



Thursday, June 16, 1977

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It's a long way to go to 'Miss America'

By LORRAINE McCLISH

Two women who know their stuff have some hints for prospective Miss Farmingtons.

•Don't wear black. It doesn't look good on young girls.

•Check your tan marks so they don't interfere with the gown you'll be wearing on stage.

•Pad your swim suit if you want—it's not against the rules. False eyelashes, wigs, falls, fake fingernails are also permissible. Use anything that will make you look better.

•Do not put oil on your legs. No hose with swim suits either.

SUSAN REED Arcinaga, executive director of the Miss Farmington Pageant of 1977, and Holly Ann Schmidt, current Miss Farmington, took turns giving do's and don'ts to young misses who will take the stage July 20 to vie for the first step up the long ladder to the Miss America title.

•Have a pair of cloth pumps dyed to match your swim suit. You'll look smashing.

•No smoking in public.

•Practice your talent backwards and forwards. Choose your act early so you'll have as much time as possible to perfect it.

•Bone up on current events and facts. Start reading the newspapers or watch a good news show regularly. We'll be throwing funny questions at you from time to time to see how you're keeping up.

•The talent critique is July 2.

THE 13 YOUNG Farmington girls who gathered at an orientation dinner to begin their pageant homework were given dates, times, and places for a series of June and July workshops to be conducted by Mrs. Arcinaga.

Miss Schmidt, with Jan Schriber, a former Miss Farmington, and Hildi Zedek, a former pageant director in

Farmington, will be on hand at the workshops to lend their expertise.

•Practice walking in the shoes you are going to wear on stage. If they are new, walk in them on some gravel, or run a piece of tape over the soles so you don't fall on your face.

•Buy a white dress, with eyelid trim, and a flower for your neck or hair for the introductory number.

•The key is femininity.

•You'll look better in a solid colored evening gown than in a printed one.

•Choose every accessory for every outfit with extreme care.

While the contestants were busy scribbling down notes, they received brochures which spelled out the official rules for the Miss America Pageant.

Meanwhile, letters were reaching local merchants asking for sponsors for each of the young women. This year, for the most part, they are high school seniors.

•Wear gold or silver sandals with your evening gowns. White shoes make your feet look bigger. No platform.

•If you want to build up your calves, or lop some fat off your upper arm, or if you have some physical thing we can take care of with exercise, tell me. There are a million exercises for anything you want to correct and I know all of them.

•You are all potential winners. If you have some plans for next year that might interfere with being Miss Farmington, you had better start thinking about that right now.

•We're going to have a runway this year, something we've never had at the pageant in Farmington before.

Allow time for a special session.

•Original words to the song

"There's a new day coming," and the music, will reach you within a week

These are to be memorized in time for the first rehearsal. You'll find the date on your schedule.

THE GIRLS were told to start making check lists now for what they will need for their introductory number, their swim suit competition, their talent competition, and their talent competition.

The mentors singled out the talent competition as most important, because at all pageant levels, it counts for 50 percent of the judges' points.

•Wear a slip with all the dresses you will wear on stage.

•I've got some rhinestone jewelry and a bunch of stuff that will give you a little flash on stage. If you need anything or want anything, either to wear or for your act, between us, we'll loan it to you or get it for you.

•Don't skimp marking down any awards or honors you've ever received. We want to know whatever is extra special about you.

•Physical exercise should start immediately. Allow at least 15 minutes a day for some kind of workout.

•Thank goodness, no complexion problems here. First make-up class is Sunday. Bring both day and evening make-up and be prepared for a critique.

ALL THROUGH the session, Mrs. Arcinaga kept hammering away on the point that the pageant would be the girls' debut to Farmington residents.

The pageant usually draws about 600 viewers to Vladimirs Restaurant every July.

"You'll be on stage about three hours and there are professionals all over the world begging for the audience you'll have on pageant night," Mrs. Arcinaga said at one point.

•Get rid of corns and callouses.

Judges see them.

•Be competitive. You're in this pageant to win. Know the girls you are competing against and learn how to work together.

•Practice your speeches in front of

your mirror and family. Start getting it down on paper.

•A special session will be called for all of you who are not accustomed to working under a spotlight.

•Don't worry about learning how to

how. We'll instruct you.

•Be prompt for all practice sessions. Don't make the rest of us have to wait for you. That's trouble I don't want.

•Get your act together.



Susan Reed Arcinaga (left), begins putting Karen Dargusch and Gayna Williams through their paces leading to the Miss Farmington Pageant of 1977, set for July 20 in Vladimirs. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

18-member coalition formed with goal to aid the widowed

By LORRAINE McCLISH

There are now 174,000 widows and widowers living in the Detroit metropolitan area.

Southfield ranks first in the number of widows between the ages of 45 and 55, but Farmington, Birmingham and West Bloomfield all have large numbers of middle aged female residents who have lost their husbands.

Population experts predict three out of four married women today will live one third of their lives after marriage as a widow.

It was because of these statistics that the Coordinating Council of Widowed Services in Southeastern Michigan was born. The Council, a coalition of various groups, may be the largest organization solely devoted to widowed persons in the nation, according to its director, Sister Margaret Basso.

Some of the groups have been in operation for years, fulfilling a recognized need in a small area. Some are fledgling groups just getting under way. Some zero in on one aspect of the widow's problem. Several are simply social groups.

"But THEY ALL seem to have at least one or more areas of expertise,

Some have resources the others don't. Some charge for their meetings, others don't. Together we can cover the entire spectrum," Sister Basso said.

"Our joint goal," she continued, "is to educate the widowed as to what's happening and what's available to them, and to educate the public on the widow or widower's problem."

One of the biggest problems for the widowed, as well as the public, is understanding the grieving process.

The survivors' families don't know what to expect or how to act or react, or know what she or he is or isn't capable of. Often the survivor is forced into making a decision at a time when he or she is least capable of making a decision. Even school teachers or counselors have a hard time knowing how to approach a child who has just lost a parent," Sister Basso explained.

Individual problems abound, and with this in mind, one of the council's goals will be to form a crew of trained volunteers, all widowed, who will be working on a one-to-one self-help basis.

Do you know we have widowed girls in their 30s who belong to some

of these groups? They have a unique problem. So does the 40-year-old who is the first of her friends to lose a mate," Sister Basso said. "And so has the only child in school who has just lost a parent."

THE BULK OF the groups listed in the Directory of Widow to Widow programs are church-based. "Only because the ministers seem to be the first ones who recognized this problem. But we want it stressed that no matter what church is giving space for meetings, we are non-denominational and we want everyone concerned to avail themselves of whatever and all we have to offer," she said.

Jean Feterl, who started a group in Farmington from St. Fabian Catholic Church, will move her base of operations to Mercy Center after July 1. She can be reached by calling 476-8810.

One of the area affiliated groups currently operating is a year-around program is "The Mature Singers" in West Bloomfield Township. This is for the widowed person who is over 50 years of age. Anne McCarter will take inquiries by calling 334-3578.

In the North Woodward area, a

group for the widowed meets from 3 to 5 p.m. the third Sunday of every month in St. Columban Church school building, 1775 Melton, Birmingham. Sister Ann Marie Quinan will take inquiries at 646-3224. A donation of \$1 is suggested for each meeting.

A long-standing, strictly social group is Widows and Friends, who meet at 7:30 p.m. the second Monday of every month in St. Agatha Church, 1950 Beech Daly. Redford. The group is open to everybody. Inquiries will be taken by Jean McDonald, 533-6408.

Another long-standing group, which schedules informational meetings at 8 p.m. on the first Wednesday of every month, meets in Our Lady of Loreto, 17116 Olympia, Redford. Sister Dena Baronn will take inquiries by calling 532-3848. There is no charge.

Sister Basso leads a group called Widowed In Service, sponsored by Schoolcraft College. The group meets at 8 p.m. on the second Tuesday of every month.

She will take inquiries at 464-2160 on her group or the council, or the whole range of offerings among all 18 groups which stretch from Grosse Pointe to Flint and from Garden City to Port Huron.



SISTER MARGARET BASSO

They read by the hour so the blind can learn

By ALICE COLLINS
Suburban Life Editor

When Gladys Comer of Beverly Hills was about 40 years old, she nearly lost the sight of one of her eyes.

"I had an ulcerated cornea and it became so bad I couldn't see. I had to be driven back and forth to the doctor's office. It was terrible in the darkness."

It was that experience, said Mrs. Comer, that heightened her concern for the blind and led her to organize Friends of Leader Dogs (FOLD) 1½ years ago.

On May 18 the group, now 85 members strong, turned over its first check for \$3,800 to the Leader Dog School for the Blind in Rochester. The money paid for one dog, its care and training, and the three weeks of training the dog and his new owner go through together.

LEADER DOG SCHOOL director Harold Pocklington reported back to FOLD that its dog went to Matthew Olanrewaju Olajai, a freshman at Marquette University in Wisconsin. Matthew, like blind persons from all over the world, came to the Rochester school for his leader dog.

After the training period, Matthew and his dog will go back to Marquette. After graduation, the two, man and dog, will return to Matthew's native Nigeria to live.

Mercedes Rakestraw, also of Beverly Hills and an original member of FOLD, said the experience of providing the dog "makes us feel we're really doing something, not just wasting time."

THE PURPOSE OF FOLD is to raise money for the Rochester school

by patron donations and by benefit events held throughout the year.

"We don't interfere or conflict with the Lions Club in any way," said Mrs. Comer. The Lions raise a large percentage of the funds for the leader dog school. "Our money goes to supplement that," she added.

The seed for FOLD was planted about three years ago when Mrs. Comer, Mrs. Rakestraw and two friends went to Rochester to visit the school. "We saw dogs and their masters meet for the first time," said Mrs. Rakestraw. "And we all cried."

"We were invited to a couple of the rooms after lunch. One young man meeting his dog asked if we would take his hand and, as he guided if over the dog, describe the dog to him."

THE DOGS ARE GIVEN free to the blind. The applicants arrive at the school on a Sunday and are given

their dog's collar and leash. On Wednesday, the dog comes to the room to meet its master. And from then on they're always together.

"The first day of the training they head right out into the traffic in Rochester or Birmingham," said Mrs. Comer.

"We've watched them step up into the bus that takes them out the first time. That first step is very high. The trainer makes the dog wait until his master has stepped up."

But then the dogs are just like kids with very definite personalities. After the owner steps up, the dog rushes past and jumps into the seat by the window where it likes to ride."

APPLICANTS FOR leader dogs usually range from 18 to 60 years of age. "But one of the last ones the school had was from an 82-year-old."

FOLD officially began in December of 1975. "I had a tea at my home and

invited about 35 people," said Mrs. Comer. The Pocklingtons came to talk about the school.

Harold Pocklington is the director and his wife Mary is assistant director.

"That-day we decided on a name and had volunteers for five elected offices," she continued. "Next, we had a tour of the school and invited our husbands to go along."

FOLD is a non-profit organization and takes patron members as well as active members.

The organization will have a tour in the fall for persons interested. "We'd like to get more people to go out," said Mrs. Rakestraw. "Because once they go, they want to help."

WOMEN INTERESTED in signing up for the tour may call Betty Rockwood, membership chairman, at 285-1552. FOLD has members from 27

area cities, from Canada and three from other states.

Mrs. Comer is the president, Jean Rozmus of Beverly Hills and Janet Anderson of Farmington are in charge of hospitality.

Other officers are Mrs. Hazen Carroll of Algonac, vice-president; Mary Cox of Birmingham, secretary; Edith Furesik of Livonia, recording secretary.

Also, Hazel Burnett of Detroit, sunshine; Margaret Latham of Farmington, telephone chairman; Miriam Papesch of Lathrup Village, publicity; and Georgianne Coss of Northville, historian.

Fund-raisers during the year included a concert by the General Music Choir, spaghetti dinner, bingo, fashion show, card party, silent auction, a dinner "and a lot of other little things here-and-there" during the year," said Mrs. Rakestraw.