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A Cut Above

by Claire Pancerz

Clever and Talented, Paul Neinast Believes In His Community.

PAUL NEINAST, DALLAS HAIRSTYLIST EXTRAORDINAIRE, IS PROBABLY BEST KNOWN AS THE owner of a successful salon and a master of color and style. However, you may not be aware that there is more to this man than scissors and a comb suggest. Although he has an international reputation as a stylist, Neinast is not a man who is content merely to rest on his laurels. As 1991 moves into 1992, he is involved in a number of fulfilling projects guaranteed to expand him personally and professionally.

For starters, he has agreed to chair 1992's suicide prevention gala. "When I was asked to chair this, I really had to think whether I was able to make a commitment to it," says Neinast. "The thing that really got me was seeing the statistics on suicide and realizing how many people's lives have been touched by it. We want to take this and pull it out of the closet." Supported by a network of socially active friends, Neinast is looking forward to a successful event. "I'd like for this to stay exclusive, with about 1,000 people invited," he says. The gala, a black tie affair, is to be held in the Morton Meyerson in the fall and will feature "a celebrity the caliber of Jennifer Holliday, Tina Turner or Harry Connick, Jr." After the performance, guests will be treated to dinner and dancing.

Competition from other organizations for an increasingly small number of charity dollars has the hairdresser on the alert and organized. He hopes to have all committees set firmly by

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the first of 1992, with underwriting in place before the beginning of summer. Neinast would also like to see a spring kick-off of awareness for the event, beginning perhaps with donations from his salon — a certain amount of money from each hair cut and blow dry for a specific period of time would be earmarked for the event.

"What this gala will do," Neinast says, "is provide us with funds to raise the level of suicide awareness, as well as funding for crisis center/counseling." One idea he proposes is to send counselors to all elementary, junior high and high schools in the area with the message that there are other options besides suicide. "This strongly affects people 25 and under," he says. "We need to make a circle around the schools so that children and teenagers can have crucial information on suicide prevention."

Chairing the upcoming gala is not the hairdresser's first brush with charity work. In 1980, he chaired a cystic fibrosis gala in Dallas that was a huge success. "I was told later that we raised the most money ever raised in the state of Texas had for cystic fibrosis," says Neinast. However, he doesn't limit his good works to high-profile functions. "We do things all the time for associations that benefit multiple sclerosis, leukemia, etc. It's one of those things that make you feel

good. Besides,

when you've really been blessed, why not give when you have the opportunity?"

Another reason Neinast feels so strongly about this is the sense of community he finds

in Dallas. "I like living in Dallas," he says. "I grew up here and I really like it. I've been halfway around the world and back, and have stayed in cities like Paris, London and Rome long enough to know whether or not I'd like to live there. While I love Europe, I don't want to live there. That's what I mean by a sense of community. We've got a whole network of people helping each other here." And his commitment to community doesn't end with his own involvement. In what must surely be the best application of a trickle-down theory, each stylist in Neinast's salon is involved with a different charity, from AIDS to cancer prevention.

On the strictly business side of things, Neinast will be kept equally busy in 1992. His original salon moved earlier this year to a location in the Crescent, where his staff includes a Hungarian facialist, a facialist who specializes in permanent cosmetics (eyebrows, eyeliner, lip line, skin camouflaging, etc.), two manicurists, seven hairdressers and three makeup artists. He is currently training seven stylists to be placed in the planned Neinast II, a second, less expensive salon featuring the "Neinast quality and Neinast know-how." He also is developing a 12-piece product line to debut next August or September. As if that weren't enough, he'd like to build two other salons (one in 1993) and Neinast also has plans to come out with his own skincare and cosmetics lines. "I've got the ability, now I'd just like to make it a reality," says Neinast, happily contemplating all that his future holds. ☐

