

The buzz on her beehive

Baltimore's HonFest celebrates hairdo and more

BY KRIS CORONADO

Sitting in a salon chair, Elliana Fetsko looks at herself in the mirror and nods approvingly at the towering updo hairdresser Sue Ebert has assembled atop her head. "I feel like a princess, hon," Fetsko says. "I'm a Hon. I'm a queen with my hair like this. This is an art form." Indeed, the foot-tall beehive is a stunner. It will also be the crux of the 60-year-old's look when she participates in Baltimore's HonFest on June 8 and 9 (between Roland Avenue and 36th Street, honfest.net).

Created by Cafe Hon owner Denise Whiting 20 years ago, the annual festival honors a brash, bold, beehived working-class Baltimore woman of days gone by. Nicknamed a "Hon," the larger-than-life female archetype was immortalized in the 1988 John Water's film "Hairspray," which later became a Broadway musical.

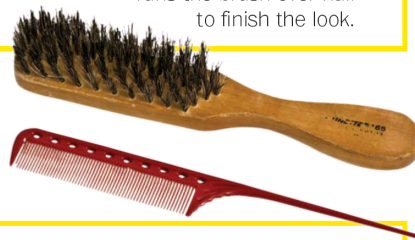
For one weekend each year, that image is brought to life when Fetsko, a retired human resources specialist, and approximately 40,000 attendees descend on Baltimore's Hampden neighborhood. The event features a pageant for the best Hon, a title that Fetsko, now a judge, won in 2007. Here, Fetsko and Ebert, who styles hundreds of beehives during the festival, offer pointers on how to make the perfect Hon hairstyle.



The tackier the better when it comes to accessories such as flowers and bows. "It's all about glitz and bling and more glitz and more bling," Ebert says. She adds **bees** by twisting yellow and black pipe cleaners and securing them with bobby pins.

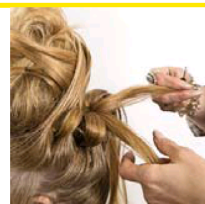
Ebert uses 42 **bobby pins** in Fetsko's beehive. Ebert estimates she and her team of four to six stylists go through 15 pounds of pins on those who stop by the festival's Glamour Lounge, where visitors can get that Hon look (\$20).

Before starting the updo, Ebert uses a **boar bristle brush** on dry hair to create shine; the brush takes oils from the scalp and pulls it through hair. "That's what gives you your luster." Once the beehive is complete, Ebert runs the brush over hair to finish the look.



A **rattail comb** is essential, Ebert says. The comb "rats," or teases, the hair at the back section on the top of Fetsko's head, creating a foundation for the 'do. The comb's tail lets Ebert pick at the hair to style it.

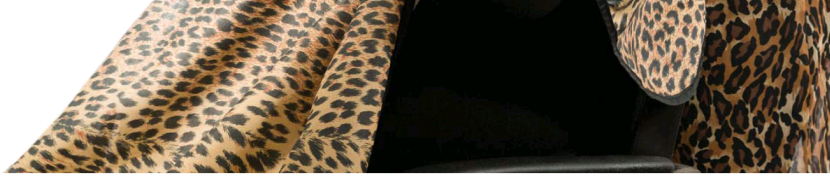
After teasing the base, Ebert wraps smooth sections of hair around it, securing them in place with hairspray and bobby pins. At the bottom of the beehive, Ebert adds more pizzazz by looping tendrils and securing them with bobby pins. "It's called a **barrel curl**," she says.



Fetsko bought this **rhinestone flamingo bracelet** from a vendor at last year's HonFest. "I've got a flamingo outfit I'm wearing this year," she says. "It takes a whole year to get the ensemble together."

Cat-eye glasses, a popular accessory in the '50s and '60s, give further authenticity to a Hon look. Fetsko estimates she has at least 17 pairs.





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