



## Going for the crown

### Miss Michigan Pageant activities under way

By Lorraine McClish  
staff writer

Mary Chris Porter is in Muskegon this week amid the swirl of activities that lead up to the crowning of Miss Michigan Saturday night.

The 20-year-old Oakland University freshman, who won the title of Miss Farmington in the pageant here last July, represents the two cities in the Miss Michigan Pageant that leads the way to Miss America.

In the talent portion of the competition, the category that constitutes 50 percent of the judges' points, Porter will sing her "Parade Medley," the same medley she put together that brought her home-town audience to its feet when she won the Miss Farmington crown.

She hasn't spent a lot of time rehearsing the three songs that make up the medley, "I Love a Parade," "Before the Parade Passes By" and "Don't Raine on My Parade," because she is singing literally every morning, noon and night.

Porter began performing publicly when she was a student at St. Fabian Elementary School. Performances continued through her North Farmington High School days, then extended to touring shows with Fred Waring's "The Blenders."

Last year she earned her music service scholarship by singing with "Meadow Brook Estate." And up until the day she left for Muskegon, she was singing from 9 p.m. to 2 a.m. in Southfield Holiday Inn's lounge.

"THERE WERE rehearsals scheduled every day, on top of special show rehearsals on top of rehearsals for ma-

jor productions on campus," Porter said of her performances with Meadow Brook Estate, a select group of the university's singers.

In addition to that schedule, and traveling through the state for Meadow Brook Estate productions, Porter wound up her freshman year with a commendation from the dean for her academic work in computer science.

While she's juggled all this successfully in the past, she plans to juggle a career that will include both her computer science and singing.

"Singing has certainly made it possible for me to get my academic degree. Maybe the computer science will back me up so I can continue on with my singing," she said.

Porter has an alto voice of wide range that is both unusual and distinct, and rather startling in its power for one so slight of build. It won the 5-foot-4-inch tall, brown-haired and blue-eyed singer "The Most Talented Student" award while she was in North Farmington High, the "Best Talent Award" in the Miss Farmington Pageant and a long string of auditions.

Pageant-goers here will hear Porter's "Parade Medley" July 17, the night she turns over her Miss Farmington crown to the young woman named Miss Farmington 1985.

THE MISS Farmington Pageant, as all other local pageants, are patterned as much as possible after the Miss Michigan Pageant, and in turn the Miss America Pageant.

"There won't be too many surprises. We all know pretty much what to expect. It lessens the tension that way because we've all gone through this before," Porter said.

Rules and judges' points for the pageants are the same, on all levels.

Contenders vie in talent, evening gown and swimsuit appearances, their knowledge of current events and in personal interview categories.

The exception is the time leading up to pageant night.

At the local level pageant directors and their committees spend up to four weeks in rehearsals with the contenders who are also offered a schedule of workshops on such things as grooming, makeup, poise, how to walk, what best to wear.

At the state level, Porter said her schedule showed a little bit of pleasure, "a picnic, a ride on a yacht, just fun things" was being mixed in with the business of rehearsals and some of the preliminary judging.

Farmington and Farmington Hills will be represented on several counts during the Miss Michigan Pageant.

In addition to Miss Farmington, Dorisa Lamarra, Miss Farmington 1977, is doing the choreography for the song and dance the Miss Michigan contenders will be performing pageant night. And violinist Kelly Garver, Miss Farmington 1981, will be one of the pageant night performers.

THERE IS still time for young women to enter the Miss Farmington Pageant this year, staged traditionally as the official opening of Founders Festival festivities in Vladimir's restaurant.

Deadline date to apply is Saturday, June 15. Applications will be sent on request by calling pageant director Pat Fallon, 271-1221, during regular business hours, or 642-2900 evenings.

Roxanne D'Ascenzo, Miss Farmington 1983, and most recently winner of a Michigan audition to appear on "Dance Fever," will do the choreography for the Miss Farmington contenders' musical opening number on pageant night.

D'Ascenzo is one of the former Miss Farmingtons who are always called back to either perform, work on a committee of their expertise, or assist the newcomers with suggestions on how best to win the local competition.

When Porter crowns the new Miss Farmington she will simultaneously be celebrating her 21st birthday and her end of the year as title holder.

Whatever happens meantime in Muskegon, she will continue on with general education requirement courses in summer classes at Oakland Community College, and be singing evenings and weekends in Lansing's Playhouse Club through the summer.

Immediately after Porter turns over her crown, Miss Farmington 1985, with title, crown, banner and the roses of victory, will make her first official public appearance in a motorcade from Vladimir's west down Grand River to be introduced to festival-goers in Downtown Shopping Center.

### Staff photos by Randy Borst

## Teachers' aides

### Teens extend child development classes with on-the-job training

By Lorraine McClish  
staff writer

The 4-year-olds who wind up their school season at Alameda Early Childhood Center this month will leave with their class picture, a memento of preschool days that includes 17-year-old Jim Laird. The Farmington High School junior's picture is much more likely to appear on the sports pages.

But Laird was definitely one of the class, first an observer, then a teacher's aid, and then somewhat akin to a big brother to the tots because he was the only male adult that made regular visits to the school through the season.

"He has been a blessing to us," said Barb Tangora, who teaches one of the several preschool classes in the school.

"SOME OF these children don't have fathers at home. Not too many 4-year-olds have teen-aged brothers and there's not much chance of any of them having male baby sitters. He had our students dribbling basketballs the first week he was here and with his sports background attempted a great many more vigorous exercises than I would have attempted."

"I spotted Jim the first day he was here to observe, and it was a happy day when I learned we were going to be working together."

LAIRD WAS one of about 25 teens from throughout the school district who had completed a child development class, which included observing preschoolers in action in both private and public schools here.

From that point the teens can opt for a work-study course which gives them school credit while they assist preschool teachers in the classroom on a regular basis.

Ann Sutschek, based in Farmington High School, has coordinated the program for 15 years in all three public high schools, and this year had her first male student sign up for the work-study program.

IT IS Sutschek's job to match up the teacher, who is agreeable to taking on a teen assistant, to the student, who is more likely than not using that experience as a testing period toward a possible career.

Her feelings about the program are that "the teens learn fast if that is the career they want."

Laird's feelings were summed up when he said, "I never gave any thoughts at all to becoming a teacher. Now it's something to think about."

He's thought about it enough to know that he's going to continue on with the work-study program while he's in his senior year of high school, and he's also thought about it enough to know he's going to request working with youngsters who are physically handicapped.

"Whether he uses this experience professionally or not, the one sure thing that will come out of it is that he is going to be one exceptionally good father," Sutschek said.

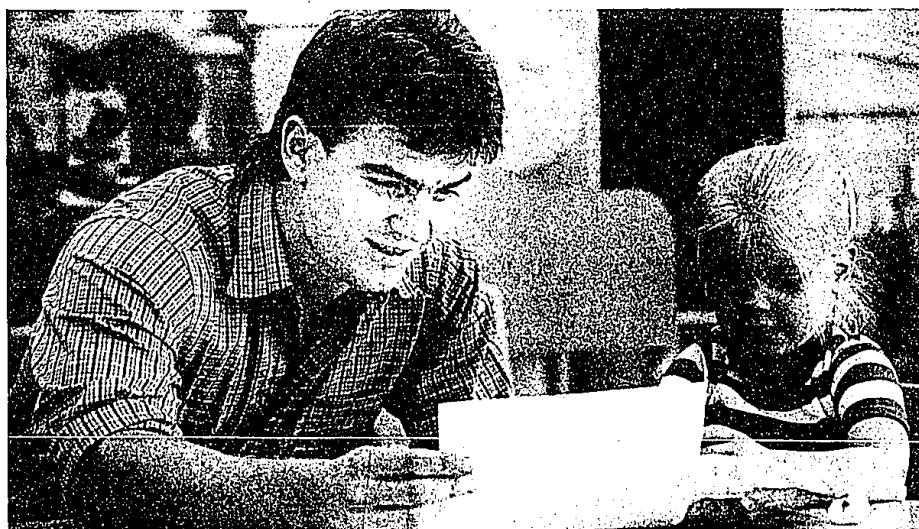
ALL OF THE teens in the work-study program spend a specified number of afternoon hours with their preschool charges that must add up to 80 hours of participation to receive credit.

One afternoon a week is spent in class with Sutschek.

"It's a time for comparing notes," Laird said. "Everyone has a daily journal, a report of what's happened during the week, and it includes all of the problems, all of the jokes, all the humorous and all of the sad things, the whole business. Sometimes we can help one another out, or give suggestions on how to handle a problem. Sometimes we trade ideas."

MEANTIME, THERE are constant critiques, from the teacher the teen is assisting and from Sutschek, who makes periodic, always unannounced, visits to the classrooms to observe the interaction between the tots and the teachers' aides.

"If my program doesn't do anything else it gives these students a tremendous amount of responsibility and a



Jim Laird assists Megan Monti with her craft project for the day, one of many assists he's called on to give as a teacher's aide in Alameda Early Childhood Center. Laird is one of about 25 high

school students in the district who worked with preschoolers this spring as a part of their child development course.

tremendous amount of well being," Sutschek said.

"They are working with someone else's children, being evaluated by professionals, facing parents with questions, while at the same time creating, designing and organizing what are very often new ideas, new methods, new ac-

tivities for these children.

"I can teach them mature from one week to another."

THE TEENS are well prepared before taking on the job as a teacher's aide. Tangora called the preparation "very similar to a college methods

teaching course" that is required before they are eligible to volunteer.

They are not paid, and they must furnish their own transportation.

Laird's work with youngsters extends to an after-school job as umpire for at least four Little League Baseball games a week, and last month he took

on his first job as camp counselor for a group of fourth graders from Larkshire Elementary School who spent some time at Proud Lake.

Meanwhile he does construction work for Great Lakes Pool, Plaster, a swimming pool maintenance firm "to keep in shape for football," he said.

## Retiree recalls a country bank with 5 employees

Dorothy Smith worked right up to closing time on the day of her retirement after 44 years in the same location, in the bank that is now the Farmington Branch of National Bank of Detroit (NBD).

Tom Oren, from the bank's head-

quarters, said working in the same town Farmington as fortunate.

"Most of them want to move around, like to move around, just to see what the other branches are doing and how they're operating," Oren said.

But Smith thinks of her stay in downtown Farmington as fortunate.

"I grew up in Redford," she said. "But my father had his business in Farmington. My mother helped him in the garage repair and gas station he owned before it was popular for ladies

to pump gas, and I just came to know the merchants in the downtown Farmington area better than the ones where I lived.

"I've always had a kinship for Farmington and feel I grew up with these people and felt fortunate that I could

stay here."

When Smith graduated from grade school, the kinship was deepened as graduates at that time were scattered to Farmington, Plymouth and Northville high schools. She was assigned to

Farmington High School.

SMITH STARTED her banking career as a bookkeeper with Farmington State Bank on Farmington Road, south of Grand River. She describes that bank as "a country bank with five employees."