

News & Entertainment

Milton's Sales crowned Miss Toronto Universe



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Milton beauty queen Tara Sales emerged the winner of the recent Miss Toronto Universe pageant.

By IRENE GENTLE
The Champion

Milton pretty woman Tara Sales has big plans for her future.

And Dream Big, a mentoring foundation aimed at helping kids find a career fit, is a part of it.

Ms Sales, 23, was crowned Miss Toronto Universe November 12 in her first-ever pageant shot.

Up next is a series of steps hopefully leading to the Miss Universe crown itself.

In the meantime, and in true beauty queen fashion, she has her sights set on ending the cycle of child poverty by giving kids a future in the work world.

"A way to tackle that would be to train people properly," said Ms Sales.

The idea is to hook high school students up with career mentors to give them a taste of the working world. Then Dream Big would help the kids find ways to make it there on their own.

"In school, you don't learn steps to achieve your goals," explained Ms Sales. "This would allow them to set, prioritize and achieve their goals."

Since starting small is a part of success, Ms Sales plans to launch Dream Big with select group of students. "I'm going to start with a specific high school, take a group of students from there, and then expand it. If any school is interested, I'd be happy to start there."

Meanwhile, she's hoping adult mentors will come forward to help. "Anyone in any specific industry that would have an hour to talk to people."

Though much of Dream Big would rely on volunteering, Ms Sales said funds could be raised by hosting events such as fashion shows in high schools.

Currently, she's busy parlaying her freshly-won crown into appearances on the Mike Bullard Show, among others. And she's still riding high from winning the first pageant she entered. The experience, she said, was lovely. But it wasn't all glitz and glamour. For one, Ms Sales was sick as a dog on the day of the show.

"I was trying not to cough and hack while I was doing my speech," she said.

Then there's the whole bathing suit thing. In a nod to changing times, the

cheesecake portion of the pageant isn't open to the public anymore, and the points it nets are fewer than in the past.

But Ms Sales still found herself decked out in a swim suit, pantyhose and high heels, parading privately before the judges. "How ridiculous is that? I hate that part. Do you ever wear pantyhose with a bathing suit? It's almost degrading."

She said brains account for more than ever in modern day pageants and traditional pageant beauty is about as old-fashioned as an Edsel. "They're not looking for this tall, thin beauty anymore."

But she warns others following in her footsteps that not all pageants are created equally. "Any girls wanting to get into pageants shouldn't have to pay a large fee," cautioned Ms Sales. "There's a lot of not very reputable pageants in Toronto."

Bateman coming to Harrop

Laird on hand tonight

Whether it be moody portraits of a skulking tiger, or the frozen vulnerability of a white tailed deer before flight, work by Robert Bateman is always recognizable.

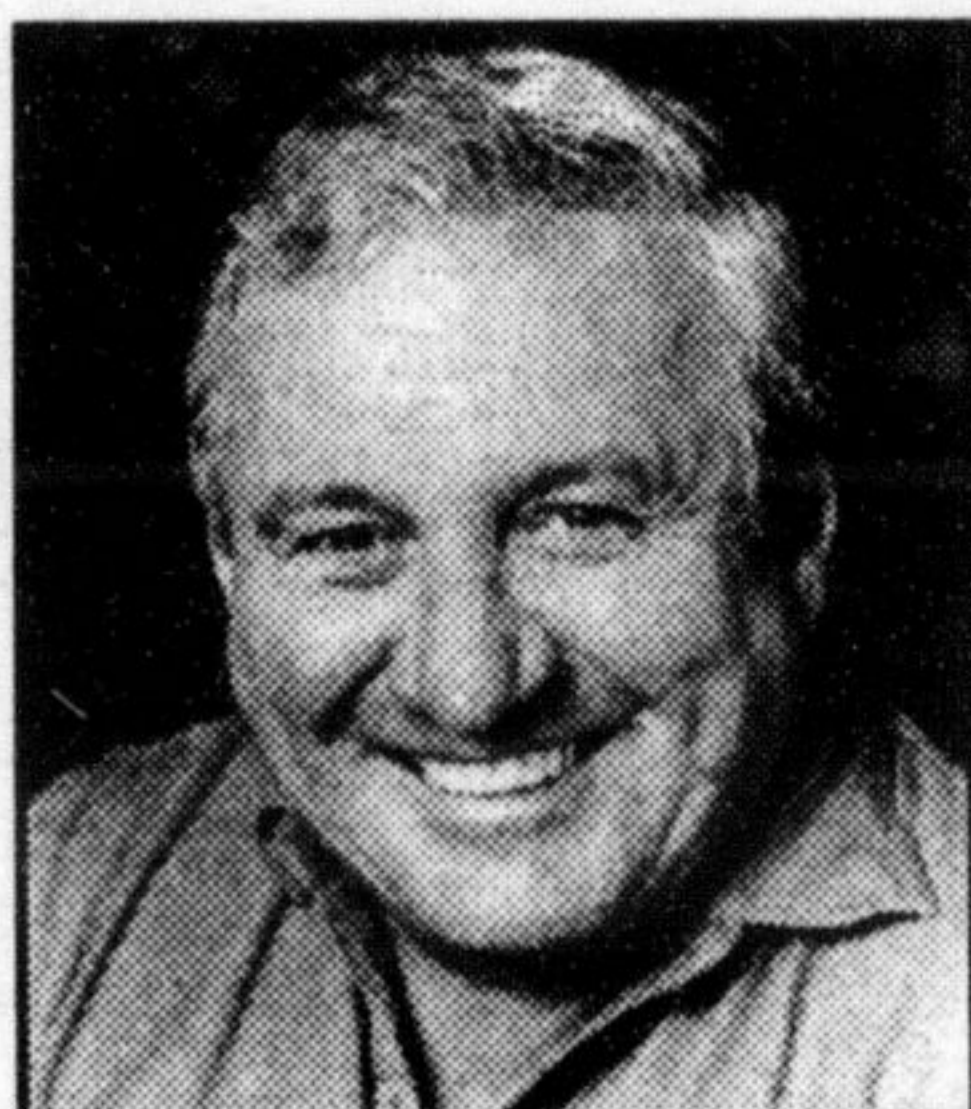
And on Sunday, Dec. 3, residents, art and nature lovers can meet the man behind the canvas at the Harrop Gallery, 345 Steeles Ave. The event will feature a wide selection of limited-edition prints, and purchases can be signed in gold leaf pen by Mr. Bateman.

For those who like to get their Christmas shopping done early, the Harrop also holds a meet-and-greet with artist Doug Laird.

Homey, nostalgic scenes of boys playing hockey on a frozen pond or a peaceful evening stroll along a comfortably lit homestead are trademarks of his work.

He'll be at the gallery tonight between 7 and 9 as well as Saturday between 1 and 4 p.m.

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Church hosts a rendition of Messiah

History will gently come to life December 6 with a historically accurate rendition of Handel's Messiah.

The music will unfold at Knox Presbyterian Church, 170 Main St. E., courtesy of the acclaimed ensemble Arkady.

Under the musical direction of Ronald Beckett, Arkady will present a historically faithful production of the oratorio at 7:30 p.m.

Reproduction baroque instruments performed in a baroque manner make the difference.

"These are period instruments being used," said Chris Fischer, director of musical ministries at the church and a tenor soloist with Arkady.

"It makes the parts clearer to hear. It's full of life in a very different way."

So don't expect the wave of sound often associated with modern orchestras.

"Over time, bigger became better," said Mr. Fischer.

"As each generation has gone by, the volume has increased. This offers a more intimate Messiah."

Ironically, early music appears to appeal especially to younger classical music lovers and musicians, noted Mr. Fischer.

"It's a very intergenerational kind of audience."

Tickets cost \$15 for adults and \$10 for students and seniors. Seating is limited.

Tickets are available at the door or by calling the church office at 878-6066.