

# Pageant from page 1C

"I have appeared at the Troy Optimist Club," she said. "They gave me \$100." The Optimists are letting Clark use part of their booth during Troy Daze, the city's annual celebration, Friday-Sunday, Sept. 25-27. "I will socialize and sign autographs. There will be a donation box."

Clark's parents — Pastor Kent W. Clark of the Grace Gospel Fellowship in Sterling Heights and his wife Pam, a counselor — are behind her 100 percent. Said Pastor Clark, who sat in on the interview in his study at their Troy home, "Her dad's not going to be able to foot the bill for living expenses and the clothes."

Describing her father's role in the beauty competition, Clark said, "He's my manager and financial adviser."

He handles public relations for her and admits that at present his PR efforts may leave something to be desired. Although Pastor Clark doesn't list prospective sponsors he is a minister, he said it sounds kind of funny when he tells them he is looking for donations and that he is her dad.

### Gifts from God

Dad is a low-key, genial kind of guy. "I've tried to instill in her, any talent, abilities and looks she has are gifts from God," he said. The image he wants to project for his daughter is "a good, clean wholesome look."

Shannon Clark, the fresh, young beauty, said of her parents, "They've instilled in me my morals and values I keep."

After winning the Miss Troy con-

test at the age of 17, Clark entered Miss Michigan Perfect Teen and won out of 81 girls. "I had to provide my own gown, which cost \$500, and earrings."

She wore a silky satin, straight dress with matching blue crystal earrings. "We got some sponsors for her, but we provided most of the money," Pastor Clark recalled.

"When I won that pageant, I won \$1,000," she said. "I bought a sequined white gown to wear to the national competition." The gown cost \$1,200, earrings \$100 and shoes, \$100. "The (additional) money came from mom and dad's pocket," she said.

Another expense, besides the gown, was in having a costume made for the nationals, to represent her state. For the "Winter Wonderland" theme, she wore a bodysuit with white fur, and a white fur muff, and ice skates with the blades removed.

For the bathing suit part of the competition, she bought an \$80 plain white swimsuit from Hudson's. "For all the pageants, suits have to be clean cut that form your body, and not too skimpy," she explained. "You have to look elegant." Clark was fourth runner-up in the national pageant for Miss Perfect Teen.

Last year, she entered the Miss Michigan United competition, and made it to the top seven. This year the local contest has become part of the Miss World America pageant.

It's easy for the public to be confused by which beauty contest is which, among the many conducted each year. "Miss U.S.A., Miss America and Miss World America — these are the top three, that go live nationally on TV," Clark said.



DOUGLAS E. SUGALLA

She's a winner: Being crowned Miss Troy was her first beauty title, won by Shannon Clark when she was 17.

### Active in sports

Athletically inclined, Clark ran track, played soccer and volleyball and was captain of the basketball team at Troy Athens, where she was graduated in 1990. "I've been playing sports all through middle school and high school, and I've wanted to be a broadcaster," she said.

Clark dates Jim Kelly, quarterback for the Buffalo Bills football team. In local personal appearances, she has been working with Detroit Pistons basketball star Isiah Thomas on a program called Shape Up Michigan, where celebrities speak to kids at public parks and arenas.

"I talk about self-esteem and feeling good about yourself," she said. She is paid for her travel expenses and her appearances in the program.

But she needs sponsors to help pay for the gown for Miss World

America, which will cost more than \$2,000, and all those other expenses. "I want to do as many grand openings in Michigan as I can," she said. "They can pay me to sign autographs and to speak. What they give me, I expect to give something back."

Anyone interested in being a sponsor can contact Clark by writing P.O. Box 4382, Troy, MI 48098. "I would love to get the city of Troy and local civic groups and business people to support her. It will be a nationally televised event. It will be good for our city," Pastor Clark said.

Localities who want to see the beauty queen before Troy Daze arrives may want to attend the Little Miss Troy and Junior Miss Troy pageants, sponsored by the City of Troy, Sept. 11, where she will be a contest judge.

# Print biz brought twosome together

BY LARRY O'CONNOR  
STAFF WRITER

When it comes to a romance, Maureen and Jerry Christensen get more than their share of ink. In the beginning, it was usually splattered over each other.

They met 14 years ago amid the hum of the printing press at an American Speedy Printing Center in Lathrup Village. Today, they own two franchises in Southfield and in Bloomfield Hills.

She serves as president at the Bloomfield Hills American Speedy Printing Center. He's the vice-president. At the Southfield location, the titles are reversed.

"We're both presidents," said Maureen Christensen, who is also a mother with two children, Jillian, 6, and Michelle, 11.

Running a printing business keeps a couple in a state of perpetual motion. She handles the books and sales for both offices. He operates the presses and trains employees.

He's rather good at the latter, according to Maureen, who was a co-op student fresh out of Birmingham Groves High School when she came into his shop looking for a job 14 years ago.

Jerry taught Maureen everything he knew about the print business.

"It's great," Maureen said about the family business. "We have met so many different people."

the Americana Theatre for the premiere of "Star Wars," he asked her for a date. Two years later they married.

On the business side, the Christensens eventually left the franchising group they were partners in and started their own businesses in the present locations.

There are pluses and minuses as a couple involved in the same business. One of the practical aspects is being able to cover for one another. And, if one of the partners comes home and says he or she is in a bad mood, the other understands.

"Taking the business home with you ... It's always table talk," Maureen said. "In fact, we've even woken up in the middle of the night to discuss a problem. He will wake up in the middle of the night and ask me about a job."

The Christensens are not unusual in that respect. With the flourishing boom of the '80s, many couples have entered the entrepreneurial field. Maureen, who is a consultant and marketing trainer for American Speedy Printing, says many married people step into the business with one spouse managing the business while the other maintains a full-time job.

Business and family, in the Christensens' case, are inseparable. "It's great," Maureen said about the family business. "We have met so many different people."

# Roommates from page 1C

head-on. In those instances, find a mediator and talk it over. Residence advisers are usually good at being Mom and settling disputes.

### DONT:

- Make assumptions. It's always

safer to check plans out with your roommate. Even if he hasn't entered the room in weeks, be sure he won't need it before you invite your friends — or girlfriend — over.

- Be afraid to say no. Compre-

mise is all well and good, but if you really don't want to do something, say so. If you cave in too much, your roommate ends up expecting it from you and you end up resenting your roommate, all of which will lead directly to a buildup of bad karma in the room.

• Borrow stuff. Really. No matter how much you may like your roommate, borrowing or lending stuff is almost always a bad idea; eventually, the lender tires of looking for her clothes/toothpaste/line

iron and finding them missing. The little perks of shoring just aren't worth a silent war.

• Chip In. This is a variation of the "borrowing stuff" idea. Many roommates, trying to be friendly on the first day, hit upon the faintly socialist idea of chipping in equally for groceries, supplies, etc. and sharing them equally. As anyone who read "Animal Farm" can tell you, however, someone will inevitably give less and take more, which will lead to class struggle.

# Helpful toll-free numbers

A number of agencies and government departments offer free information or advice on a wide variety of subjects of interest and service to older adults and their families. Following is a list of toll-free numbers. Operators will be happy to answer your questions or direct you to other proper information sources.

- AT&T Special Needs Center 800-233-1222
- Alzheimer's & Related Disorders Center 800-621-0379
- American Cancer Society 800-ACS-2345

- American Council for the Blind 800-424-8666
- American Diabetes Association 800-232-4372

# Off the Cuff wants your suggestions

Got a suggestion for an individual The Eccentric can highlight in Off the Cuff, an occasional feature that focuses on ordinary people with extraordinary flair for fashion? If you know an Observer & Eccentric area

resident — man, woman or child — with a distinctive clothing sense, be it classic, trendy, homespun or outrageous, give us a call at 644-1100, Ext. 243.

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