

Business Briefs

BUSINESS PROFILE

Everything is coming up home grown at Teen's Country Shop

By ROBIN BARKSDALE
Chronicle Staff Writer

Ola Morris has the answer to any of your herbal questions. The owner/operator of Teen's Country Herb Shop literally has hundreds of home-grown herbs and herbal products at the shop on Waughtown Street.

Mrs. Morris opened her herb shop a little over two years ago. Few people are familiar with herb growing and cultivating as a hobby, but Mrs. Morris said that more people are becoming involved with the art. Her own interest in herbs began during her

earlier years when her aunt gave her a mint plant. Since that time, she has been fascinated with herbs and their uses.

"I've been interested in herbs for about 10 years, and now I'm in the U.S. Herb Society," said Mrs. Morris. "I attend seminars regularly."

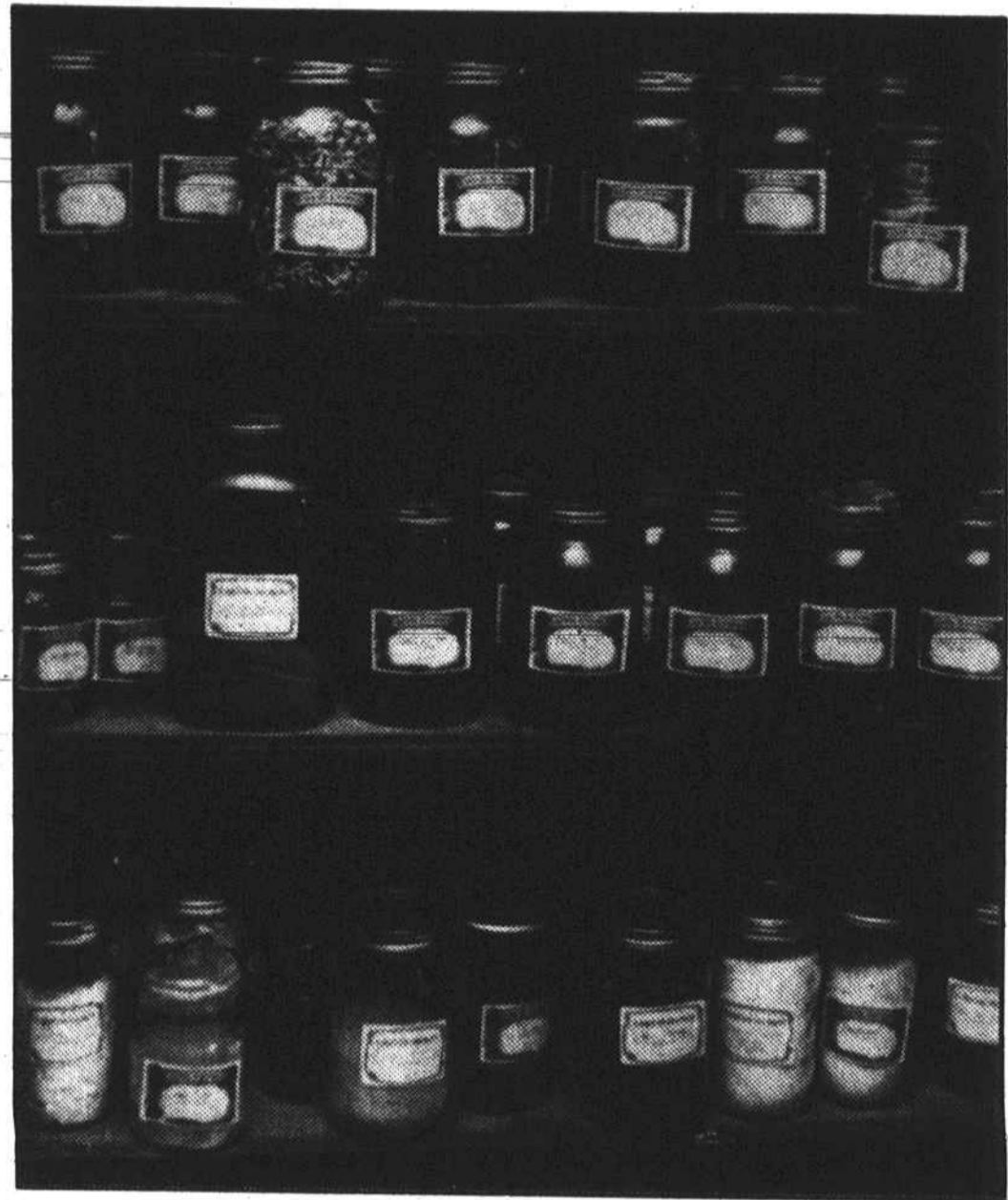
With so few people demonstrating an interest in herbs or opting to run to the local grocery for processed herbs, it seems risky to open a business that may not find a market.

"I decided to open the shop because this was something that I really enjoy," Mrs. Morris said. "I



Photos by Mike Cunningham

Ola Morris has shelves full of her home-grown herbs. At left, rows of herbs are displayed on shelves at Teen's Country Herb Shop. Mrs. Morris says she wants to get more Afro-Americans interested in using herbs.



enjoy dealing with herbs. It's not so much the money that I was concerned about. It's just fun. I am continually learning about herbs."

Mrs. Morris shares her knowledge with the community through classes that are offered at her shop every Saturday and Sunday. Classes meet from 3 to 5 p.m. and the class loads have been large enough that Mrs. Morris now requires pre-registration.

She said she feels that more people would use herbs if they were aware of their value and of all their uses. She is particularly

concerned about exposing Afro-Americans to the dietary benefits of cooking with herbs.

"I'm hoping to get to my people, now," said Mrs. Morris. "I'm hoping to get to them so that I can show them ways to use herbs to substitute for a lot of the salt in their diets. I've had about 350 students, and I think that out of that 350, only four have been black."

Mrs. Morris grows herbs on a two-acre lot that she and her husband, Larry, own. They harvest the herbs, dry them and can them in jars in the shop. The herbs

grown in her garden are used to make decorations, vinegars, pot-pourri and herbal dyes. Little equipment is required for the processes, which Mrs. Morris said makes herbs an easy hobby for any one to take up. Unlike vegetables, herbs grow all year and can be grown in nearly any setting, Mrs. Morris said.

Mrs. Morris, whose motto is "Herbs are forever and for all," said that she sells her herbs to restaurants and to grocery stores. She conducts seminars for garden clubs and at the city's elderly high

rises. She currently is preparing for an "Herb Feast," which will be held July 15 to 16 at her shop, from 1 to 5 p.m.

"If you go back to slavery times, you'll find that all people used were herbs, and herbs are mentioned in the Bible," she said. "We're going to have an 'Herb Feast' which will expose people to herbs. There will be herbal foods, teas and drinks. It's just going to be an old-fashioned day with soap-making and basket-making. Herbs are becoming very popular."

Owning your own firm: Risky but rewarding

MILWAUKEE, Wis. -- Bill Dyson flirted with the idea of owning his own business for many years before taking the plunge in 1983. Armed with 30-plus years of experience as a lithographer and engraver, Dyson knew he had the technical background to be a success. But what about the intangibles? How do you get work orders? How do you win contracts? How do you compete with companies that have been around for 10, 20, 50 years?

"I saw a lot of other people taking the risk of going into business for themselves, but I have three daughters and two sons. My wife and I wanted to be sure we were providing a solid family support system for these kids. Going into business was risky business," Dyson said.

The attraction of trying his hand at being the boss overruled Dyson's sensibilities. First Edition Graphics is now established in St. Louis, Mo. It is a principal printing contractor, serving a variety of clients, large and small.

One of the companies First Edition Graphics services is the major brewer, Miller Brewing Co. with headquarters in Milwaukee, Wis.

"Miller is just about everything you want in an account. They set extremely high quality standards, which provides the challenge I welcome. And they have deadlines that are not flexible," Dyson notes.

Sometimes entrepreneurs need a nudge to act on their ideas. Dyson's nudge came when he attended a Miller-sponsored minority development workshop in 1983. The work-

shop proved beneficial in how to get started and in meeting other entrepreneurs in the St. Louis area.

While the workshop gave Dyson the spark he needed to establish his own business, clearly the success of his company during the last six years has been due to his own talent and persistence.

"A company in a highly competitive industry such as Miller cannot settle for less than high quality in its products. Therefore, its vendors must be top notch," said Dennis Madigan, corporate purchasing manager.

"If Miller is doing business with you, it's because you are able to produce on time and with consistent high quality," said Madigan.

A sign that Dyson passed the Miller muster is the fact that First Edition has supplied the brewer with printed material for more than five years. During that time, Dyson has specialized in point-of-purchase items that are distributed nationally.

"I've paid my dues, but I think I've been fortunate," said Dyson. "I believe in opportunities. Miller gave me an opportunity to prove to myself that I could do it."

"I believe the only way to learn is through people who can help you. There's no school you can go to that can teach you the kind of things you learn when you're running your own show. Miller has taught me so much," Dyson said.

Today, Dyson is an active member of the Minority Development Council of St. Louis, passing along to the younger Bill Dysons of the world what he has learned and



Bill Dyson checks the registration on a color job for Miller High Life point-of-sale material.

encouraging them to take the risk of opportunity.

"This is a lot of fun. It's challenging, but fun," he said.

Stouffer Winston Plaza joins other Stouffers to offer conference planning service

Stouffer Winston Plaza Hotel has joined 33 other Stouffer properties in offering a personalized, one-stop conference planning service called Meeting Express.

Meeting Express offers same-day confirmation if sessions are booked through an exclusive toll-free number, 1-800-USA-MEET, by noon Eastern Standard Time.

With one call to a representative at the Stouffer Central Reservations Office, the expert or the first-time meeting planner is able to conveniently book rooms, plan menus, and order audio-visual equipment.

If arrangements are called in by noon EST, Meeting Express coordinators at the hotel or resort where the session is scheduled will fax

confirmation of the meeting or send via next-day mail.

The service is specifically designed for short-notice conferences regardless of size or complexity.

Kim Dinsmoor, director of sales and marketing at the Stouffer Winston Plaza, said, "Within the past few years, Winston-Salem has

become a very popular city for meetings and conferences. Lead time is something that most meeting planners don't have the luxury of having, so the Meeting Express package is a tremendous help."

Meeting Express is available at 33 Stouffer properties throughout the continental United States, Hawaii, and the Caribbean.

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