

GLOBE AND MAIL

NEWSPAPER ■ FOUNDED 1844 ■ GLOBEANDMAIL.COM ■ SATURDAY, MAY 15, 2004

THE GLOBE AND MAIL
SATURDAY, MAY 15, 2004

G

\$12 for a new you and an old Joan Rivers

**Leanne
Delap**



It's like going to the CNE: You walk around and pick up information and goodies in a bag," says Barbara, 53, who works at a law firm east of the city. She's talking about the carnival atmosphere at the New You show, a three-day bazaar devoted to what is euphemistically called "anti-aging." Barbara, like most of the people interviewed for this article, still feels plastic surgery is something you do on the down low. She had a face-lift after attending last year's show, but has not told her family. "People in this city are ready to have things done, but they're not ready to talk about it," she says, even as American reality shows are carving up volunteers all over the airwaves and making the transformed creatures parade in beauty contests.

Toronto's New You show,

which kicked off its third year yesterday at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, is the only consumer show of its kind. About 20,000 people are expected to shell out \$12 to cruise the more than 200 booths offering various pricey panaceas to the local boomer market. There are yoga, dance and fitness shows, and lots of makeup and skincare displays, but the big draws are the people who jab, fill, cut and paste: the plastic surgeons and dermatologists.

"These are very focused people," says Ann Kaplan, founder of the show. "They've gone through the show guides, they've planned which seminars they want to attend." Ms. Kaplan also owns a business called Medicard, which provides financing for cosmetic procedures, so she has some idea of who her audience is. "About 75 per cent are women, aged 25 to 55. These are people who generally don't want to go too far. They just want to look a little fresher," she says. At 44, she has indulged in a bit of Botox and lip-plumping herself.

"The people coming to the show are not socialites," she says. "These are real people. The aver-

age income of the consumer who applies for financing is \$40,000."

A lucky few (all prescreened and preselected from physicians' existing practices) will get work done on the demo stages — if they're willing to have their pores blown up supersize and their faces stuck with needles live via broadcast on screens around the room.

Julie Kelsey, 57, is a meeting planner who lives at Yonge and St. Clair. She is going to have Botox injected at the show, as well as have her lips done and permanent eyebrows applied. She is fine with using her last name because she's not new to the surgery game: She had a face-lift two years ago, in front of CFTO news cameras.

"The only bad part was when they made me go into the operating room three times so they could get the shot from different angles," she recalls.

Ms. Kelsey is bringing along a friend, Priscilla Burry, a 29-year-old editorial assistant who lives in Toronto's east end. Ms. Burry feels she is too young for most of the surgical procedures, but she "wants to know more, and wants to plan ahead. There are lots of ways to prevent aging before it

happens."

Lisa, 44, works in manufacturing in North York. She went to the first New You show two years ago and has since had Botox and collagen injected into her "nasolabial folds and oral commissures" (the wrinkles that run from nose to mouth and the ones that run below the mouth, respectively). Like many modern consumers, she addresses her body parts by their clinical names.

She goes to the show to aggressively pursue advice and find answers to her questions. The thrill, she says, is that "real people have access to the same things movie stars do."

If you've ever tried to get an appointment with a dermatologist, you'll know that the opportunity to get up close and personal with one of the city's superstars is probably worth the \$12 entry fee. Fred Weksberg is a dermatologist with a busy practice near North York General Hospital. He gives demos and seminars on behalf of various manufacturers.

"We are inundated with questions," says Dr. Weksberg, who is used to people at parties asking about their moles. He is happy for the opportunity, he says, to offer

"real, specific and accurate medical information" about cosmetic procedures. He says he gets "dozens" of new clients from the booth.

"This field is growing in leaps and bounds. I'm a baby boomer myself. We act young, and we want to look young." Dr. Weksberg himself gets Botoxed regularly.

Despite the carnival atmosphere, everyone takes things seriously, says Debra, 45, who works in financial services and lives in Lawrence Park. She has had Botox and Restylane injections. "The show makes people take the procedures more seriously. The doctors were careful to explain everything was not appropriate for everyone. And no one shied away from side effects."

The show will climax tonight with a live talk from the 21st-century poster granny for plasticity, Joan Rivers. You gotta hand it to the organizers: By choosing to present the scariest possible example of human reconstruction (outside of cat-faced socialite Jocelyn Wildenstein or Orlan, the French surgery art project), they've stolen my punch line.

ldelap@globeandmail.ca