

# Busty BarBe Q mannequin turns 1

READING - For her first anniversary, BarBe Q plans to wear her birthday suit. And little else.

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## Document Text

"I'm putting her in her best outfit, the Daisy Duke short-shorts and the bikini top," said Kenny Tessel, a fun-loving restaurateur who relishes playing Ken to the headline-making mannequin's Barbie.

"That outfit," he added, "caused the most fuss."

BarBe wore it last year when she was cited for being a scantily clad sign.

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Photos: BarBe Q's first year

Tessel owns KT's Barbecue.

BarBe Q has been working the street outside the barbecue joint and enticing customers since March 24, 2009. In honor of the statuesque piece of plastic's first year on the job, Tessel intends to hand out free cake from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday

"It'll be chocolate cake," Tessel said Tuesday, "Sara Lee for BarBe."

Running his fingers through her hair as he stood next to BarBe on the sidewalk, Tessel said he "never expected her to last this long." Passing motorists honked their horns as Tessel adjusted BarBe's hat with the "All Hail the Birthday Princess" sign.

"Couldn't find a 'Happy Anniversary' hat," Tessel said.

After making sure her hat was on straight, he stepped back to admire his restaurant's mascot.

"Can't believe she's been here a year."

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Photos: Meet BarBe

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Photos: BarBe's night out

What a year it's been.

BarBe Q made national headlines last summer as she won the right to wear what she wants outside the restaurant.

Later in the year, after being rented out for parties, proms and high school musicals, she fell while on the job. She wouldn't say if she filed a workman's compensation claim. BarBe doesn't give interviews. She can't talk.

Tessel can. He spoke about her accident. BarBe broke her left wrist and snapped off her left index finger.

"She falls a lot," Tessel noted, sounding worried.

"She even has some boob crackage," he said, staring at a ragged patch of torso plastic.

"High winds knock her down. I have to prop her up. She's top-heavy."

He said that with a straight face. That's just one of only two serious comments Tessel made as he talked about BarBe and her year's worth of wardrobe changes.

"She's a total goof," he said. "Her costumes are fun."

Photos of her dressed as a leprechaun, an elf and a Beatle line the restaurant's counter. Some were taken by BarBe's personal paparazzo, Jeffrey Slutz of Mount Lookout.

"I started taking photos of her because of the controversy, which Reading was silly to pursue," said the amateur photographer. "Then I went in to taste the barbecue, found it to be pretty good, so I kept taking photos. At my age, young girls won't pose for you. A mannequin can't argue."

Tessel picked up a photo of BarBe in a holiday outfit.

"She was Mrs. Claus for Christmas," Tessel said, holding a shot of BarBe in a skimpy red and white outfit.

"If the real Mrs. Claus looked like that," he added, "Santa would never leave the North Pole."

Next to BarBe as Mrs. Claus was a photo of her dressed as Baby New Year.

"I put her in a diaper and covered her chest with two satin sashes," Tessel said.

That costume provoked a death threat.

"An outraged woman called to say she was going to take her car, ride up over the curb and kill BarBe," Tessel said. He delightedly told the woman that you can't kill what's not real. Undaunted, the caller kept threatening to do in BarBe.

"That's when I told her: 'Come on down,' " Tessel said. "Imagine the free publicity with the headline: 'Crazed woman tries to kill mannequin. ' "

The woman hung up.

BarBe brings in more business, Tessel said, than she chases away.

"I average 85 new customers a week," he noted. "All because of her. Usually, they're the day's first customers."

As if on cue, two car mechanics, Steve Hesse and Steve Aah, walked in. The first-timers said BarBe caught their attention.

"That BarBe looks great," Hesse said.

Tessel hears that a lot.

"People tell me she's the best mannequin they've ever seen. They want to know who's her plastic surgeon."

The mechanics wanted to know about BarBe's next costume.

"I won't dress her as the Easter Bunny," Tessel said. "I'm politically incorrect. But I won't cross that line."

Turning serious for only the second time in 90 minutes, Tessel talked about BarBe's May costume. "I'll dress her for breast cancer awareness," he said. "A portion of KT's proceeds will go to fighting breast cancer," he added. "My mom died from breast cancer."

Changing the subject, he wondered what gift he should get BarBe for their first anniversary.

Is she a traditional or a modern woman? The traditional first anniversary gift is paper.

"Got that covered," Tessel crowed. "I already gave her the 'All Hail the Birthday Princess' hat."

The modern first anniversary gift is plastic.

"Can do," Tessel said. "I'll buy her a new finger."

If you go

BarBe Q's First Anniversary party features free chocolate cake from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday at KT's Barbecue, 8501 Reading Road, Reading.

Information: [www.ktsbbqanddeli.com](http://www.ktsbbqanddeli.com)

or 513-761-0200.

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**Abstract** (Document Summary)

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