

As American as apple pie

By Marjorie Stearns Krevsky
Special writer

THE BEAUTY pageant is an American tradition, as typical to our way of life as apple pie and hot dogs.

Phyllis George and Bess Meyerson started their careers by smiling at the judges, looking great in bathing suits and evening gowns, and trying to show a sparkling personality when asked mundane questions.

Local personalities who "have come a long way, baby" from beauty queen days include artist and socialite Patricia Hill Burnett, writer and mother Diane Girard Brown, and newscaster-turned public relations executive Sandy Drew.

IN JUNE, FOR 138 contestants in the Miss Michigan United pageant, it was a time for strutting their stuff, trying to make modeling contacts and having a good time. However, the contest had a new twist.

Instead of one grand evening, a series of events were planned. One night, the judges, contestants and their families partied and danced together at Cheeks.

They also were filmed for cable television at Topinka's and were wine and dined at several restaurants before the final judging at Canton's Center Stage.

THE CONTESTANTS range in age from 17-27 and are mostly from the metropolitan Detroit area. Each one has her own reasons for entering the beauty pageant.

Christina Brusca of Southgate wants more than being a winner. She needs a

kidney for transplant and is hopeful that the publicity will help her find a donor.

The 26-year-old brunette has been on a dialysis machine daily since 1982. Within the next couple of months her doctors will be searching for a donor to provide her with hope for a better life. Ypsilanti resident and kindergarten teacher, Gail Georgette Parks said she entered to "Give some excitement to my summer."

KAREN LEE WOLGAT of Lathrup Village, a nutrition major at Wayne State, participated "Because of the three E's — exposure, experience, excitement."

Five-foot five-and-a-half-inch Audrey Bauza of Farmington Hills reflected the hope of many entrants when she said, "I think this contest will be beneficial for getting contacts." Bauza works at Tally-Hall and hopes to become a successful model.

Seaholm National Honor Society graduate Sarah Ann Tierney of Rochester is a real estate saleswoman for Century 21. Her goal is acting. She said she "feels the contest will help with that dream."

MISS MICHIGAN United was organized, produced and choreographed by Cynthia Guenther, whose career skyrocketed after she won the Miss Michigan World contest in 1975. Her most recent experience was as the hostess of the Michigan lottery "Michiganne" program.

Guenther organized an impressive assortment of sports celebrities, beautiful people and well-qualified media related individuals to be judges, includ-

ing championship fighter Thomas Hearns, Detroit Lion defensive lineman William Gay, top model Harriett Fuller, beauty maven Mira Linder, Farmington Observer Editor Steven Barnaby, theater owner Charlie Shafer and Dan Hayes, official spokesman for the Detroit Auto Show.

ALSO TIERRE, 1982 Miss Michigan USA, Diane Arapja, took time to participate during preparations to leave for Paris where she will be modeling for European fashion houses. She remarked, "It's interesting to be on the other side of the runway. I know how those girls feel."

Another judge was Emmy award-winning advertising executive Bob Pevac, who divides his time between Los Angeles and Detroit. Pevac said he was delighted to be one of the judges. "I'm always looking for new fresh faces," he explained.

The onces for the final evenings program was Peter Carey, who was assisted by Cynthia Guenther. Carey was marking his third year as master of ceremonies. "It's always fun for me to see where some of the former winners and contestants have taken their careers," he said.

THE SPOILS for the winners of the contest were impressive. A 1983 Datson, a \$2,500 fur coat, modeling school scholarship, and a trip to the Bahamas were just a few of the goodies that were in store for the winner. Four runners-up plus Miss Michigan United were gifted royally. The 25 finalists also received auditions for auto shows.

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A helper from Heidi's salon was on hand to help contestants Jeannie Lynn Buerer of Howell, Cheryl Heinrich, who was voted Miss Photogenic, and Judy Lee Miller, a Michigan Panthers cheerleader, and, in front, Colleen O'Connell of Sterling Heights.

Keep your eyes on the judges

Beauty contest experts Judy March and Phyllis Papa of John Robert Powers modeling school in Southfield have been involved in hundreds of pageants. They agree to share some tips on how to win and survive in the wonderful world of beauty pageants.

• Practice smiling for long periods of time. When you're not used to smiling constantly for at least two hours, you'll find your face muscles begin to fatigue and then have a tendency to quiver.

• Whatever you choose to wear in the contest, whether it is an evening gown or bathing suit, make sure you practice in it and feel comfortable in it.

• If you're used to pants and have to look elegant and poised in an evening gown, you need to know how the dress feels and how you look in it. In a bathing suit, select one that shows your best assets.

• If you bought new high heeled shoes, sandpaper the bottoms before hitting a slick runway. Wear these shoes and practice your turns in them before the contest.

• Be nice to everyone. Remember, the girl beside you may be the winner and could help you or give you a contact, especially if you've loaned her a safety pin or helped zip her dress.

• Make sure you thank all the judges

after the contest, even if you do not place. A thank-you is a gesture that may be remembered long after the contest is over.

• Arrive early to set up your area so you won't be nervous because you are hurrying.

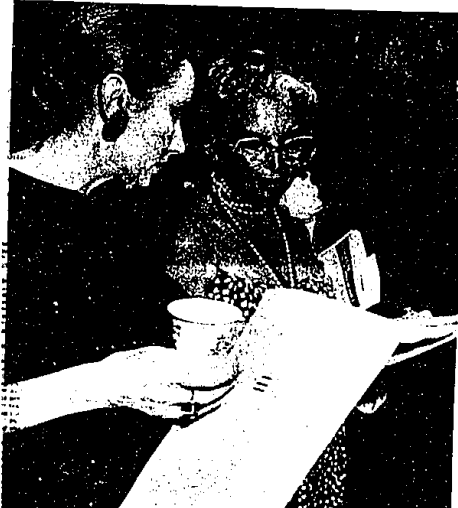
• Bring all the supplies you will need to make you beautiful, from your makeup to a razor. Many professional models pack everything they'll need into a tackle box, which is conveniently compartmentalized.

• Work out a simple walking routine for parading past the judges. A straight walk on and off won't make it. You've got to do some turns. Never take your eyes off the judges.

• Get a good night's sleep before the event. Do nothing but pamper yourself that day. You have to feel beautiful to look that way to the rest of the world.

• If you make an error on stage, even if it's walking off the wrong way or losing a shoe, smile and remain poised as if you had planned it that way to show that you can handle anything that happens. Never shake your head or react to your mistake. You'll probably get applause for your aplomb and the judges will remember that.

• Remember, the most beautiful girl does not always win. Carry yourself as if you've already won.



ROB REED

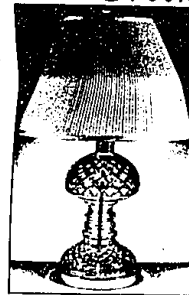
Harriett Fuller, (at left) and Mira Linder were among the judges who took part in a series of events over several days which gave them opportunities to observe the contestants in a variety of settings.

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