

Miss Teen Lubbock relinquishes crown

LUBBOCK (AP) — A disgraced teen beauty queen who relinquished her crown after allegedly threatening to make her school's cheerleading squad "disappear from the face of the Earth," said yesterday she only threatened to beat up one cheerleader.

Roni Lowe, Miss Lubbock Teen USA, withdrew from Frenship High School last Tuesday after school administrators told her she would have to attend an alternative school for three months for making the comment. She gave up her crown days later.

Lowe won the beauty pageant in February but did not make the cut during cheerleading tryouts in March.

"I wasn't getting along with one of the cheerleading girls very well," Lowe told the Associated Press yesterday. "She had been saying that I was going to kick her butt and everybody was going to know who did it. This was fifth-grade stuff."

Lowe said she believes she was suspended because the principal's daughter is a cheerleader.

"I didn't threaten the whole cheerleading squad," Lowe said. "I think it's ridiculous to use violence. I use my mouth as my hands. I think they wanted to punish me because

the principal was mad about it, since his daughter is a cheerleader."

Other students confirmed that the principal's daughter is a cheerleader at the school. Lowe said she also believes she was denied a place on the squad unfairly.

"I told her I was going to kick her butt. This was fifth-grade stuff."

— Roni Lowe
Former Miss Lubbock Teen USA

"I was never told whether or not I was on the squad or what the vote was," Lowe said. "I think they just kept me off because there was a group that wanted to be together on the squad."

School administrators declined to comment on Lowe's statements.

Her suspension was part of Frenship Independent School District's zero-tolerance policy against threats, which school officials implemented after school shootings in Littleton, Colo.

"Last spring we began looking at all of the tragedies that were occurring across the nation and we decided we wanted to be proactive in making sure nothing like that would occur here," Paul Whitton, Frenship's superintendent, said. "It is unfortunate, but there isn't any room for joking anymore when it comes to threats."

The alleged threats, if proven, also would violate the pageant system's strict behavior policies and a moral code all contestants sign, pageant officials said.

"Roni is an intelligent young lady, she is very considerate and did what she thought was best," pageant director Kathy Bouldin said yesterday. "This was the best decision for everybody involved."

Lowe said she gave up the crown to protect the pageant's reputation.

"I didn't want the pageant to get a bad name, so I didn't try to fight anything," she said.

Monica Vasquez, a 16-year-old Frenship High junior, will serve the rest of Lowe's term as Miss Lubbock Teen USA 1999. Vasquez will receive the prize package Lowe surrendered, including a \$500 college scholarship. The new queen will compete in the Miss Texas Teen USA contest in November.

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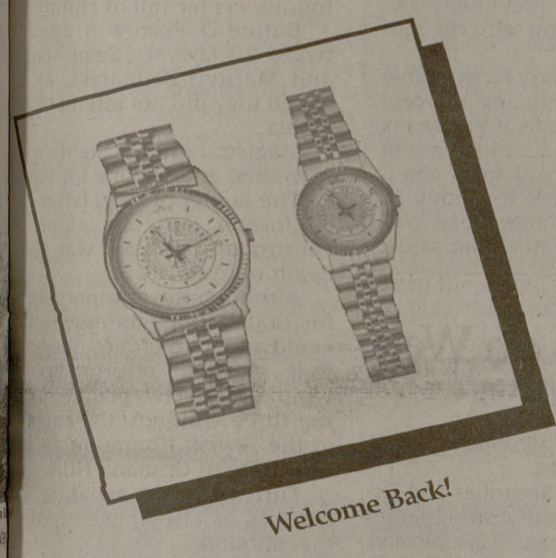
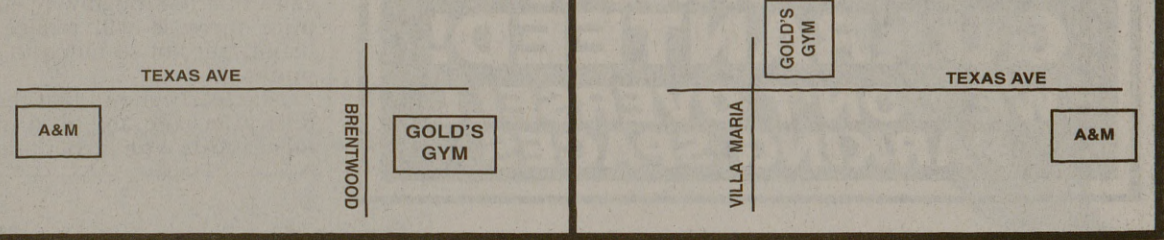
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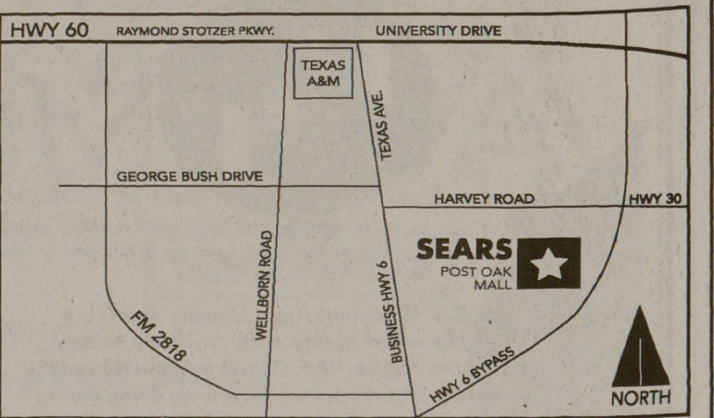
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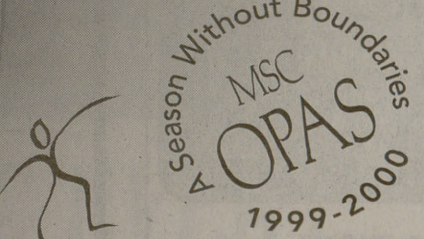
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