

Close shave for Nova students

There is a new course being given at the Nova Career Centre this year. It's called barbering, with the emphasis on administering haircuts to black men.

Dan Rosenburg

"We've never run this course before," said Stéphanie Tremblay, co-ordinator of Nova's hairdressing program. "It's an attempt to promote the art of barbering and bring the community together," she explained.

"The 12-week program is unique to Nova and is not offered elsewhere," she continued. "Often regular barbers cannot service black clients and I thought that was terrible. Here our students learn all aspects of cutting, extensions, styling and straightening."

The teacher is William Bennett, who goes by the pseudonym of "Mark the Barber." He spe-



Hairdressing coordinator Stéphanie Tremblay of Nova Career Centre watches student Trevor Lawson give mannequin a trim. - Photos Dan Rosenburg



Barbering teacher William Bennett, alias Mark the Barber, left, shows technique to Nova Career Centre student Kevin Queenland.

cializes in cutting 'Afrocentric' hair, a term coined by Bennett's wife Kereen.

Although the course is offered two nights a week from 6-8 p.m., Tremblay says a shorter module is available during the day. "I like the fact that this course is multi-ethnic and I hope this course will be ongoing," she voiced.

Student Kevin Queenland said that his mother owns a beauty salon school for women in Côte des Neiges "but, other than Nova, there is nothing on barbering anywhere."

Roxane Walsh and her husband, a native of the Dominican Republic, are both taking the course. "My husband was having a hard time finding a barbershop for his own hair, so that inspired us to start our own multi-ethnic place on the West Island," she said.

Shani Lowther, a home-care worker, decided to change careers and try her hand at barbering. "I've always liked cutting hair," she noted.

Trevor Lawson said he "always had an affinity for cutting hair. I did it for my sons," he recalls, "and I was always searching for a course. Most courses concentrate on hair but spend very little time on actual barbering." A field service technician for Loto-Quebec, he says this could be "a possible career change for me."

"There is a lack of barbers downtown," says Adam Herscu. "I was looking for a course like this but couldn't find one. Then I saw an ad for this course in a community newspaper, and that was it."

The course ends on Oct. 27, at which time Tremblay is hoping to start up a new group. Anyone wishing more information can call her at 450.691.2540.

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The students, who come to Chateauguay from as far away as Huntingdon and the West Island, practise on dummies or hairpieces, working on tapering, mid-fade and high-fade, Bennett explained. "I also teach how to trim beards," he said, "lining hair and outlines."

"Everybody taking this course (currently eight students) is so focused and concentrated," marvelled Tremblay, who is also a full-time hairdressing teacher in addition to coordinating the administrative assistant, accounting and hair-

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