

Shelly Craig is a real "DILLY"

by Eydie Fenton Weiser, Signal American

If you've ever met Shelly Craig you would no doubt agree that she's a "dilly". The Midvale hairdresser, wife of a local excavator, mother of two young, active daughters, coach of the local high school girls volleyball team, organizer of fund raisers for the local pool... well the list could go on and on. However, Shelly may soon become most famous for her own "Dillys" in jars.



With a little coaxing from her good friend, Erin Whitener, and an old family recipe for dilled asparagus and beans that Shelly helped her mother can while growing up in Indian Valley, "Dillys" hit the market this year.

"This started out as a hobby and has gone pounds of asparagus and it was all sold by the beans came on. I bought all the beans Fruitland had and went and picked the demand." Through her research Shelly nervous she might be over doing it when She's now up to 35 cases and wishes she



bananas," said Shelly. "I canned 120 August. I had orders for the beans before States Produce and the Produce Barn in everybody's extra beans to keep up with found the jars and lids and was a little she placed her first order for 24 cases. had ordered more.



Utilizing her computer, Shelly created her unique label that features a picture of Midvale taken by Midvale Telephone's camera atop Midvale Hill. "It's all pretty labor intensive," Shelly admitted. "For the hours I have to put in I'm not making much profit. But I think it could become a money maker. Dillys were first offered to the public at Midvale Market, States Produce in Weiser and the Produce Barn in Fruitland.

When Cycle Oregon rolled through Midvale in late August, Shelly had her chance to test market her Dillys to a large audience. With her promotional sign professing their home-made goodness, and samples to taste, Shelly sold six cases of Dillys Hot N' Spicy Dilled Green Beans and Hot N' Spicy Dilled Asparagus. "I was in Midvale most of the afternoon and then went to Cambridge to sell some jars to those who did not want to pack the Dillys on to Cambridge," said Shelly. "When I got there they were all there and ready to buy them. They were all in a line by the pay phone waiting for me to show up." The exposure from Cycle Oregon has led to what could be a big break in the future growth of Dillys.



"One lady who came through gave her name to me and said she had connections with markets in Ketchum and Sun Valley. 'Those people would eat that stuff alive,' she said. Not long, after I received a call from one of the merchants there who said 'if she gave your name to us it must be good stuff you have. She doesn't send just anybody our way'".

Another humorous incident that evening occurred when Shelly's friends Ardis and Craig Boll, and Angie and Mike Campbell, were serving as security at the beer garden in Cambridge. They told Shelly that one of the visitors coming into the beer garden said to them, "Have you guys tasted these?" while holding up a jar of Shelly's asparagus. They assured him they had, many times at friends' potlucks where Shelly is always asked to bring her dilled delicacies.

Anytime Shelly has a chance she combs the specialty market shelves in search of home-spun products such as her Dillys. She found one other home brand while on the Oregon Coast and decided to put them to a taste test against her own. With 20 people on hand to participate, Shelly's Dillys were the hands-down favorite.



"I could just stay small," said Shelly of her new venture. "But why? There's a whole world out there."