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'87 Miss Brunswick County's Living A Little Girl's Dream

BY SUSAN USHER

Whether or not she gains the title of Miss North Carolina next week, the reigning Miss Brunswick County, Lorri Bowling, will be fulfilling a childhood ambition.

"When I was a little girl and watched pageants on TV, I told my mother I wanted to do that," she said.

At 5-feet, 3-inches and 103 pounds, the 19-year-old resident of the Mill Creek community doesn't fit the stereotypical image of a pageant queen. But she makes up for it in self-determination, effort and poise.

Looking interviewers straight in the eye, she can tell them, "I'm ready. I've been preparing a long time," and answer their questions succinctly.

She won her county crown in December, after first gaining the Miss Teen Brunswick County title five years ago. In between, she finished second runner-up in the county pageant and learned a valuable lesson as a contestant in the Miss N.C. Fourth of July Queen's Pageant.

At first unable to give a prepared statement, she burst into tears and left the microphone, but determinedly returned to finish the task.

"Everything's a learning experience," she reflected, determination showing in soft, gray-green eyes. "I've made my blunder."

As Miss Brunswick County she's traveled approximately 3,500 miles and made more than 25 appearances, many of them within the county at events ranging from grand openings to parades.

While her reign may not end until December, the Miss North Carolina Pageant June 14-20 will be a memorable part of it. The finals will be aired Saturday,

June 20, on WECT-TV 6, at 9 p.m.

Lorri Bowling leaves Sunday for Raleigh, where she will take her place as a member of "Group A." That means she will compete in interview on Tuesday afternoon, talent on Wednesday and swimsuit on Friday, "and Saturday do it all over again," she added optimistically.

A rising sophomore majoring in marketing at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, she's taken the summer off from classes to finish preparing for the pageant. "It's a lot more work than most people realize," she noted.

That work has included a regional seminar in January and a working weekend in Raleigh in March. Then, for the first time, she stepped up and looked out across Memorial Auditorium.

Even in an empty hall, she continued, "It's something else being on that stage."

When she returns to Memorial Auditorium next week, she'll have an entourage of supporters that includes her business manager from the Miss Brunswick County Scholarship Pageant Inc., county attorney David Clegg; her best friend, Sondra Rabon of Winnabow; her sister, Debbie, who pushed her into entering the county pageant; and sister Susan; her mother, Vera Bowling; and a special male friend.

"Twenty-five seats have been reserved for Saturday, all of which have been taken," noted Clegg.

Her regimen since December requires time management and self-discipline—budgeting wisely, practicing the piano, exercising nightly while watching the David Letterman show. She also keeps up with current events, formulating opinions on the issues of the day in preparation for the state interviews. She's worked with a professional hair and makeup stylist in Raleigh who will be with her at the pageant.

Wardrobe is important, but Lorri Bowling's couldn't be called extravagant by any pageant's standards. "I try not to put a lot of money into clothes I won't be able to continue wearing," she explained.

Clean lines are the key to her look for Raleigh, with most pieces fashioned by Myra Palmater of Wilmington. "Everything's very simple," she said, "to let the person show instead."

For her interview, she chose a red and white dotted silk blend dress with long sleeves, coordinated with red crocodile shoes and belt.

She'll perform her talent number, a semi-classical Spanish piece by Ernesto Lecuona, "Malageuna," wearing a dress of red lame under black lace, fashioned with a very full skirt, puffed sleeves and fitted waist.

During evening gown competition, she'll don a cobalt blue matte crepe with a V front and back, fitted waist, and a straight skirt that flares out at the tail.

Finale gowns include one gown with a redesigned bodice and a black cocktail gown, bought in a county shop, that is covered with sequins from top to bottom.

"I had to have it," she said. "It's my first all-sequined gown."

Her swimsuit has been worn in other pageants—a



LORRI BOWLING displays one of the finale gowns she'll wear during the Miss North Carolina Pageant next week in Raleigh.

STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER



THIS FORMAL portrait will be included in the pageant program. In it, Miss Brunswick County's wearing her first all-sequined gown.

simple maillot cut on the bias in a silvery-tone fabric that under strong stage lights glimmers with the blue of its underlining.

The state pageant will be celebrating its 50th anniversary, and has something a little different planned for the opening of the show. Contestants—and past Miss North Carolinas—will don identical long black skirts and sequined tops. In recent years contestants have been given a theme and a color scheme and encouraged to create their own costumes.

All that has gone into preparing for this week in Raleigh—including the miles of travel, public speaking engagements, grooming and wardrobe preparation will have cost about \$5,000, which Bowling's business manager, David Clegg, said is "average."

Added Bowling, "There will be some people there who have spent \$20,000, I'm sure."

A year ago, watching the Miss North Carolina Pageant from the balcony of Memorial Auditorium, she turned to her friend Sondra and said, "That could be me next year."

Whatever the outcome of the pageant, Lorri Bowling knows she's already a winner. And she's enjoying her year as Miss Brunswick County, though she'd willingly give it up to first runner-up Jennifer Kye in order to accept the state title.

So much is she enjoying her year, it's an experience she'd recommend to anyone as plans are made for the county pageant in December.

"If there are any girls out there even slightly interested in pageants," she said, "I'd encourage them to pursue that. They've got nothing to lose and everything to gain."

Including a title that will be theirs for life.

Pleased With Our Choice

(Continued From Page 4-A)

itself was immaculate, orderly and well-equipped.

It is a comfort and a source of pride to have such excellent medical personnel and facilities so easily available. It is a pleasure to express publicly my thanks and support to those who are providing quality, truly people-oriented medical care.

Louise T. Greene
Holden Beach

Brief Notes From Subscribers

To the editor:

We have enjoyed your publication for two years. Now we are culminating a dream and finally moving into Brunswick County.

G. G. Dale
Wexford, Pennsylvania

To the editor:

Please find a check for year's subscription to The Brunswick Beacon.

I have a house on Holden Beach and feel that keeping up with the news through the Beacon could be an advantage to me. I look forward to receiving the first copy.

Phyllis B. Noah
Mount Airy

To the editor:

Enclosed is a check for another year of The Brunswick Beacon. We enjoy reading about the happenings in Brunswick County.

Every week when we read the paper we feel as if we have had a short visit back there.

Guy and Louise Bolen
Kansas City, Missouri

Planning For A Long, Hot Summer

I avoided reruns of "The Long Hot Summer" last week, that two-part NBC movie based on a William Faulkner novel.

Although the movie is fair (I have seen it before), I wasn't in the mood for such "summer" entertainment. Summer entertainment should be special. It should also start in June.

By the way, June began last Monday. People are starting to mumble wise sayings about the summer heat and how we need rain—just like in the movie. However, summer won't officially begin until June 21, Father's Day.

June is also the chosen month for weddings (the Brunswick Beacon staff is monitoring Susan Usher's countdown to June 27) and for family vacations. I still love summer vacations—Tweetsie Railroad, Disney World, Carowinds. Only, I'll be reading Shakespeare this June.

I'm enrolled in Shakespeare I at UNC-Wilmington, a course I need in order to fulfill my requirements in English. Somehow summer and Shakespeare don't seem to match. It takes a certain state of mind to read Shakespeare during the long, hot summer.

It's also difficult having to attend classes five days a week, 90 minutes a day, at 8 a.m.

For sports fans, the NBA championship series also began June 2. For one of the teams, either the Boston Celtics or the Los Angeles Lakers, it will be a long, hot summer spent watching films and discussing what went wrong.

Things just seem to happen in June. People seem to do things in June that they wouldn't normally do during any other month of the year. Town and county budgets are

prepared. Fights break out over funding. June is the last month of the fiscal year.

Following Memorial Day, area beaches start to feel the influx of tourists. Vacationers and property owners also start heading to the ocean. There, they celebrate the long, hot summer. They enjoy the waves and they soak in the sun.

The N.C. Department of Transportation has been thinking of June recently. They worked to install a new traffic signal on the Holden Beach causeway so it would be ready to handle the June traffic.

School graduations are held in June. School vacations begin in June. Vacation Bible Schools are often held in June. And, I'm afraid, with June comes the hurricane season. The list goes on.

I'm planning my version of the long, hot summer and I'm hoping to mix in some summer fun here or there. That may be difficult.


I don't want to appear "wimpish" by having to read Shakespeare on the beach, but I may be forced to do so. The textbook was obviously not designed by someone who enjoys a long, hot summer at the beach. It's not a carry-along edition, for it takes a strong arm to carry this huge thing around.

Next month, it's PE 101. I'll tell you more about that later.



Terry Pope


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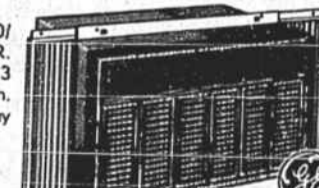
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