

Kroger to open new specialty store in West Bloomfield

The Kroger Co., the nation's largest supermarket chain, will host a grand opening for its newest store at Pontiac Trail and Haggerty in West Bloomfield.

The ceremonial ribbon-cutting will take place at 7:45 a.m. on Thursday, Jan. 23. The store will be open 8 a.m. to midnight, Monday through Sunday. The 63,315-square-foot Kroger Food & Drug Co. will feature customer conveniences, including a full-service pharmacy, Comerica Bank Branch, CompuCook and One-Stop Meal Shoppe.

"Our new Kroger Food & Drug lets us bring the latest merchandising innovations to customers throughout western Oakland County," said Dave Babinsky, vice president of merchandising for The Kroger Co. of Michigan. "We will offer the highest quality

products at competitive prices in a friendly, customer-oriented setting."

The store is designed with "the conscious" customers in mind. They can grocery shop, fill a prescription, conduct banking transactions and buy a greeting card and flowers—all under one roof. Customers will also find a color scheme of hunter green and burgundy with a black and white tile floor.

"Our West Bloomfield store offers unparalleled customer choice, value and shopping excitement," said store manager Blaine Tweed. About 225 people will be employed at the store. The specialty departments include:

- Customer Service Center (includes UPS service, Western Union, check cashing, copy and fax machines, money orders and

lottery tickets.)

- Full-service Pharmacy (A full-service pharmacy with a pharmacist on site for consultations.)

- Kid's Korner Play Center (Parents may leave their children in this supervised area for up to one hour while they shop. Children may enjoy games, coloring and storytelling. The service is free and open to children between 3 and 8 years old.)

- Full-Service Comerica Bank Branch

- Coffee Beanery (Featuring fresh brewed coffee, tea and fresh ground coffee to brew at home.)

- Pet Care Center

- Baby Care Center

- CompuCook (A computerized kiosk with food facts and nutritional data, as well as recipes and menu suggestions. Compu-

Cook provides the entire shopping list plus a directory of where in the store to locate the items.)

- One-Stop Meal Shoppe (A central display containing all ingredients needed to prepare a complete meal.)

- Meal Solutions (Customers may select ready-to-eat meals and side dishes.)

- Video Shoppe (Membership is free.)

- Floral Shoppe (Over 250 varieties of fresh-cut flowers and custom designed floral arrangements, plus a complete selection of greeting cards.)

- Service Meat Shoppe (A large variety of fresh cuts of meat, trimmed to the customer's specifications at no extra charge. Featuring USDA Choice Beef and fresh prepared meat entrees.)

- Seafood Shoppe

- Pastry Shoppe

- Deli

- Health and Beauty Care (An assortment of health and beauty care, plus a selection of cosmetics and designer fragrances.)

- The Kroger Garden (Featuring an extensive assortment of peppers, mushrooms, fresh herbs and spices and greens, as well as tropical fruits.)

- Kosher Foods

- Natural/Health Foods

The new West Bloomfield store is part of Kroger's commitment to renovate older facilities or open larger operations, giving customers more shopping conveniences. The store will welcome customers with a grand opening "Sollabration," featuring special promotions and savings throughout the store.

Kroger operates 82 stores in Michigan and 1,300 nationwide.

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FINANCIAL MATTERS

by Pat J. Paige CPA

AT THE AUTO SHOW

While visiting the Auto Show this week, remember leasing can be a good way to finance the acquisition of a car. Owing to the fact that monthly lease payments can be 30% or lower than loans for the same cars because the consumer is not paying for the entire value of the car. The smart way to lease a car begins with paying attention to the capitalized cost. This is the lease's equivalent of the sales price and is used as the basis for figuring the monthly payments. Consumers should price negotiate the capitalized cost of the car, much as they would negotiate the sales price (if they were buying). Next, the difference between the capitalized cost and the residual value (the figure used by the dealer to estimate the car's worth at the end of the lease) plus the finance charge becomes the monthly lease payments. Consumers should check the residual value set forth by the dealer against an industry reference to see that it is fair.

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NOTE: Check each step of how the dealer calculates monthly lease payments, including such factors as the trade-in value of their old cars and all state taxes, as well as first (usually negotiable) charged by the dealer which are built into the payments.

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Auto show

from page D1

approachable and speak about the car.

Before that, women — and Fuller was one of them in the early 1980s — were just ornaments on the podium.

"We were not allowed to speak. We wore low cut gowns and we were just pointed while a man in a tuxedo talked about the cars," she said about her four years as an auto show model. "In those days, women didn't go out and buy autos. It was a man's world."

But that's all changed.

"Most people don't want to go down to the auto show and see someone standing up there who doesn't understand what they are pointing to," Fuller said.

While Productions Plus still looks for attractive talent, Krevsky said, the emphasis has moved toward a more genuine look and now includes people of all ages.

"It's definitely not look and don't touch anymore," she said adding that most product specialists have to go through intense training sessions and are often tested on their knowledge about the car they are representing — from engine to airbag.

"They have to know as much, if not more, as a sales person," Krevsky said joking that a model has to be a "real motorhead" to be accepted for the show.

Though not universally followed by all car companies, Production Plus' approach to presenting product specialists has been successful and has been adopted by more and more car companies over the years.

"It has really been changing in the last eight to ten years," Fuller said, predicting that even more will come into the fold. "I think they'll come around. The

signal is there stop and look at the cars."

Since Productions Plus began handling car accounts in 1983, their client list has steadily grown and currently provides includes Pontiac, Buick, Mercedes Benz, Infiniti, Nissan, Toyota, Suzuki and Lexus.

The long client list and extended national auto show season, which runs September through May, keeps Fuller and Krevsky's 12-person company busy for most of the year. In fact, providing talent for the auto show and related films and projects accounts for 75 percent of the agency's business.

Even in the "off season," the two frequently travel to New York and Los Angeles to coordinate talent and keep up with fashion.

"Just as cars have trends, fashion has trends. They have the same kind of cycles ... there are new colors each year," Fuller said adding that wardrobe is a large, important part of presenting the right image.

For some car company presentations, Productions Plus has brought along as many as 150 ensembles for colorization and other considerations.

"Fashion has always been a big part of the agency's business and actually gave Productions Plus its start."

The two owners first met during the spring fashion shows in New York in the early 1980s. Krevsky, who was a national buyer for Alvin's, and Fuller, a Detroit-based runway model, met and had coffee during a break at a fashion show. After a couple more cups, the two realized that they had similar business goals.

When they got home, they set



Changing trends: Margery Krevsky, left, and Harriet Fuller, owners of Productions Plus in Birmingham have changed the approach to auto shows.

up their agency on a card table in Krevsky's living room. After a year, they made the leap into a rented office and now they are knocking down walls in their Birmingham space to make way for expansion.

"Their growth came strictly through reputation," Fuller said. Krevsky added that the agency has about 600 people of all types of talent on a computerized database.

"They have rounded up everything from repelling rollerskating acts, but the bulk of their business naturally shifted toward auto shows because of their Detroit location."

Though the provide talent for auto shows in every state, Krevsky and Fuller said they always look forward to the Detroit show.

"No one does and auto show like Cobo," Krevsky said.

Odd Jobs

from page D1

"her stuff" setting the pace for Fairchild's future endeavors.

An accomplished astrologer by the time he was 20, Fairchild took a slight detour to New York in the 70's after being picked from an audience to play a role in the Broadway production of "Hair."

He went on to win roles in "Jesus Christ Superstar" and numerous soap operas before returning to Michigan in 1978. "I was not an actor. I was just this astrologer weirdo," said Fairchild. As his reputation continued to grow, Fairchild found himself in demand in many mediums. He enjoyed a five-year stint as host of the "Ask the Astrologer" program on WXYZ talk radio and authored several books.

Over the last dozen or so years, Fairchild has engrossed himself in Feng Shui. The ancient Asian art holds the belief that the colors and designs of living space play a part in creating a healthy energetic environment. He published his first book on the subject last April.

Q. How did the psychic astrologer role come about for you?

A. "My grandmother was an astrologer and a palmist and I just thought everybody knew this stuff. I didn't think I was the only weirdo but as I went in to school, particularly when I got to high school, I realized not everybody was really into how the teachers wrote on the blackboard."

Q. You mean you were studying their handwriting?

A. "Yes. I was always raised with the concept that hand writing means something and body language means something. By the time I went to Michigan State, I was an elementary education major but at the same time I was also an astrologer."

Q. An astrologer is an unusual way to earn extra money at

school isn't it?

A. "Yes it is but that's how I made my money even though most college kids work in restaurants. I had many of the first ladies and up and coming political people as my clients. I just told fortunes basically then I got to the point where I said I'm making arm loads of money and this is very fun and I love what I'm doing."

Q. Is that when you decided against being a teacher?

A. "Well by the time I was 22, I was being hired by the wealthiest person in India to fly me first class in my own private plane and pay me more money than my dad made in a year to just sit there and say I don't like that couch and maybe we should move this here. I knew I was on to something."

Q. Do you feel your abilities are learned or in-born or both?

A. "I believe they are learned. I do believe everyone is born with the same gifts but why do some people choose to smoke a pack of cigarettes a day or eat lots of butter and do that thing to the body. It's something you have to discipline yourself with."

Q. As an accomplished psychic and astrologer, you must have a discipline.

A. "Yes. I'm the cheap date. I go to bed at 7 o'clock I don't drink, I don't smoke I don't do drugs. I try to be a clean machine. Why? Because it's my job to try and work with people and I just don't want to have anything cluttering up my ability to communicate with them. I don't care what they do, they can be junkies or having five affairs but I don't want it in my life."

Q. Do you share both positive and negative thoughts or predictions with your clients?

A. "An intuitive astrologer sits with a person and tries to figure out their particular rhythm may be - good, bad, or indifferent. I

don't sit there and say, 'Oh, your going to lose a daughter' or 'You're going to have a grandson' or any of that stuff. I'll say this might look bad, this doesn't look good it may be a time to pull back."

Q. Who's the most famous person you've had as a client?

A. "I've been doing this for half my life. I've had three presidents and eight first ladies. You can put it together and figure out, 'cause I'm only 50, who these people might be but I don't drop their names. They drop mine occasionally, but I don't drop theirs."

Q. Do you find that overall your impressions are pretty accurate?

A. "I would never say I'm more than 70 percent on with clients."

Q. Seems you've had a very interesting career so far?

A. "All my life, I've studied all these things that people just don't think make a lot of sense. At the same time, it's allowed me the luxury of going around the world 28 times. I make an extremely wonderful living I have a beautiful house in Birmingham. Obviously, somebody does think this stuff has an impact."

Q. Do you have any personal predictions for 97?

A. "Generally speaking the theme of 97 is not going to be the little people making all the big bucks. It's definitely going to be tightening the budget making the belt a little tighter."

I think Dennis Archer is going to be right here to stay with the casino thing happening. We aren't going to see the world end, California is not going to fall off the coast. The general feel to me is that the whole purpose of life right now in the late '90s is coming back to the Victorian Times. Honesty and integrity, uniting the family unit. It's not radical at all. I think that's where we're going now."

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