

Slouch By Jim Earle



"Any word about when we'll be getting our name tags?"

Miss America Pageant: spend an evening in a meat market

Watching beauty pageants never has ranked high on my list of favorite time-killers. I suppose I prescribe to the feminist complaint that pageants put women on a par with a package of meat at Safeway.

So, what did I do Saturday night? Since I had been assigned to report on the pageant from a local angle, I watched the Miss America Pageant — all two hours and 20 cereal commercials of it.

Aside from the fact that I now feel like a close friend of Tony the Tiger, my opinion of beauty pageants hasn't changed a bit.

When you think about it, the entire premise is ridiculous. How can a small group of judges choose the most beautiful, talented, poised, etc., etc., woman in the United States?

Besides, look at the panel of judges. The judges for the 1982 pageant included a game show host, a man who made his name in the entertainment industry portraying a drunk and several former Miss Americas.

Maybe the people who chose the judges know something I don't, but I can't believe hosting "Tic Tac Dough" makes Wink Martindale an expert on the All-American woman.



Denise Richter

But, at least we now know what happens to former Miss Americas. When the judges were introduced Saturday night, we learned that pageant oldies become fashion consultants and beauty advisers.

I had always wondered about that — I thought former pageant winners might spend their first crownless year trying to get the stitched-on smile off their faces and then wander around the rest of their lives looking for a crowd to wave to.

One of the latest additions to beauty pageants is the stress now placed on "scholarship."

According to pageant officials, contestants are judged on the basis of intelligence as well as beauty, because any woman who represents the best America has to be intelligent. This attempt to out the meat market approach is thought — why don't I believe it?

Could the way the Miss America gown competition was handled have anything to do with my doubts? Probably. In case you missed the pageant, I'll give a brief recap of this portion of the pageant. Each finalist walked to the microphone, stated her name, age and other pertinent information, then turned her back to the television camera and just stood there. I may be gullible but I can't believe a person's mental capacity can be measured from a 30-second rear view. And the IQ test is in serious trouble.

In spite of my objections to beauty pageants, I watched the entire pageant glad Sheri Ryman did as well as she. But, the concept behind pageants seems like a waste — despite the fact that women have made in their fight against sexual stereotypes, the yearly "Miss America special" continues to be held.

High interest rates: No. 1 GOP problem

By CLAY F. RICHARDS
United Press International

WASHINGTON — While President Reagan is still getting high marks from the public and his tax and budget cuts are popular, there are storm clouds gathering over the GOP that could halt the dramatic Republican comeback drive.

After returning from the August recess and talking with fellow GOP House members, Republican leader Bob Michel went straight to the White House to tell President Reagan in strong language there were big problems with the voters back home.

There was a growing concern among voters, the GOP House members reported, that while the Reagan tax and budget cuts were fine, they didn't mean much because high interest rates put a new car — let alone buying a home — out of the reach of many Americans.

Few Republicans are more concerned about the interest rate problem than national chairman Richard Richards who sees the problem as the potential end of his dream of establishing the GOP as the dominant party for the rest of the 20th century.

"Interest rates are indeed a problem and our polls reflect it," Richards said. He said polling also shows that "the typical voter is going to give us more time" to solve the problem, "but I don't know how much time."

"The average guy understands high interest rates better than he understands other problems," Richards said, explaining how interest rates could become the GOP's biggest problem at the polls next fall.

On the positive side, Richards adds: "The president knows that and he is working on it."

While Richards says he doesn't know how much more time the voters will give Republicans, he believes the public's patience will have worn out if things are not better by next November.

"If we haven't turned the corner and haven't improved significantly, we will not do well in the 1982 elections," he said. "If we don't build more homes and sell more cars, some of our early supporters will fall off."

"In 1980 we got votes that traditionally had been Democratic all their lives," he said. "They thought Reagan had a better idea — but if we don't prove we can lead, they will step back to their traditional voting pattern."

Richards says he is worried, but not pessimistic, because the tax cuts that are crucial to the success of the Reagan economic program don't even go into effect until October and the full impact won't be felt until next year.

"I think the president is still riding high," he added.

But he adds glumly: "If supply side economics and Ronald Reagan fail, we will step back to the 29 percent rating we had a year ago — we're going to lose the 19 percent we gained in the last year."

"We certainly don't have any longer than November 1982 — we may not have that long," he said. "If we don't turn things around we will pay the price."

the small society by Brickman



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9-30 BRICKMAN

Let's hear it for economic jargon

By DICK WEST
United Press International

WASHINGTON — The United States, according to one of my favorite economic analysts, is entering a period of "negative growth."

Oooh, I just love economic jargon. Don't you? It's all so exquisitely meaningless.

I mean, what in the everloving, blue-eyed world is "negative growth?" Is it anything like "positive shrinkage," do you suppose?

When I went to school, the economy either grew or it didn't. Went up or down, so to speak. Or else stayed in the same place. Nobody had yet figured out a way for the economy to go up negatively. As a result, people pretty well knew where they stood.

People could be fairly certain that if times didn't get better, or didn't remain as they were, which, goodness knows, was bad enough, why then times most surely would get worse. It was that simple.

This sense of exactitude lent a certain stability to life. It was somehow reassuring to know the economy was going to either expand or contract. But borrrrrrr!

I much prefer modern economic trends and predictions. There is such an air of excitement about them; a venture into the

Great Unknown.

Those of us whose spirits tend to lapse without constant stimulation are grateful when the economists come up with tingling terms like "negative growth" to enliven our rather humdrum existence.

Don't quote me as an authority on this, but I get the impression that "negative growth" was made possible through the advent of "supply side" policies. For that, we can tip our hats to President Reagan.

Except for Reagan's backing, the "supply siders" could never have prevailed and the country probably would have continued down the path of "stagflation." Nobody in his right mind wanted that.

"Stagflation," which apparently developed under President Carter and perhaps other recent chief executives, occurs when we have economic stagnation

and inflation simultaneously. This is as bad as having "recessive properties."

Stagnation alone is an awful business. Inflation by itself can be devastating. Put them both together and you can see the advantages of switching to "negative growth."

Meanwhile, whatever happened to "tight money" the economists were vigorously kicking around a few years ago? One seldom hears that term any more.

What one hears a lot of nowadays is of returning to the gold standard. There is an issue we can all understand.

If you think the present kind of "negative growth" is the best we can do under the gold standard, "Dynamic" is my prediction.

Warped



By Scott McCullar

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