

Opinion: Miss USA is wrong American woman

LEESHA AUSTIN
Layout Editor

On Friday night, Mar. 2, I watched something I have not watched in years: the Miss USA pageant. Oops—I mean competition! In the words of host William Shatner, I can't forget to be politically correct.

I should explain that I had had no intention of watching the pageant. My roommate happened to be flipping through the channels and came across it.

We both remarked that we hadn't watched it in several years and thought, "why not?"

As I began to watch the pageant, it brought back memories of how excited I used to get when I watched it as a little girl.

I found it funny as I reminisced about how I used to beg my mother to let me enter pageants as a child, and she firmly refused.

However, when I was in high school, she tried to talk me into entering our county's preliminary Miss America competition.

When, as an "impartial" mother, she wouldn't accept that I didn't have any form of talent worthy of public performance, I explained that not only would I feel uncomfortable parading around in a skimpy swimsuit in front of strangers but also that doing so while in stiletto heels would likely prove hazardous to my physical safety.

She finally relented.

I was glad to see that these particular contestants seemed both comfortable and adept at balancing on the stilettos.

As the contestants were introduced, I saw that most of them were attractive, as I remembered from other pageants I had watched. However, what impressed me was that they also seemed to be intelligent.

Among the young women were engineers, journalists, artists and college students studying a variety of fields.

My first thought was, "Miss USA must be trying to put more emphasis on the intelligence and service projects of its contestants like the Miss America pageant, rather than focusing on how they look in a swimsuit."

Unfortunately, after hearing Shatner, in one of his many pitiful attempts at humor throughout the evening, warn the audience that if they were bothered by the swimsuit competition, they should stop watching because it was coming up next, I realized that I was wrong.

Indeed, from the swimsuit competition on, the pageant's image continued to deteriorate.

I must admit, in spite of my childhood fascination with pageants, I have grown into an adult who is not a big fan of them.

It is impossible to ignore that the underlying concept of these "competitions" is to put women on display and judge them based on different categories. Interestingly, I see similar competitions for dogs and horses but not for men.

I do realize that people can argue the merits of pageants, and it is true that in the case of the Miss America pageant, greater emphasis has been placed on the interview and talent competitions, and contestants compete for scholarships.

No matter how one views pageants, it is impossible to deny that this year's Miss USA pageant was disrespectful and even degrading of its contestants, which is not that surprising when one realizes that the Miss Universe Organization, which Miss USA is associated with, is co-owned by Donald Trump.

There was the guy who kept trying to be a comedian between competitions by giving an "inside look" at the pageant, such as explaining that contestants use heavy-duty spray adhesive to prevent their swimsuit bottoms from "riding up." And then there were the

"humorous" clips of actual contestants portraying stereotypes, such as a blonde being too involved in blow drying her hair to answer the practice interview question her friend is shouting at her.

As if this was not offensive enough, several of the judges asked inane questions during the interview competition, such as MTV video jockey Ananda Lewis' asking the "delegate" from Nevada if she had ever used her looks or charm to get out of a ticket.

The contestant responded that yes, she once told a patrolman that she sneezed in order to get out of the ticket. Luckily, other contestants were able to produce more intelligent responses to their questions.

At least the judges chose the contestant who clearly gave the best answer to the final question as the winner.

When asked how she felt about the cloning of human beings, the contestant representing Texas explained with poise and intelligence that she had done a lot of reading on the subject and that she does not support the cloning of human beings because she thinks it is a bound that humans should not cross.

Too bad that the contest she won had just spent two hours belittling the intelligence and accomplishments of its contestants. I could not help but feel more disappointed than glad for her.

HANNER continued from page one

business department. That's how we got such a large support in Race for the Cure," Finch said.

Hanner received her undergraduate degree from UNC-Chapel Hill, her MBA from Meredith as a member of the first graduate class and her doctorate from N.C. State.

At Meredith, she was once the director of the MBA program before becoming a full-time professor. As a professor, she taught Human Resources Management and Business Communications. In addition, she was the adviser for the Society for Human Resource Management.

Oatsvall noted that Hanner especially took an interest in 23 plus students, for she herself had been an adult student when she received her undergraduate degree.

"She worked very well with students, especially adult students," Oatsvall said.

"It was particularly important to her that those students be encouraged," Oatsvall

added.

Necrasen, a 23 plus student, said that she felt like Hanner could effectively communicate with adult students.

Several months ago, the business department established the Sandra Hanner Award especially for a 23 plus student. The first award will be presented this Academic Awards Day in April.

Hanner took medical leave in December 1999. She did not officially quit teaching, however, until August 2000.

The funeral will be at the Church of the Nativity in Raleigh at 2 p.m. this Thursday, Mar. 8.

A family visitation will follow the service.

The family asks that donations be made to the Sandra Hanner Award Fund, which is established here at Meredith College, or the Sandra Hanner Conder Memorial Fund at the Church of the Nativity.

CLASSIFIED ADS

SPRING BREAK BAHAMAS
Party Cruise! 5 Days \$279!
Includes Meals & Free Parties!
Awesome Beaches, Nightlife!
Departs from Florida! Cancun
& Jamaica \$439! springbreak-
travel.com 1-800-678-6386

SPRING BREAK PANAMA
City \$129! Boardwalk Room w/
Kitchen Next to Clubs! 7 Parties-
Free Drinks! Daytona \$159!
South Beach \$199! springbreak-
travel.com 1-800-678-6386

ENERGETIC, ENTHUSIASTIC staff to work with school-age children during After-School Care. Weekday afternoon positions available in Raleigh & Cary. Apply, YWCA, 828-3205 or 834-7386.

ATTENTION ALL POLITICALLY CONCERNED WOMEN! Planned Parenthood of the Capital and Coast is currently recruiting dynamic women to participate in a unique opportunity to learn how to bring about political changes regarding women's reproductive health. Call the Education

Office now at 833-7534.

FLEXIBLE, PART TIME afternoon, evening and weekend hours in the Triangle Area. Work with children with disabilities. teaching life skills and providing a break for parents. Paid training provided. Help Easter Seals create solutions that change lives. Call Pam Peterson at (919) 783-8898. EOE

NEED STUDENT to help with 15 mo. old twins March 16-23, June 1-8. Great Pay! Have used Meredith students before. Call Jeff/ Marcy Hobart @ 469-4119.

TEACHER (FT or PT) to work at innovative child care center in downtown Raleigh. Have fun sorking with children while earning great benefits! Contact Lisa at 856-2747 to learn more.

The *Herald* does not check ads before they are placed. When you respond to an ad, do so at your discretion.

RECYCLE

your

MEREDITH
HERALD