'Travelers' aid': Beverly Garland wears many hats

By Arlene Funke
special writer

Millions of Americans know Beverly Garland as the warm and lovely TV wife of Fred MacMurray on "My Three Sons."

But actress Garland also owns hotels — two, in fact — with her husband, real-estate developer Fillmore Crank.

She recently came to the Detroit area to promote a new consumer protection plan offered by the National Tour Association, a non-profit organization of tour operators.

"We call it the patron saint of travel," Garland said. "We're promoting good consumer (awareness)."

Actress Beverly Garland is also a spokeswoman for the travel industry.

SEVENTEEN YEARS ago, Garland entered the hotel business. With land bought from retired cowboy star Gene Autry, the Beverly Garland Hotel made its debut.

"One of our hotels is a block west of Universal Studios, in North Hollywood," Garland said, in a morning interview over coffee at the Mayflower Hotel in Plymouth. "The other one is in Sacramento."

Many tour groups stay at Garland's Hollywood location and, if the guests are lucky, they'll be greeted by the actress herself.

"We aren't absentee owners," she said.

Several family members are involved in the hotel operations, she said.

GARLAND HAS done several TV series, "but the one most people seem to remember is 'My Three Sons.' It has been very good for me," she said.

The actress, who is in her 50s, has chin-length, ash-blonde hair and a friendly manner. She wore a black skirt topped by a white jacket, her favorite travel clothes.

Garland is a longtime member of the National Tour Association. With 3,000 members, the association represents hotels, restaurants, transportation firms and other travel-related businesses.

While visiting locally, Garland stayed at the Mayflower. She toured Domino Farms, pizza magnate Tom Monaghan's headquarters in Ann Arbor, and squeezed in a visit to a few shops in downtown Plymouth. Most of her time was devoted to TV and radio interviews.

"There is a tour for everyone," Garland said. "The best tour for me is a shopping trip."

Garland has managed to juggle successfully her roles as actress, businesswoman, wife and mother. She has four children and has been married for almost 30 years.

"I wear many hats" is how she describes her lifestyle.

Born in Santa Cruz, Calif., Garland made her movie debut in the 1950 feature film "D.O.A." She is a veteran of more than 200 television and movie roles.

IN ADDITION TO her three years as Barbara Douglas on "My Three Sons" in the late 1960s, she starred as a policewoman in the TV show "Decoy." She was Bing Crosby's wife on the "Bing Crosby Show" and, most recently, she appeared as Dottie West, Kate Jackson's mother in "Scarecrow and Mrs. King."

"You are always out there hoping you get something," Garland said of her acting career. "A lot of this had to do with luck, being in the right place at the right time."

Love blossomed in the family as a result of Garland's role in "My Three Sons." One son, Fillmore Crank Jr., is married to actress-singer Tina Cole, who played a pretty, blonde daughter-in-law (and mother of triplets) on the show.

"I introduced (my son) to Tina," Garland said. "He was very enamored and scared to death. When he would get uninvolved with a girl, he would call Tina. They did that for seven years."

The younger Cranks, who have been married around seven years,

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LaSalle Drinkery deejay keeps everybody happy

By Victor E. Swanson
special writer

LET'S GET SILLY a moment.

Put the palms of your hands together, and, while keeping your hands together, put your hands over your head. Start moving your feet and body to the music, and pretend you are a dancing shark. Now, don't forget to wiggle your dorsal fin.

If you're having trouble getting it right, watch Laura Kalapinski, the disc jockey at LaSalle Drinkery, which is the lounge within the Embassy Suites Hotel, Southfield. She'll show you how to do it, if that's what's going on when you're there.

"What we have, right now — I feel — is a 'Cheers,' " Kalapinski said during an afternoon interview several days ago. The 22-year-old, who also is entertainment and promotions director of the LaSalle, pointed out, "We have a really friendly staff. We're young. We're all energetic. We're all there having a good time while we're working. We make it a fun place for people."

"I work Monday through Saturday, from between noon and 3 till the bar closes. During the day, I do the managing for the bar, scheduling, ordering, making sure that the bar management part is running smoothly, and then at night I do all the entertaining," she said.

KALAPINSKI TALKED seriously about the work. "I do things as far as making sure people come to work. If a guest has a problem with the bar, usually I can help. If you want to have a party in the bar, you can call me." At La Salle, she oversees a staff of 10 persons.

"We do a lot of company parties with IBM, FTD, Michigan Bell," she added. "If they need extra food, I set that up for them. If they need a type of music, we get their music for them."

Mostly, LaSalle Drinkery is for hotel guests and anyone who wishes to stop by. Kalapinski did say, however, "We're not a big pickup joint — and we don't want to be known as a 'meat market.' "

The lounge usually opens around 11 a.m. and remains open throughout the day. From 5-7 p.m., there's the customary "happy hour," when a person is likely to hear jazz, Kalapinski's favorite type of music. She really gets the evening entertainment going around 7 p.m.

"Basically, we play the crowd. If we've got a crowd of 35 and older, we'll play some oldies. If we have a younger crowd, we'll play Top 40. We don't play any 'acid rock.' "

EACH NIGHT HAS a different theme. For example, there could be a hula festival with tropical drink specials, a fashion show, or a contest to name the title of a song. With a very broad smile, she said, "We've run a dating game — we've run a dating game twice — with a singles group. That's worked out really well. We have the theme music. We have prizes." On one day, the dating game

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Elvis fun is coming

At the LaSalle Drinkery, "Elvis International Tribute Week" will be celebrated Monday-Saturday, Aug. 15-20, with a week of contests, impersonations, videos and prizes such as free limousine service.

Lounge guests will be invited to enter a "Where Have You Spotted Elvis Lately?" contest. The winner will receive three hours of complimentary limousine service.

Other Elvis events at the lounge include Elvis videos all night, Wednesday, Aug. 17; an Elvis impersonation contest, Thursday, Aug. 18, and an Elvis Hawaiian Luau, Friday, Aug. 19.

— THOMAS ARNETT

Laura Kalapinski spins records at LaSalle Drinkery. (Below) John Gressa of Rochester and Shardon Edmark of Northville dance at a company party.

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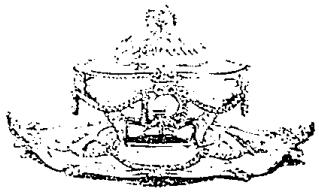

The Campbell Soup Tureen Collection.

Now on display, "Kings, Queens and Soup Tureens," a collection of over 300 silver and porcelain soup tureens from the tables of 18th and 19th century European Royalty. Come see this one-of-a-kind exhibition, recently displayed at Christie's of New York.

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