

Feature Article

Somebody's Gotta Do It

Celebrating the Bay Area's Under-appreciated Jobs

Jimmy Christopher



Catch "Somebody's Gotta Do It" hosted by

Mike Rowe on Evening Magazine, Wednesdays at 7pm on KPIX Channel 5.

EMPLOYEE: Judi Henderson

OFFICIAL Title: Owner, "Mannequin Madness"

UNOFFICIAL Title: "Matron of the Dead"

ANNUAL SALARY "Makes a killing!"

WHAT YOU "GOTTA" KNOW

Judi Henderson's expansive Oakland home is littered with various arms, legs and bodies. There are limbless torsos piled in her two-car garage. Body parts are stuffed into 30-gallon garbage cans which stew under a hot sun in her yard. In the dark, cold basement, cadavers line every inch of wall space. Men, woman and (gulp) children too!

Some would call this scene horrifying, but to Judi, all of these lifeless bodies are beautiful because they're the soul of her booming business. Yes, the bodies are mannequins.

Nearly a thousand of these attractive parts and pieces make up Judi's prized collection of plastic cadavers. All of these mannequins are for sale or rent.

DOES SOMEBODY REALLY HAVE TO DO THIS?

In the last year alone, Judi has salvaged more than 100,000 pounds of what would otherwise be called trash. The fiberglass dudes and divas would be in landfills across our globe, tossed out by countless department stores that now prefer cloth models. "Mannequins are large, bulky items made of materials that don't easily biodegrade," says the self-employed genius. Her

efforts have garnered a prestigious award from the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Mannequin Madame started the company almost three years ago, when she was looking for a mannequin for an art project. The only mannequin rental company in town was closing its doors, so that sparked Judi's entrepreneurial juices. One thing led to another and then BAM! Judi took home her first 50 mannequins from the belly-up rental business.

"The Bay Area is a creative community that needed at least one rental mannequin service. I went from 50 to 500, almost overnight."

\$\$\$\$

How much is that hot mama in the window? The cost of a new mannequin can set you back anywhere from \$400 to \$1,100. Since Judi's men and women are lucky to be saved from the landfill, they aren't going to set you back an arm and a leg... (Sorry about that – won't happen again).

Here's a menu of what's for sale: • Mannequin with head:

\$250 to \$500

• Headless mannequins:

\$150 to \$400

• Single leg: \$40

• Pair of legs: \$80

• Torsos: \$50 to \$125

• Butts: \$50

WACKY DESIRES

You name it, Judi's heard just about every bizarre request from just about every bizarre cross-section of the mannequin-needing populace.

"I had one man who wanted a female bust on a male bottom. I don't ask questions. I just simply sell the merchandise. My best sellers are legs. Around Christmas time, the phone rings off the hook for people looking for a leg to make a lamp, like in the movie *A Christmas Story*."

Whether it's a transvestite looking for a cross-dressing companion or an artist looking to adorn a torso with flowers for an exhibit, there are countless uses for an immobile body. And of course there are NC-17 uses that we won't go into here.

ATTRACTIVE INVENTORY

There are bodies that mirror Sharon Stone in *Basic Instinct* and faces that make everyone pause, thinking, "haven't I seen you before." Her naked men are well endowed and nearly every woman has a pair of head-turning boobs.

And then you come across the deformities, like the woman with a metal growth coming out of her ass. "We get them in all conditions, this right here is a butt rod," says Henderson, who catches us off-guard with her candid uttering of the words "butt" and "rod."

WAIT, HERE'S AN IDEA!

Walking around her residence showroom, you begin to wonder... you could assemble the perfect companion. The right lips, the perfect tush, eyes that will light your world on fire. That special someone that never talks back, looks you straight in the eye and in your imagination,

laughs at your jokes. You can kiss him or her, dress them in leather... the possibilities are endless!

She even offers rentals if you want to have a few dates before taking the plunge!

Find your special someone at: www.mannequinmadness.com

©2001 - 2005 The Wave Media.