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PLE

# Knock at the Door, Return as a New Woman

New mobile hair salon gives door-to-door service.

By Jennifer Kwan  
Gainesville Post-Examiner

A black 20-foot former recreational camper sits in the parking lot behind Enterprise on Duke Street. It has been converted into the Nirvana mobile hair salon on wheels complete with a shampoo bowl, two hair dryer stations and two salon chairs plus a waiting area. Clippers are wedged in wall racks along with mirrors, flat irons, gel and hair spray.

## PEOPLE AT WORK

They're Lani Knorrnschild and her driver, Alycia Gomez. Lani Knorrnschild has driven from Del Ray to get her regular wedge cut and Ah! Natural hair color. Although Rubie D. Williams, known as Ms. Rubie, often drives to a customer's home on request, Knorrnschild explains the needs of Del Ray are too narrow for the van. She says she has been coming to Ms. Rubie for probably 25 years and when Ms. Rubie decided to open her mobile hair busi-

ness, Knorrnschild followed her. "I just let her go. She makes it work for me. My mother says her too."

Ms. Rubie says she got the idea a couple of years ago when one of her regular customers moved to Gainesville and asked Ms. Rubie if she would be willing to come out there to do her hair. "It was a long way but I did it for her because it was always possible to leave some of my supplies at home or in her house. So she told me I should do a mobile hair salon." Ms. Rubie says that although she had to go to customers who can't get out with everything she needs.

Ms. Rubie remembers the first started out parking her van at the old Paddock parking lot. People would beep and honk and look. "Now it's a daily event."

Now Ms. Rubie travels from Addison to Marysville to Klagenfurt to the Farmer's Market at Commons Station and a lot of places in between. She says it is mostly the teachers at Marysville where she goes once a month. They send out a notice when she will be in the parking lot, and customers sign up for appointments. "We'll be there again Sept. 28. I received the bridesmaid/ hair list a wedding on Robinson Island in May."

Her assistant, Alycia Gomez, also recalls a baby shower and a 9-year-old's birthday



Lani Knorrnschild has come in for her regular cut and color. She says she has been coming to Ms. Rubie for about 25 years and when Ms. Rubie opened her mobile hair salon, Knorrnschild followed her there.



Lashell Washington inspects the back of her hair after her cut. She says she just tells Ms. Rubie to trim it where it needs it.

party for seven children where they did haircuts and nails for the girls. "The girls were all crowded in here with their relatives and everyone was having a great time." She says the girls mostly wanted their hair sprayed color. Gomez says she has been a hairdresser at various salons for 25 years and has been working with Ms. Rubie since she opened her mobile salon.

Ms. Rubie added, "People want change. Colors are trendy right now. A lot of people of all ages are getting in purple. Others like highlights. I guess colors make people happy." Ms. Rubie explains that hair is popular now although barrettes often stay pretty much the same but they just add a different twist. "Honey eyes are cool."

Lashell Washington from Alexandria would fit in among the other clients for today's hair session "and don't cut me much off. I just will let it trim it where it needs it." Ms. Rubie pulls out a pair of clippers and works around the edges, fluffing up the top as she goes straight up on the sides

several times. Washington will be in a few weeks for highlights. She says averages every two weeks for one of her treatments. Ms. Rubie hands her instruction manual "Want to see what I did the back?"

Ms. Rubie says it wasn't easy getting out for her new location. "I went to get but they didn't know what to do. I didn't fit any category." It wasn't a stretch to drive wasn't a rule that fit business. "The manager of getting was a no-no." He told one of his employees to be a rule "because this woman is trying to be a business."

The first appointment is 8:30 a.m. on a busy day she will work until 5 p.m. She drives her mobile van on 5 days, Thursdays and every other Saturday and Fridays "in an emergency Knorrnschild added, "I'm around the drive that thing."

People at Work is a weekly column featuring people in our community doing their best suggestions by email to [info@plaza.com](mailto:info@plaza.com)

Ms. Rubie, owner/hair-stylist at Hair Nirvana mobile hair salon on wheels with her assistant, Alycia Gomez.



Photos by Jennifer Kwan/  
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