

## FRESH LADY

The Shutan Camera & Video Shop in Chicago, Illinois.

Ms. Joan McMuetry

"There used to be a lot of camera shops in Chicago but many of them have been forced to close down or operate on a reduced scale on account of excessive competition," said a representative of a Japanese manufacturer who has been stationed in the U.S. for a long time. In fact the writer saw only two or three camera shops as he walked through the streets of Chicago which are lined mostly with shoe and clothing stores and discount shops.

As chance would have it, I came across a small camera shop right in front of the hotel where I stayed and looked in. What struck my eyes was a full array of cheap price tags that one would have difficulty converting into Japanese yen. The havoc which the cheap dollar and high yen had created was worse than what I had heard.

Through the good offices of Fuji Photo Film U.S.A. I was able to visit an old established shop in Chicago called "Shutan Camera & Video". Since it was founded in downtown Chicago's business section in 1918 as a photo shop, its main line has been cameras, but it is also doing mail-order business and is handling video products, astronomical telescopes, and so forth.

According to Mr. Scott Shutan, third-generation owner of the shop, he has been placing emphasis on electronics such as home video products since two or three years ago and is doing quite well, and that he has expanded sales by handling telescopes and binoculars.

This means that compared to the growth of the new field he has moved into, the growth of the photographic field has slowed down noticeably. "Judging from the trend of the customer and market as well as the profitability of this shop, the new field is more attractive businesswise and it is therefore necessary to put more strength into it," he said.

#### As to Color Rendition, Fujicolor is the Best

The interior of the shop is quite spacious and it is highlighted by rows of a wide variety of cameras. The walls may be called the camera corner, and standing behind the film and photofinishing counter in the far end of the room is Joan Mcmuetry, the "Fresh Lady." Her job is accepting photofinishing work and operating the video transfer system for transferring 8mm movies onto video tape. The work load per week is 2,500 - 3,000 meters on an average and the number of customers per day is nearly 100. No wonder that the minilab and the video transfer are the fashion of the photo shops in the U.S.

The work at the counter consists mostly of selling film, accepting photofinishing and enlarging work. In Japan, the person behind the counter just tries to sell you his products, but here it is a two-way affair: emphasis is placed on filling the customer's needs and desires. As to film, emphasis is placed on selling Fuji film which is displayed more conspicuously than the others. Film sales are expanding as a whole but this is not limited to a particular brand. "But as to high-speed film, the Super HR1600 is very well accepted," says Joan. "As to myself, I prefer Fuji film," she says. She says the skin rendition of Fujicolor is outstanding, and the subtle hues of red and yellow are faithful and can always be relied upon.

Ms. Joan was all smiles during the time she spoke to me, but as to her work, she said: "I have a short temper so I have to force myself to keep calm and cool when I speak to my customers." "What is it that you enjoy most about your work?" I asked. "It is when a young and handsome man like you comes to this store" she said with a laugh.

Even the Camera Shops in the U.S. Are Placing Their Hope on the SLR

This shop which is located in the business section of the city has top-grade customers as its regular clients. Its aim is not price alone but kind and polite customer reception and sale of a rich variety of items besides photographic products. Nevertheless its highest hopes is placed on photographic products and it wants to sell SLR cameras and strengthen its ties with its customers, according to the owner of the shop.

(Photo Captions)

- ① Performing dubbing service with a video transfer system.
- ② "Shutan" an old established shop founded in 1918.
- ③ Besides displaying cameras it has a fairly rich stock of interchangeable lenses.
- ④ All the walls of the shop are used for display purpose and the show-case counters are lined up in front.
- ⑤ Fujicolor film is specially displayed in the front side of the counters.
- ⑥ The corner for video movie and stationary type VTR on which the shop is placing emphasis.

- ⑦ A wide variety of the items that are handled are placed near the shop entrance in a well classified manner.
- ⑧ A rich variety of camera bags, tripods, photo albums, and other accessories.