## the nation

# Beauty queen relinquishes title

United Press International

CHICAGO — Shanna Jean McNeill, the Illinois beauty queen accused of "bizarre behavior", has agreed to relinquish her claim to the Miss Illinois title and a chance at Miss America — but the $4,000 scholarship is still hers.

An agreement, worked out between lawyers for the state pageant and the 20-year-old Carterville woman, allows McNeill to keep the scholarship she won in the Illinois contest. She also will be listed as a former Miss Illinois and invited to future pageants.

But the agreement ends her threat of a lawsuit and clears the way for the first runner-up Miss Illinois, Elizabeth Russell of Pekin, to attend the Miss America competition in Atlantic City, N.J., Sept. 8.

"I've had some bad things happen recently. Right now, I just want to get on with my life and leave the bitterness behind me," McNeill said Monday after the agreement was announced.

Pageant officials originally said they took away the title from McNeill because of an injury she suffered Aug. 3 when she thrust her hand through two plate glass windows and broke out a screen door at the home of one of her trainers.

The injury to her right wrist would prevent her from playing the piano in the talent portion of the contest, they said.

After she threatened to file suit, however, the operators of the pageant said they really dethroned her for "bizarre behavior."

McNeill claimed to be able to speak in tongues and to prophesy, pageant director Richard Schiller said. Once, he said, she said she "had to go home for 10 days of purification" and when asked what that meant, said, "Just look in Revelations 2."

McNeill said the window-breaking incident occurred after she spent weeks under constant criticism and had a hectic schedule of fittings, hair appointments and makeup consultations.

She cited intense media exposure, lack of sleep, a battle with the flu and a severely restricted diet to keep her trim.

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# Many states help poor with paying high energy costs

United Press International

CLEVELAND — More than half of the 50 states are providing local energy cost-assistance programs for the needy but there is no coordination of the effort by the federal government, Cleveland State University researchers said Tuesday.

The findings were made in a nationwide, six-month survey of energy assistance programs aimed at easing the rising energy cost burden on the poor and elderly. The study was conducted by Cleveland State's College of Urban Affairs.

"The 50-state survey shows clear evidence of the need for a comprehensive, coordinated approach linking up federal, state and local resources to provide energy assistance for the poor and elderly," said Dr. David C. Sweet, dean of the College of Urban Affairs.

Sweet argued that the Carter administration should work to reinforce existing state programs and aid distribution systems, rather than establishing an "entirely new and costly" bureaucracy.

Among the major findings of the 420-page report were:

—"Weatherization and conservation may be the single most effective strategy for providing energy assistance to the poor and elderly and should be part of any energy assistance program."

— "A comprehensive approach is important to coordinate a variety of federal, state and local efforts as well as to provide consumers with complementary services and programs."

—"Relatively little attention has been paid to energy assistance programs related to natural gas, as opposed to electricity, as an energy source."

# Gag order given in priest's trial

United Press International

WILMINGTON, Del. — A court imposed gag order Tuesday silenced participants in the armed robbery trial of a Roman Catholic priest that was interrupted by a lawyer who said his client was guilty, not the defendant.

Superior Court Judge Andrew D. Christie ordered everyone involved in the case not to discuss it after he revealed Monaia confessed to the charges for which the Rev. Bernard T. Pagano was on trial.

State police, who refused to speak with reporters by telephone, were busy investigating the confession of Ronald W. Clouser.

The 39-year-old Brookhaven, Pa., man was brought to Delaware late Monday and appeared briefly before Christie while his attorney implicated him in the crimes that had threatened to send Pagano, 53, to prison.

Police said Clouser had not been formally charged but a Wilmington newspaper said Delaware detectives Monday night confiscated clothing from Clouser's home that was similar to that worn by the well-dressed courteous robber police nicknamed the "Gentleman Bandit."

Police removed a black overcoat, a black coat with black knit trim, tan corduroy coat, a black fur hat and a pair of blue trousers from Clouser's home, the Wilmington Morning News reported.

Police had no comment on the report.

Wilmington Postmaster Edward Beagle said Clouser has been a $23,500-a-year industrial engineer for the Postal Service for 2½ years and had transferred to the Wilmington Post Office from Philadelphia. Beagle said Clouser has been on sick leave since June 1.

"It's real good news," said Pagano, who is charged with five armed robberies and an attempted robbery that took place last winter in the Wilmington area.

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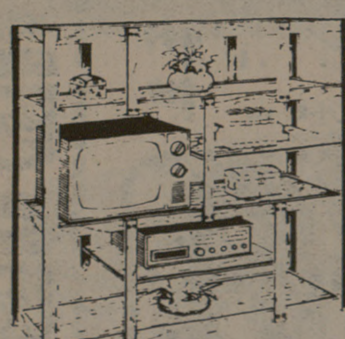

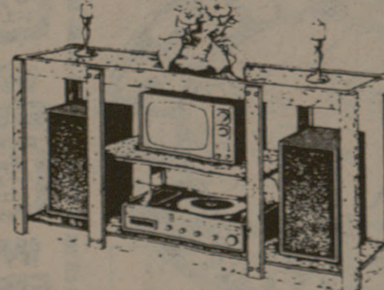
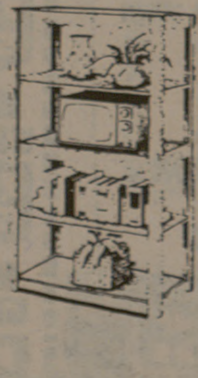
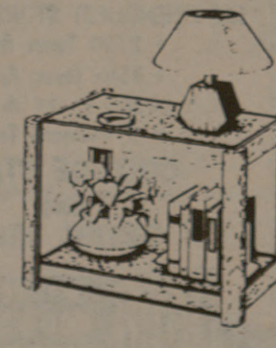

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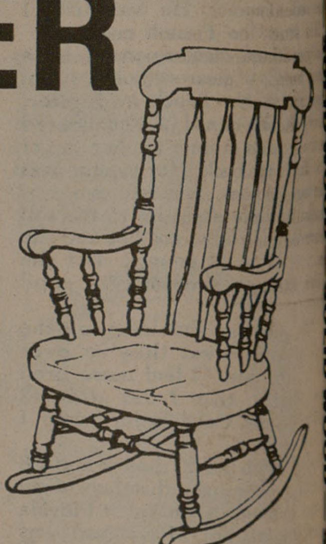
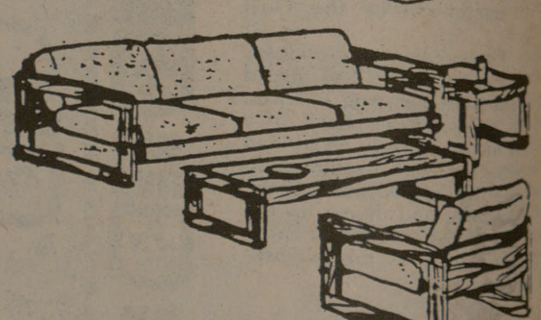
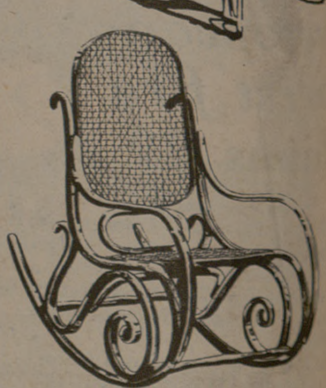

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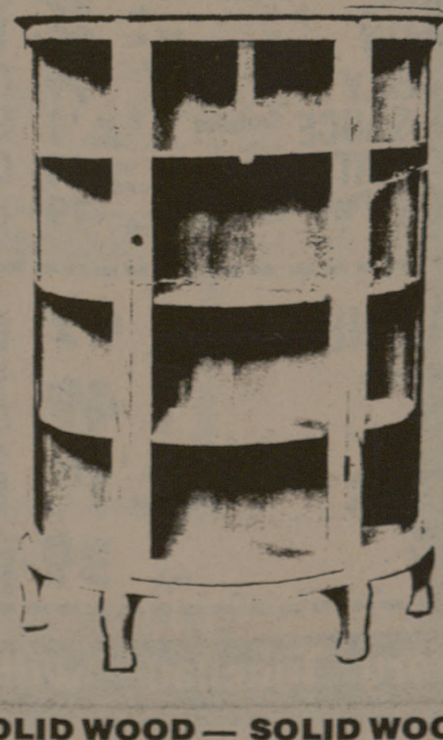

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