

Here she comes but what should she wear?

Students have differing views on the swimsuit competition issue

Jan Higginbotham
THE BATTALION

For 74 years, contestants in the Miss America Pageant have paraded down the pageant's runway in swimsuits, but that could all come to an end Saturday night. The pageant has been criticized in recent years for exploiting women by having them display themselves in only swimsuits and high heels in the swimsuit competition. Viewers can call the pageant's 900-number during the contest to decide whether or not the swimsuit competition will be included in this year's and future competitions.

A&M students have expressed an interest in the subject, both criticizing and endorsing pageant officials for their decision to let viewers decide the fate of the contest.

Tracie Martin, an A&M student who won Alpha Phi Alpha's national Miss Black and Gold contest, said the swimsuit competition should be eliminated from the Miss America pageant.

"Having had to compete in three levels of swimsuit contests, I feel it undermines the true essence of beauty and of womanhood," Martin said.

A&M's contest does not include a swimsuit competition, but Martin was required to participate in one at the state, regional and national levels of the Miss Black and Gold competition.

"On the surface, it seems harmless," she said. "To actually be up there on stage in that position was very uncomfortable."

Clint Eckhardt, a senior chemical engineering major, said the swimsuit competition is an appropriate part of the pageant.

"If the contest is truly about physical beauty, then the swimsuit contest should be a part of it," he said. "If the contest is about the woman as a whole, then the swimsuit contest should be de-emphasized."

Miss America Pageant participants are judged on their performance in talent, poise and grace, swimsuit and evening gown competitions.



"It seems harmless on the surface. It undermines the true essence of beauty and of womanhood."

— Tracie Martin
Miss Black and Gold 1995

Eckhardt said officials should not be concerned about the presence of the swimsuit competition, but with how the results of such contests impact the pageant's outcome.

"Maybe the whole question should be how much the swimsuit contest should be weighted in the final results," he said. "It is important to be included, but it shouldn't be the focus. It definitely should not be weighted as much as the other segments."

The Miss TAMU scholarship pageant eliminated the swimsuit segment from its competition several years ago.

Christie Barton, second runner-up in the 1995 Miss TAMU Pageant, said the pageant's contest should determine whether or not swimsuits are included in the competition.

"In a pageant like Miss America, beauty is a part of it, as much as people are trying to get away from it," Barton said. "That's why pageants were started in the first place."

Barton said other parts of the pageant could be seen as demeaning to contestants.

"If you're going to take away the swimsuit contest, you might as well take away the evening gown contest," she said. "There really isn't that much of a difference between them anyway, especially now when the dresses are just as revealing as the swimsuits."

Eckhardt said the swimsuit competition allows judges to see contestants in a unique situation.

"I like the swimsuit competition because it shows a woman's poise in a situation that most women would be uncomfortable in," he said. "Sure, it helps to sell the pageant to men, but for the judges, it's a chance to judge the women on being fit and for showing poise in that situation."

But others say the competition serves no purpose. Scott Harper, a junior biology major, said the swimsuit competition should be eliminated.

"The contest isn't necessary," Harper said. "It's just for guys to look at. What does it have to do with anything?"

Harper said there are other ways besides a swimsuit contest to tell if a woman is beautiful.

"In today's society, when you think of an overall beautiful person, people automatically think of physical beauty," he said. "You can also tell if someone is beautiful if they have their clothes on. You don't have to take their clothes off to see that women are beautiful."

Pageant has a long history before television

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) — In the beginning, there was no television. There was no tearful walk down the Convention Hall runway.

On Sept. 6, 1921, eight young women agreed to compete in a bathing suit contest on the beach. Seventy-five years and 68 beauty queens later, what started as a tourism gimmick remains an American institution.

Through a depression, a world war, the women's movement, occasional scandals and hundreds of awful talent acts, the Miss America Pageant has endured as an annual rite of fall that celebrates American women.

When millions of viewers tune in Saturday for the 75th anniversary Miss America Pageant, the event they see will bear almost no relation to the inter-city beauty pageant won by 16-year-old marines champion Margaret Gorman of Washington, D.C.

The first pageant was dreamed up by members of the Avenue Hotelman's Association as one of several events in a "fall frolic" aimed at keeping tourists on the boardwalk after Labor Day.

An 80-year-old man dressed as King Neptune came ashore from a yacht anchored in the ocean and led the women to Garden Pier, where judges picked Gorman.

Campy as it was, word about the beauty contest spread quickly and far. In 1922, 58 women showed up for the pageant. Gorman lost out to Mary Katherine Campbell, Miss Ohio, who later became the only two-time winner.

Some years were missed in the 1920s and '30s. It was not officially called Miss America until 1940.

By most accounts, the biggest contributor to the pageant's longevity was its marriage to television.

When Lee Meriwether was crowned Miss America 1955 before a national viewing audience, the dowry was lucrative television revenue and — perhaps more importantly — an image beamed into living rooms from Philadelphia to Phoenix.

Instead of relying on newsreels and newspapers to get pageant news, fans could now see it live. The image of Miss America walking the runway, roses in hands, fueled the dreams of countless young girls.

"It's like being a princess, being in fairy tale," said one of this year's hopefuls, Miss Vermont Jennifer Lynn Faucette, who dreamed of becoming Miss America as she was growing up.

In the 1940s, the addition of scholarship money under then-executive director Lenora Slaughter was the first of many

initiatives aimed at distancing the pageant from its bathing beauty origins.

The Miss America organization, through its state and local programs, now makes available \$29 million in scholarships to young women annually. Miss America 1996 will receive a \$40,000 scholarship and the other finalists Saturday will receive scholarships ranging from \$8,000 to \$30,000. The money must go to education expenses or be forfeited.

The other contestants receive a \$3,000 scholarship or savings bond.

What has kept the pageant alive and flourishing, according to pageant officials, is a network of 300,000 volunteers at state and local pageants that supplement the work done by the pageant's 14-person staff.

"What's made it last is that it's a grassroots organization," said Debra Maffett Wilson, Miss America 1983. "Holly-

wood sometimes creates things and they don't last. But this is heartland, this is America, this is a program that originates with them (volunteers)," she said.

Television did not make the pageant, she said.

"Of course, TV helped. But it was alive and thriving long before TV," Maffett Wilson said.

First lady plans to vote but keeps her opinion a secret

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. (AP) — Even Hillary Clinton is getting involved in the Miss America Pageant's swimsuit poll. But don't ask how she'll vote.

"Except voting for my husband, I don't tell anyone how I'm voting," Mrs. Clinton said in a telephone chat with Miss America Heather Whitestone.

Viewers of Saturday night's pageant telecast can call in their votes to determine whether to hold the swimsuit competition.

Whitestone, who is deaf, spoke to Mrs. Clinton on Wednesday at her farewell news conference as Miss America. She used a special telephone system for the deaf.



Clinton

HAIR BIZ
Store and Salon
Regular Haircut \$9.95
Special \$6.95
Buy any Joico Conditioner and receive Shampoo Free!
Expires: October 6, 1995
4321 Welborn Rd.
846-4790
Tues. - Fri. 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. • Sat. 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

12TH MAN SPECIAL
Every Saturday, All Fall!
DOUBLE DAVE'S PIZZAWORKS
919 Harvey Rd. 764-DAVE
211 University 268-DAVE
Carter Creek Ctr. 846-DAVE
326 Geo. Bush Dr. 696-DAVE

FLOPPY JOE'S
Software rental
Out with the OLD, In with the NEW!
Come see our updated selection of IBM and MAC software!
Try it before you buy it!
We have Microsoft Office, programming languages and software for Windows 95!
one year membership \$5. off your next purchase of \$20. or more with this coupon
Limit one coupon per visit. Expires 09-30-95.
1705 Texas Ave. South in Culpepper Plaza, at the corner of Texas and Harvey. 693-1706

Medium One Topping Pizza & 2 Large Cokes \$7.99
OR
Dozen Peproni Rolls™ \$9.99
TAILGATERS OR LARGER GROUPS
Pick Up A PARTY PACK
Large One Topping Pizza
Dozen Peproni Rolls™
16 Buffalo Wings \$19.99
(\$26.50 Value FEEDS 5-6)

CINEMARK THEATRES
MOVIES 16 HOLLYWOOD USA
BRYAN COLLEGE STATION Hwy 6 Bypass @ Hwy 30 764-7592
MOVIES BELOW ARE FIRST-RUN
\$3.50 MATINEES BEFORE 6PM
AFTER 6PM ADULTS \$5.50
CHILDREN & SENIORS \$3.50
These times good starting Friday, Sept. 15.
FRIDAY-SUNDAY TIMES ONLY

ANGUS (PG-13)	11:40 2:00 4:20 7:00 9:20
THE USUAL SUSPECTS (R)	12:00 2:20 4:45 7:20 10:10
HACKERS (PG-13)	12:20 2:40 5:00 7:45 10:25
TO WONG FOO: THANKS F (PG-13)	11:10 1:30 4:30 7:15 9:55
MORTAL COMBAT (PG-13)	12:00 2:20 4:40 7:30 9:55
PROPHECY (R)	11:20 1:35 4:00 6:45 9:30
DESPERADO (R)	12:15 2:45 5:15 7:45 10:20
NATIONAL LAMPOON'S SR (R)	11:45 2:00 4:15 6:45 9:50
DANGEROUS MINDS (R)	12:10 2:40 5:10 7:40 10:10
THE BROTHERS MCMULLEN (R)	11:55 2:15 4:35 7:15 9:35
NINE MONTHS (PG-13)	12:05 2:20 4:45 7:40 10:25
A WALK IN THE CLOUDS (PG-13)	11:05 1:40 4:05 6:40 9:20
SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT (R)	11:40 2:00 4:30 7:00 9:40
BABE THE GALLANT PIG (G)	11:45 1:55 4:00
THE NET (PG-13)	12:45 3:00 5:30 7:55 10:30
APOLLO 13 (PG)	6:45 10:00
CLUELESS (PG-13)	11:30 1:45 4:15
VIRTUOSITY (R)	7:00 9:30

We're on the Internet. Our WEB address is: <http://www.ipt.com>
NO PASSES OR SUPERSAVER ACCEPTED ON THIS FEATURE

Cavitt Corner
Used Books & Collectibles
• Paperbacks • Hardbacks
• Furniture • Antiques
• Collectibles & Gifts
822-6633
2100 Cavitt Ave., Bryan
Tues.-Sat. 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Sun. 1-5 p.m.

Party Cakes Delivery
We deliver decorated Cakes or Cookies for that special person or occasion (2) FREE balloons with birthday orders.
CALL (409) 846-0509
(Advance orders please)

Our Customers Say We Offer The Most Stunning Collection of Sterling Silver Jewelry in the Brazos Valley
216 N. Bryan Downtown Bryan 779-8208
Mon. & Sat. 10:15-12:15
EarthArt
ANGELS GARGOYLES AFRICAN ART
INCENSE LAVA LAMPES CELTIC CROSSES
MUSEUM REPRODUCTION

BRAZOS TRADER
ANTIQUE & COLLECTIBLES
Browse in our store for a different shopping experience!
• M - F 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
• Sat 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
• Sundays by chance
210 West 26th St., Bryan (409) 775-2984

To Place Your Ad In
The Battalion
Call 845-2696

Ok, you Aggie VEGETARIANS, get yer' tree huggin', tofu eatin', granola crunchin' butts over here - you don't need to drive to Austin for the good stuff...!
Brazos Natural Foods
4303 S. Texas Ave., Bryan
Ph. 846-4459, Fx 691-2733
(composed w/o Windows 95 on an old Mac)

A+ TUTORING
725 - B UNIVERSITY 260-2660
Tickets go on sale Sunday, Sept. 17th from 5-7 p.m.

SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING

	MON. SEPT. 18	TUES. SEPT. 19	WED. SEPT. 20	THRS. SEPT. 21
CHEM 101 3-5 PM	CH 1,2	CH 3,4	CH 4	PRAC TEST Dr. Conway Dr. Brown Dr. Wolf
CHEM 101 5-7 PM	CH 1,2	CH 3,4	CH 4	PRAC TEST Dr. Conway Dr. Brown Dr. Wolf
CHEM 101 7-9 PM	CH 1,2	CH 3,4	CH 4	PRAC TEST Dr. Conway Dr. Brown Dr. Wolf
PHYS 218 9 PM - MID	CH 1,2,3	CH 4,5	PRAC TESTS	

Dr. Gonther and Dr. DeRose CHEM 101
SAT. SEPT. 16 9-11 AM Ch 5 & PRAC TEST A
SUN. SEPT. 17 6-8 PM PRAC TEST B

Dr. Kennicutt and Dr. Peck
SUN. SEPT. 17 CHEM 102 11 PM - 1 AM PRAC TEST

SUN. SEPT. 17
PHYS 201 8-11 PM PRAC TEST
Dr. Ford, Dr. Clark, Dr. Welch

Aggies Helping Aggies for over 10 Years

	MON. SEPT. 18	TUES. SEPT. 19	WED. SEPT. 20	THRS. SEPT. 21
MATH 151 5-7 PM	REVIEW PART I	REVIEW PART II	PRAC TEST A	PRAC TEST B
MATH 151 7-9 PM	REVIEW PART I	REVIEW PART II	PRAC TEST A	PRAC TEST B
PHYS 208 9-11 PM	CH 23, 24	CH 25, 26	PRAC TEST A	PRAC TEST B

BUSINESS

	SUN. SEPT. 17	MON. SEPT. 18	TUES. SEPT. 19	WED. SEPT. 20
ACCT 229 5-7 PM	CH 4	CH 5	CH 6	PRAC TEST
ACCT 229 7-9 PM	CH 4	CH 5	CH 6	PRAC TEST
FINC 341	9 PM - 12 MID CH 1,2,3	9-11 PM CH 3,4	9-11 PM PRAC TEST	
FINC 341		11 PM - 1 AM CH 3,4	11 PM - 1 AM PRAC TEST	