

Miss Oregon keeps title, student roles separate

By Kent Hancock
Of the Emerald

Few people at the University are aware that the current Miss Oregon is a student here. Her two roles are deliberately kept separate.

Jana Peterson is a 22-year-old senior majoring in telecommunications and film and has attended college for the past five years with the help of scholarship money she earned through the Miss America Pageant.

Originally from Newport, she

competed in the Miss Lincoln County competition in 1982 while still a senior in high school. She placed as the first runner-up and emerged as the talent winner.

While in high school Peterson excelled in many areas. She was a member of the jazz choir, a cheerleader and was inducted into the local chapter of the National Honor Society. Her junior and senior years she was listed in the "Who's Who of Students in America," which is a national magazine honoring

students of excellence. She also participated in the Talented and Gifted Program in high school.

After graduating, she moved to Portland to attend Mount Hood Community College. She competed in the local pageant there and was crowned Miss Metro-East 1983. Following that she went to the state pageant in Seaside. Peterson didn't make the finals, but she did leave as the preliminary swimsuit winner.

"I left the state pageant feeling disappointed and sorry, but I learned from it," Peterson said.

In the spring of 1986 she competed in the Miss Linn-Benton Pageant.

Fate seemed against her on the night of that pageant. After accidentally locking her keys inside of her car while still at her hotel and after a wrong turn on the way to the pageant location, Peterson arrived with less than five minutes remaining before the opening dance number. Pageant officials held



Jana Peterson

the opening for five minutes while she dressed, and the big night began.

"I was scared," Peterson confessed, "because I had worked hard for months, and I didn't want to miss my chance." Her hard work showed as she went on to dazzle the judges and capture the title of Miss Linn-Benton.

She went on to Seaside in July for the state pageant, and this time she didn't leave disappointed — she left Miss Oregon.

Actually, she didn't leave. The newly crowned winner must stay in Seaside the remainder of the summer to prepare for the Miss America Pageant that is held in early September. During those summer months the winner makes few, if any, personal appearances as Miss Oregon. Instead her time is spent preparing for the pageant ahead.

Peterson had about six weeks to prepare in the four areas in which she would be judged: talent, swimsuit, evening gown and a seven-minute personal interview.

To prepare for the interview she read the Oregonian and U.S. News & World Report and glanced through the Wall Street Journal each day. She also watched the evening news each night and studied facts about Oregon.

After reading an article, Peterson said it was important to form an opinion about the

issue at hand and stick with that opinion. "The interviews range from questions on social, political and economic issues to state questions, such as naming the state flower or 'What's the state rock?'" she said.

A question she was later asked during competition was: "If I were a corporation looking for a new home, give me three reasons why I should choose Oregon?"

To help her prepare for questions like this, people in the Seaside community conducted mock interviews twice a week.

Peterson also exercised two times a week, went to an hour-and-a-half voice lesson three times a week and spent half an hour a day walking and turning in high heels. Three times a week there were also fittings for swimsuits and evening gowns, and each week she went to Portland to purchase outfits and accessories.

"Through all of the preparation I learned to be disciplined. I became more goal oriented and discovered that nothing comes without paying for it," Peterson said of her summer in Seaside.

The six weeks of preparation passed quickly, and she was off to the Miss America Pageant in Atlantic City, N.J. The 51 contestants are required to be present during the seven days of "pageant week," but Peterson arrived a few days early to adjust to the climate and recover from jet lag.

It's estimated that about 60 million people in the United States and abroad watched the final night of the four-night pageant.

"I have watched the pageant since I was a little girl," Peterson said, "and waiting backstage to come out was a weird feeling." She explained she was neither nervous nor scared. "It was a good feeling."

While waiting backstage for her talent competition, Peterson had a near disaster. She was in one of the practice rooms, which are located up two flights of stairs, practicing her singing with a hand-held stereo and headset. She began walking down the stairs 15 minutes before her scheduled performance time, and on the way down her heel caught in the hem of her gown. She tripped and bounced down several stairs on her shin before catching the railing with one hand. "I don't know why," she said, "but in my other hand I was holding my Walkman as tight as I could."

Peterson's biggest fear was that she had ripped her nylons or ruined her dress, neither of which happened. The only damages were a few small bruises on her shin and a broken nail, which she glued back on with nail glue borrowed from another contestant just in time to perform her songs.

"It was just one of those things where you learn to get up and go on," she said. "I knew they weren't going to hold the pageant for me."

With the big pageant behind her, Peterson returned to

Turn to Miss, Page 12



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"Report from Africa"

Peace Corps Volunteer Margaret Pettibone of Seattle, a health and nutrition specialist serving in the West African nation of The Gambia, recently wrote this account of her work in that developing country.

"Bakendik is a Gambian farming village located on the North bank of the Gambia River, not far from the Senegalese border. There are 1,000 people living here speaking diverse languages of Mandinka, Wolof, Fula, Jola and Serrehule. Two chiefs preside over the village, one a Mandinka, one a Wolof. Both served in the British Army during WWII. The main activity is farming — rice and vegetables by the women and couscous by the men.

One villager, Mustapha Jammen, has been propagating Mango trees in his back yard in tin cans for 5 years or more. He was encouraged to do this when he heard radio reports out of Senegal talking of the advance of the desert. (There is, of course, no electricity here, so he listens when he has batteries.) When the trees are about 18 inches high he transplants them to a field and carries water to them from a well which is about one quarter mile distant. He protects his trees with bamboo fences and bits of corrugated tin.

INFORMATION TABLE:
Tues., - Wed., Apr. 28-29
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
EMU Lobby

FILM PRESENTATION:
Tues., Apr. 28
12:30 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.
EMU Room 108
Film: "The Toughest Job You'll Ever Love"

SCHEDULED INTERVIEWS:
May 12-13
9 a.m. - 4 p.m., Hendricks Hall

Career Planning & Placement Center. Sign up in advance, bring your completed application to the interview.

For more information call 686-3235

There is no herd law here so goats, sheep, and the big horned African cattle wander at will. Anything green attracts them. The survival rate for Mustapha's trees is very low. After five years he has 7 trees.

As a Peace Corps Volunteer I was posted to this village to investigate the causes of malnutrition. At the same time, I became aware every day that the land was blowing — here they call it the Harmattan winds. Sand is everywhere.

In the hopes of increasing food production, changing land use and perhaps altering the work load of women, the villagers and I began talking of tree planting. Together with Mustapha, the Primary School Headmaster, and a prominent woman we obtained U.S. A I D funds to provide adequate fencing and an accessible water supply for a fruit farm. School children are each assigned a tree to care for and can be seen watering their trees morning and night. Villagers who were skeptical of Mustapha's vision are now asking how to start their own. It is a beginning."

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SLIDE PRESENTATIONS:
Tues., Apr. 28
7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.
EMU, Forum Room

"Peace Corps At Work in The Philippines"
Wed., Apr. 29
3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
EMU, Maple Room
"Peace Corps Perspective On Sierra Leone"

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