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Photo by Phelan M. Ebenhack

Former Miss TAMU and current Miss Bryan-College Station Stephanie Smith will participate in the Miss Texas-USA pageant June 26 in San Antonio.

Miss B-CS needs \$2,000 for shot at state pageant

Loupot backs former Miss TAMU in new quest

By Richard Tijerina

STAFF WRITER

She's already earned the right to compete in the Miss Texas USA Pageant, but now Stephanie Smith is facing a different challenge — raising the necessary funds to enter the contest.

Smith, a senior biomedical science major from Dallas, currently holds the title of Miss Bryan-College Station and will attend the pageant June 26. Her only problem is funding — she needs approximately \$2,000 to compete in the contest.

Because it was difficult trying to raise the money and maintain her 3.8 grade point ratio, Smith enlisted the help of an A&M former student — Judson Loupot, Class of '32 and owner of Loupot's Bookstores.

"I think people will want to help her," Loupot said. "She's done all the hard work. Now she has the op-

portunity to show it. I'm not going to let \$2,000 keep her from doing that. We're not asking for \$50, just anything anyone can help her with."

Smith held the title of Miss Texas A&M from 1988-1989. She said when she entered the pageant her sophomore year, it was the first time she had ever entered a pageant.

"Miss A&M is how I first got started," Smith said. "I had never entered a pageant before. I was never one of those girls who did pageants for a living. There's not a lot for girls to do at A&M. It caught my eye. It was something I could do."

Smith said being Miss Texas A&M was both hard work and a good opportunity because it helped her grow as a person and gain confidence in dealing with others.

After graduation she hopes to enter medical school — either Southwestern, Baylor or A&M. She said

she wants to be an obstetrician or gynecologist someday.

There are two different pageant systems. The Miss Texas USA Pageant is the stepping stone to the Miss USA Pageant. A similar contest, the Miss Texas America Pageant, leads to the Miss America Pageant in September.

Smith said the two pageants are basically the same, except competition ends at the Miss America Pageant, and the winner of the Miss USA Pageant goes on to compete in the Miss Universe Pageant.

Of the 100 women entered in the Miss Texas USA Pageant, 13 will be selected during the preliminary week as contestants for the televised contest June 26. Five of these will be chosen as the finalists and one will win to represent Texas in the Miss USA Pageant next February.

The last five Miss USA Pageant winners have been from Texas.

The Miss Texas USA Pageant is divided into three competitions: swimsuit, evening gown and onstage interview.

Smith said the responsibility of Miss Texas A&M was to represent the University at various functions where she was called upon to speak.

She said holding the title of Miss Texas USA would be no different because basically she'd be a spokesman for the state.

However, winning Miss Texas USA would alter her educational plans because she wouldn't be able to attend medical school immediately, but it would be worth it because she'd be able to compete in the Miss USA Pageant.

"Obviously, it would put my schooling back another year, but I think it would be worth it," she said. "Two years out of your life is not asking so much when you gain so much from that experience. After that I would go back to medical school."

Smith hopes to raise \$2,000, which would cover her entry fee into the pageant, her plane fare and other pageant costs, including hotel and food costs, opening number costumes and television costs.

Smith has raised almost one-third of what she needs.

Donations can be either dropped off at any Loupot's Bookstore, as long as the money is accompanied with an envelope with the donor's address on it, or mailed to Stephanie Smith, in care of T. Becker, Box 8096, College Station, 77844.

Tour guide says Texans brag too much, changes program

AUSTIN (AP) — After Clare Scherz took over as director of the State Capitol Guide Service last year, something became apparent as she studied the tour's finer points. Texans brag too much.

So, no longer will more than 150,000 Capitol tourists each year hear that a Texas state senator set the record for the longest filibuster.

Nor will they have to listen to claims that we have the tallest capitol building.

It's just not so, says Scherz, a native Texan.

"Louisiana is taller, and Illinois has the tallest domed Capitol," she said. "It's a little taller than the U.S. Capitol, but not enough to matter."

The rewritten Capitol tour includes more references to Indians in Texas history and contributions of some Mexican-Americans to Texas in the war against Mexico.

"I don't like things in the tour that make Texas sound like it's trying to brag," Scherz said. "I don't like that perception of Texans as being bombastic braggers."

Scherz, whose husband is the president of a local bank, started a college career at the University of Texas at age 35 (she is now "more than 50"), and was studying for her

doctorate in English and teaching undergraduate English classes when a friend told her that the tour director's job was available.

She supervises 25 to 40 college students, depending on the season, who work for minimum wage, unless they are bilingual. With the large number of foreign visitors to the Capitol, the guide service likes to have the ability to give tours in Spanish, French and German, if necessary.

Besides giving tours — which are always free and also include the Governor's Mansion — Scherz estimates that half of the guides' time is spent doing research to answer questions about Texas. Scherz said she loves the job but laments that even with thorough preparation, an ordinary day can turn nasty.

Take last Wednesday, for example.

The tours usually visit the House and Senate chambers. But in the morning, the House and Senate were in session. Later, legislative committees tied up the rooms.

"We had nowhere to take all these people who had made reservations."

"You get caught between the rules of the Legislature and people who are demanding to go in this place or that."

Jo Jensen

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