



**ANDREA'S FINE HATS
& ACCESSORIES**

HAT HEADLINES

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Andrea, "Hat Lady".

A FINE HAT AFFAIR...MARK YOUR CALENDAR. Sunday, September 29, 2002, Martin's Crosswinds, Greenbelt, Md., 2:00 - 6:00 PM. Tickets \$50.00 with part of proceeds to the Arthritis Foundation, Washington. A small deposit reserves your seat.

HAT SHOW VS "HAT AFFAIR"...There is a difference, just ask one of our guests who has attended our annual celebration of the hat. For the first time the fashion spotlight will be on Andrea's Fine Hats Fall & Winter Collection. We are talking fantastic color, leather, fur felt, genuine fur hats, feathers and lots of dazzling rhinestones, ribbons and bows. I travel to designer showrooms around the world to gather this collection which features hats for all occasions as well as one-of-a-kind, and designer originals. The models, ladies & men, are our customers. There will be the annual presentation of the Top Hat Award, celebrities, music, entertainment, door prizes, fun and great discounts. It's more magic and fun than 4 hours can hold. And of course a delicious full course dinner by the award winning chefs of Martin's Crosswinds. Guests are encouraged to wear a hat. You must be there for the areas most talked about fashion and social event of the season. Reserve your tickets today. It won't take long for September to get here.

LAYAWAY - IT WORKS!

MOTHER'S & FATHER'S DAY...Are special days to honor and celebrate parents and others who have made a positive difference in our life. One way to say thank you is with a gift from Andrea's Fine Hats. Selecting a hat is easy. For ladies, hats generally come in one size. A little info on dress size, age and lifestyle will help assure the perfect gift. A hat gift for men is easy to. Look inside another hat for size, or try it on yourself. When you come into the shop, select a hat, try it, and compare fit. Again a little info on age, and lifestyle will nearly guarantee a perfect choice. One final word:

A GIFT CERTIFICATE ALWAYS FITS

PS: For your convenience we will ship your gift in time for the holiday.

HATSPITALITY... A WINNING TEAM..Is what I have around me each day and they are exceptional people. My staff enjoys working with you so you can wear your fine hat with all of the "hatitude" you deserve. They all are very knowledgeable about our products, wear hats in their personal lives, bring a wealth of experience and talent to you, and are members of local churches. Personalized service with courtesy and style is what we promise at Andrea's Fine Hats. Going the extra mile gives us the winning edge. We appreciate your business. Next time you're in be sure to say hi to: Dave Anderson, Sales Manager aka "Hat Master D", Juanita Caldwell, Alcatrina "Trina" Peterson, and Vondella (Von) Parker

IT'S CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN...This old saying refers to eggs, children and group sale of hats. Deaconess, ushers, missionaries, and special groups in, and, out of church very often want to be identified and recognized with a special hat in their color. Andrea's Fine Hats can do it all for you at a price you will want to pay. We'll also give you a tremendous selection of styles from which to choose on however many hats you need. A small deposit is all that's required. (Allow 2 to 6 weeks for delivery.)

MAJOR CHARGE CARDS ACCEPTED

INSIDE HAT HEADLINE

**WHAT COLOR IS YOUR
RAINBOW ?
POPULAR COLORS**

WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE

**HAT AFFAIR, SUNDAY,
SEPTEMBER 29, 2002**

WPFW AIR TO THE THRONE

**HATSPITALITY - COURTESY
HOSPITALITY**

FLAT HATS/PACKABLES

**GROUP SALES SPECIAL;
PRICE**

STAFF

HOURS

HAT CLEAN

COUPON

Editor/Publisher: Andrea G. Bray

Design/Layout : Maggie Bray

MaGrafix Design

Continue...

COLOR STRUCK...It seems like lightening hit and made all hats glow in rich hues of color. Hats 2002 is the year of colored hats for ladies & men. Name a color in the rainbow and you will find a matched hat. Ladies call it orange, men call it Ginger. Men call it Putty, ladies call it taupe. But color, by whatever name you call it, is beautiful. Red, shades of lilac, lavender and soft blue are popular but you will see rich hues of pink, corals, and kiwi (green) gently co-mingled. On the horizon look for turquoise, aqua, royal and rust to emerge strongly. Use color to your advantage making sure it compliments your complexion as well as your garment. WE HAVE PLENTY OF WHITE HATS IN STOCK FOR MOTHER'S DAY.

**HOURS: 10:00 - 6:00 PM
MONDAY - SATURDAY
CLOSED: MAJOR HOLIDAYS**

WPFW-FM, 89.3...Your "Hat Lady" is host to Saturdays "Andrea Bray Show", 4:00 - 7:00 PM, and 3 hours of the best in old school Rhythm & Blues. I inherited the full responsibility of the program from former host and radio legend Bobby Bennett. "The Burner" is now at XM Satalite Radio, Florida Ave. NE, where he entertains a nation. I'm having a great time with the show, and audience because "old school" is the music of my life too. I want you to tune in because WPFW is a listener and community supported station and depends upon people like you. See you at the Hat Store and talk to you on WPFW Radio!

**WATCH FOR OUR SATURDAY
SIDEWALK SALES
BARGAINS - BARGAINS - BARGAINS
\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$**

PACKABLES...nothing is better than a Flat Hat unless it's 2 or 3 Flat Hats. Other possibilities include RAFFIA straw hats for ladies & men. They are considered



"crushable" although I would avoid a "crush" if at all possible. Hats made of a new coated straw are also good on the road, air & sea. These hats are usually casual styles. Men's dress hats or ladies hats with elaborate trims should be carry-on in its on special box. A large shopping bag is also good because it can be placed under your seat. Come in and see other "Have hat will Travel" styles and happy vacation time to you.

WINTER ADVISORY...MEN bring your hat(s) in for a check-up.

**WE PROFESSIONALLY CLEAN,
BLOCK AND REPAIR HATS**

HATS & HEALTH...No matter what color your skin a hat on summer days will keep melanoma away. Simply said: a hat is added protection from the ill effects of intense summer sun and its consequence - skin cancer and wrinkles. Wearing a hat also keeps you cooler during the summer and increases protection for the eyes. Try a summer hat for your health, comfort and style.

WASHINGTON POST STYLE...Andrea's Fine Hats is honored to have been selected and featured as the premier hat store in the Greater Washington area with an article on Easter Hats, Thursday, March 28, 2002. I have included the article in this edition of Hat Headlines. Special thanks to our customers, staff and the Washington Post who made the story possible. Sincerely, Andrea

Crowning Glory

Church Ladies Want Fabulous Hats That Say a Lot -- and Say It Loud

By Ann Gerhart, Washington Post Staff Writer

Thursday, March 28, 2002; Page C01

Easter is coming, and the church ladies are bustling about Andrea's Fine Hats in Silver Spring, looking for some fabulous and flamboyant finery to settle atop their heads in glory to God. They are risen! — these towering creations of tulle and straw and rhinestones, topped with outrageous fountains of ostrich feathers or explosions of silk posies.

These hats are not for amateurs, who buy a bonnet but one time a year. These hats are for professionals, the women who had the handyman build a special closet to hold the hatboxes.

"When I put on the hat," says Martha McNeil, 76, as she angles a startling flying saucer of red and yellow over her gray curls, "I can feel the glowing spirit. I feel like running through streets and jumping through walls."

She turns her head and tilts her chin up. "James!" she commands, calling over to James Lewis, a church organist and middle school music teacher who has brought his mother and McNeil out on a spring shopping spree. He turns to look and whistles in his breath.

"Oh, a lotta sass up in there," he tells McNeil. "You saying something there."

And what the church lady says with her hattitude is this: I am a queen, and this is my crown. I am a proud black woman in my Sunday best, glorious for my Lord. I aim for you to notice, so the bigger the better. If you're hoping to see the altar, well, honey, don't sit behind me.

"It's all about looking fabulous," says Andrea Bray, the proprietress of Andrea's Fine Hats. "A hat designates status, position in the community and lifestyle. It bespeaks who you are. A hat gives you a feeling you are heads above the rest. You don't even have to say a word."

And sure enough, the instant Clynette Russell places a very edgy scarlet straw cloche atop her head, she is transformed. The hat has a high crown that peaks asymmetrically, and one side boasts a cluster of poppies and cherries.

In that moment, her sweat shirt and leather jacket seem to fade away, becoming like the velvet drape on an easel holding a masterpiece. Her neck lengthens. Her cheekbones sharpen. She extends one hand away from her crooked elbow, as if carrying a tiny purse. The other hand, fingers extended, floats just off her cheek. She unconsciously levitates onto the balls of her feet, even though she is wearing scuffed flats instead of fine pumps. Smiling, she swivels back and forth through the crowded shop. The other customers stop and coo, and sales manager Dave Anderson crows, "Look how she walks! Look how she walks! She is working it."

Russell, who is 47 and lives in Fort Washington, already has purchased a few hundred dollars' worth of bonnets -- a wide peach lid with lace and pearls and a stylish sculpted sky-blue straw trimmed with chiffon, both still in the running to be the new hat on her head at Pilgrim Baptist Church in Northeast Washington on Sunday.

Her husband, James, who has selected a pair of nice fedoras for himself, watches her and beams. "See, she's already found what she wants," he says, as his wife prances through the shop, trying this and that. "She's playing now."

The beginning of the story is in the Apostle Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 11, Verse 5: "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head; for that is even all one as if she were shaven."

Theologically, there is great disputation about this particular passage, and whether it should be interpreted as biblical dictum on the subservience of women. For the particular niche of observant women who frequent hat shops like Bray's, the answer to that debate can be taken in with one swift glance.

In many stricter sects, the Christian head covering is simple -- plain gauze caps for the Amish, for example. But simplicity has no business being on the head of a black church lady of a certain mature age. Inside Andrea's Fine Hats, millinery by Chapeau Creations of Cincinnati and Jack McConnell and Eric Javits is shouting from the walls.

Here is a hat of dove-gray satin, glistening and ruched and looking like it was squeezed out of a wide-tipped pastry bag. Here is a crownless brim of purple sequins, an ostrich fireworks display anchored with a pearl brooch. Nearby, a wide-brimmed swoop of navy and lime straw with rhinestones swirls together like soft-serve custard. Here is a hat an Argentine cowboy could love, if he fancied his basic black overlaid by ornate silver brocade. Here is a turquoise bowl entirely drenched in silk petals, Esther Williams's swim cap gone glam. Outrageous and incredible, evoking carnival and showgirl, the hats could have been made by parade-float designers.

There's a lot of history under such hats, says Craig Marberry, a Greensboro, N.C., writer who wrote the oral histories accompanying Michael Cunningham's rich photographs in "Crowns: Portraits of Black Women in Church Hats."

The flamboyant interpretation of Paul's proclamation derives from African traditions and American sociology.

"Many [cultures] believe that the head houses all wisdom. The head is the entry and exit point for the spirit and deserves special adornment," says Marberry, pointing to gaily colored African headwraps, festooned with dung and mud and grass, and intricate braids, "really eye-catching styles." Slave women would wrap their hair in bandannas, then trim them with wildflowers.

"After slavery and emancipation, as the black middle class began to emerge," says Marberry, "a fancy hat was the easiest way to symbolize being on one's feet. The fancier the hat, the more significance for the working class. And through civil rights, women like Dorothy Height and Coretta Scott King were protesting in their hats." Efforts might be made to dehumanize them, but there they were, heads held high, as the police circled. They were ladies.

Such ladies have kept fashion millinery alive in America almost single-handedly.

Aldo Hats is an upstate New York manufacturer that turns out 800,000 hats a year in four fashion lines, Jack McConnell included. Aldo partner Ramon Moreno says most of the firm's customers are black church ladies, and they don't want small. No, they favor a wide-load brim that can angle off the face, in colors like lime, fuchsia, tangerine.

"After 9/11, things were not so good," says Moreno, "but in the last six or seven weeks, demand is terrific again."

The tradition may die out in the next few decades, Marberry predicts. Just as the Sixties bouffant and beehive finished off hat-wearing in society at large, thick braids and elaborate updos are the crowning glory for younger black women, who go to church bareheaded. They don't want to mess up their hair. They have not been raised to feel they must not set foot in church without a hat on their heads. They have not, in the words of Marberry, "arrived." Carrying off eye-popping head wear demands a certain maturity and self-satisfaction.

Marberry's grandfather was a preacher in the Church of God in Christ, where the women are the unquestionable monarchs of the big church hat.

"There are three sizes -- large, larger and 'Why'd you have to sit in front of me,'" says Marberry, laughing. He recalls a recent denomination convocation in Memphis attended by 30,000 women. One lady took 14 hats for the six-day event. "She said she couldn't be seen in the same hat twice."

Competition can be intense and not always sisterly. Bray says some of her customers won't pass her business cards around at their churches, preferring to keep their source secret. "It may not be very Christian thing to do," she says, "but it's a very lady thing to do."

"I know I can come here," says regular customer Vondelia Parker, 55, of Silver Spring, who attends Randall Memorial Baptist Church in Northeast Washington, "and I'll get a hat I will not see on anyone else."

Every woman in the hat sorority can talk and talk, and they cluster in the shop to get the personal regard reminiscent of a merchandising style all but gone.

Now Martha McNeil, she has collected so many hats over the years that she has four custom-built shelves, and still stashes more hatboxes under the bed. "Don't make me count," she chides.

"The funnier it is, the better it is," she says, describing her particular style. "I put it on for me. I do it to suit me."

She wears the hat to Second Baptist Church, but she takes it off when she sits down to the piano to accompany the gospel group. Oh, she has someone designated to hold the hat for her," says her friend James Lewis, and McNeil chuckles. Hat etiquette is elaborate like that.

"You do not touch the hat -- never, never, never," says Parker.

"And even if the spirit overcomes you," adds Bray, "the hat never leaves the head."

The two demonstrate the "hat kiss," which requires both wearers to lean in, heads cocked at opposing angles, mouths puckering into perfumed air. This permits an exchange of affection beneath brims wide as washtubs.



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A former news broadcaster who now hosts a Saturday music show on WPFW-FM, Bray talked herself into the New York showroom of designer Eric Javits one day in the mid-'80s -- and got a little carried away.

"I came home with a dozen hats and almost \$1,000 on my credit card, and I told my husband I would sell the hats to the ladies at Metropolitan Baptist, which, of course, I did not. But I was the best-dressed lady for a year," she says.

A few years later, she quit her job, took her severance pay and indulged her lifelong love of hats with a plunge into retailing. Her shop on Eastern Avenue is wedged among a beauty shop and an Ethiopian bakery, "a destination location," she calls it, where church ladies will plunk down anywhere from \$50 to \$500 for an exotic creation.

And sure enough, here comes Rachel Carey, on a first visit. Her husband, Alfred, the pastor at First New Grove Missionary Baptist on Benning Road, has brought her here. Elegant in a maroon wool coat and coordinating suit and pumps, Carey is hatless today, but there are some 50 confections in the special hat closet back home in Upper Marlboro.

"Ooooo, honey," she says to her husband, "this is the wrong place. I'm like a kid in a candy store. I could take all of them."

"No," says the reverend, "it's the right place, but you got to get a job."

Carey fixes her eyes on Parker, who visits the shop every week to "set my Saturday," before she goes to the grocery store and does the laundry and visits the nursing home. Parker has brought in her coral silk Harve Bernard suit, to make sure it

coordinates with the immense, stunning coral hat with the white-spotted brim she intends to wear on Easter. And it's a magnificent match. She likes to take a new hat home and hide it away until Sunday, when she will descend the stairs as her husband, Charles, awaits in the living room.

"I like to see the expression on his face," says Parker, who will act like a bride on her wedding day, even though she has five grandchildren, including a 5-year-old girl who loves to play with her hats. For now, she puts it on, and she holds the suit jacket to her face, and she feels pretty.

All the women in the hat shop squeal in delight.

"Oh!" says Carey. "That is the hat. That is the hat."

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