradley said. "Then we had another who hadn't



BERNICE MARTUNEAC

worked for 30 years. Ironically, our latest employee is just 23 years old but brought a wealth of experience."

When they started with Elkin Tours, both women said they were simply handed a brochure and told



LIZ BRADLEY

to go out and sell.

They agree their second challenge eight years later was more traumatic. But they met it, started a new business and growing with it.

"And we didn't lose a single client," Mrs. Bradley said.

Roofers pay to nab thieves and vandals

A group of Detroit-area roofing contractors recently began a reward program in hopes of reducing thefts and vandalism on job sites.

The Roofing Industry Promotion Fund, of Warren, is offering rewards of up to \$5,000 for information leading to a person's arrest and conviction of theft or damage to a job site. Smaller amounts will be paid for "reliable information," according to the group's announcement.

Mervin Smith, secretary of the roof-

ing contractors group, said theft and vandalism annually costs metropolitan contractors an average \$15,000 per firm.

Smith said job-site vandalism is usually the work of "kids from the site area," but other thefts have been linked to organized crime rings.

"If it's theft, it's organized," Smith said. Often the stolen roofing equipment is resold.

Smith said there are 4,500 roofing contractors in southeast Michigan.

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