

Mall offers opportunities for grads

By BONNIE LANGFORD
Staff Writer

Post Oak Mall has just celebrated its second anniversary. Besides providing a place for Aggies to shop, it has also increased the job market for A&M graduates. Two former students who have found careers at the mall are Cindy Brannen and Richard Reynolds.

A mall is a pretty big job for a marketing director; however the job gets more demanding when the mall has 106 stores in it; and even tougher if the person responsible for the job is fresh out of college.

Cindy Brannen, a May '83 journalism graduate from Texas A&M, has taken that challenge, and turned it into an exciting career.

Brannen is the marketing director for Post Oak Mall, and being an Aggie may have helped her get the job.

"I didn't really interview when I graduated, because I

was getting married and didn't know where my husband would get a job," she says. "I started working for Culpepper Properties, which has four smaller shopping centers. A friend of mine told me about this job, and I applied."

Brannen says that CBL and Associates, the Chattanooga based company that owns Post Oak, usually promotes within the company, but they liked the idea of having someone local doing the job.

"When I brought in that A&M degree, several people teased me about being an Aggie, but they were happy to have someone local," she says. It helped make the mall more community based.

"I heard about the job, didn't know if that was the job for me, but I knew the description fit what I wanted," she says. "I was lucky, because a lot of people go through three or four jobs before they find one they want."

Brannen says that practical projects completed while in college helped her get the job.

"All of those projects I did in college were the main reason I got the job," Brannen says. "I had many things to show them even though I didn't have any professional experience."

What Brannen says she enjoys most is working with the community.

"I used to think it would be just like being in school," she says, "but it is so different. There's an entire different community out here that's not related to A&M."

Though students make up a large part of the mall's customers, she says, Post Oak is a regional mall and many shoppers come from the nearby towns.

She says that one of her biggest fears was thinking of special events to have at the mall.

After three months of working for the mall, Brannen hasn't run out of ideas yet. The special

event she is most proud of is the country mall walk sale.

"I decided to give it a theme — more fun and festivities," she says. Her theme for the event, 'A little bit of country.'

She rounded up some antique farm equipment, four big pieces, and decided something else was needed. So then came hay, and then fresh apples and Indian corn.

To top off the event, she decided on evening entertainment provided by local fiddlers.

"We had down-home contests to give away gift certificates," she says. "Those were jalepeno eating, hog calling, horseshoe throwing and arm wrestling."

Ideas from other malls also have helped her stay out of tight spots.

"It's a big compliment when another mall copies your idea," Brannen says.

One of her ideas has been recognized as a good idea by the company; she has started

publishing a professional bi-monthly newsletter.

"They had been doing a newsletter that was typed in the office and then xeroxed," she says, "but I had experience with graphics, and wanted to have it typeset and professionally printed."

The compliment Brannen is most proud of came from the president of CBL and Associates shortly after she started working for them.

"After my first promotional, I sent the marketing information to the main office," she says, "because our sales for the mall walk sale were up 50 percent from last year. During the president's opening speech for the company's marketing conference, he mentioned my promotional. I was really excited that the president noticed what I had done."

Brannen says that her job often is hectic, with different promotions each week, but the work is fun.

Cover model sought

By LAURI REESE
Staff Writer

Seventeen magazine wants a special cover model, so department stores all over the country — like Dillard's in Post Oak Mall — are coordinating contests to find her.

Dillard's already has selected 12 young women from over 50 contestants to participate in a fashion show March 31st at 2 p.m. in the mall entrance to Dillard's.

They will be judged at the show by a panel of eight including Gerri Helpin, who owns a modeling agency in Houston, and the Dillard's photographer.

The judges are looking for the girl with that "special something," someone pretty, innocent, athletic, leggy and fairly tall, Lori Grassman, the coordinator for the Dillard's contest, says.

They want someone who photographs well, carries herself well and projects the "Seventeen look," she says.

Contestants must be from 13 to 21 years old.

The winner of the March 31st contest will go on to compete on a national level.

In the national competition, young women from all over the country will be judged purely on the basis of the photographs they submit.

Three of the Brazos Valley semi-finalists are Texas A&M students.

Senior Maribeth Creasy, 21, says she was very surprised when she came back to her apartment after Spring Break and found a letter on the table saying she was a semi-finalist.

She wasn't dressed teeny bopper or young, which is the look Seventeen usually tries to portray, she says.

Creasy, a psychology major, says she just entered the contest for the "grins of it" and even if she doesn't win the top prize, she believes she already has won because she tried.

You can't go in expecting to be number one, you just have to put your best foot forward, Creasy says, and nobody really loses in a contest like this unless her hopes are too high.

Creasy says what she really wants out of the contest is local recognition and experience.

She says that during the past year she has often thought about modeling, and this is her chance to do it. If the results are good she will think about pursuing the career further when she graduates in December, but right now she just wants to concentrate on school, Creasy says.

Sheila Etheredge, a sophomore business major, was a model for the Kim Dawson Modeling Agency in Dallas for two years.

She has modeled in ads for Dillard's and Joske's, for the Foley's Christmas Catalog, for Sanger Harris, Zales and other stores.

Etheredge says she really liked the modeling, but felt like she was missing something by not going to school full-time.

"I wanted to see what else was available to me," she says.

Etheredge says her age is not a disadvantage in the Seventeen contest.

"I'm 21 but I don't look it," she says. "I look young and I can make myself look younger."

Katherine Cooper, 19, also acknowledges that looking young is an important part of being a Seventeen model.

For the preliminary contest, Cooper wore a pastel, pleated mini-skirt, a white T-shirt, a

peach sweater, peach hose, white bobby socks and white jazz shoes.

She says she has always been interested in modeling and even took a series of classes at a modeling school in Houston.

Cooper, a sophomore, was on the Sakowitz Team Board in 1981.

She says her boyfriend set up a studio in his apartment to take the photographs she needed for this contest.

Each contestant was required to submit four photographs and model on a runway in front of the judges.

Prizes for all 12 semi-finalists have not been announced. Among other prizes, the winner will receive a \$300 photo opportunity with the Dillard's photographer, Grassman says.

The grand prize winner of the national contest will appear on the magazine cover of the September issue of Seventeen and will receive a new car.

The other seven national finalists will win an all-expense-paid trip to New York in May for special photography sessions and hair and makeup styling. They will be featured inside the magazine.

The contest is being coordinated through 28 department store groups nationwide, including Dillard's, Foley's, Sanger Harris and Dayton's.

Company keeps mall green

By JILL GOLDEN
Reporter

Four times a week a crew of 10 workers, most of them Texas A&M horticulture majors, heads out to Post Oak Mall intent on clipping, pruning, mowing, watering, and fertilizing.

The Greenery, a Bryan landscaping company, is under contract to refurbish Post Oak Mall's \$165,000 worth of trees and shrubs, both inside and out.

David Brochu, a manager at The Greenery, says that in the first month of the firm's year-long contract, the crew has been replacing and repairing many of the interior

plants that previously had not been properly cared for.

A big problem with maintaining the plants indoors is the poor lighting, he says, and another problem is the water. The company uses a de-ionizing unit to water the plants, he says.

Replacing plants is costly—up to \$100 for a single tree—so The Greenery uses inexpensive plants such as ivies and ficus trees, Brochu says.

Post Oak Mall has about 480 trees and 700 shrubs on its grounds surrounding the mall and about 1400 plants ranging from small ivies to 40-foot trees decorating the mall.



Photo by MIKE DAVIS

Post Oak Mall has a jungle of lush plants year-round. The Greenery has been employed to make sure these plants continue to thrive.