Photos from Vegas

January 28, 2009 By Shawn Decker

Finally! Pictures from the glitz and glory of Miss America! Click on any of the pictures to go to the entire photo album on Facebook.

Tara Wheeler, Miss Virginia 2008!

Tara did a great job at Miss America representing the Commonwealth. Her evening gown was the best on her preliminary night, and with her background in hockey as well her training with the Army, she could have kicked everyone's butt at the pageant!

But she didn't. Why? Because she's classy: she's Miss Virginia.

Took this picture after the final night of competition. I mentioned to Tara that one of my other favorites of the week was Miss Kansas, Emily Deaver, and she said that they were roommates (every contestant gets one) and that Kansas was as cool as she came across to the audience.

Another cool person is Tara's mom. She gave me a big hug and told me she reads the blog... (hi! Tara did a great job!) She also said, "Tell Gwenn we haven't forgotten about the dress she loaned Tara for Miss Virginia!"

Miss New York, Leigh-Taylor Smith!

Leigh-Taylor is another Virginia girl. In pageants, you have to win a local to go to state, then win state to compete at Miss America. What was interesting about this year was that Leigh-Taylor moved to New York, won Miss Brooklyn and then Miss New York! In Virginia, she was Miss Arlington, and when her year was over she crowned the new titleholder... Tara Wheeler!

So many people traveled to Las Vegas to cheer on both girls. It was a pretty rare opportunity for the Commonwealth to seize the crown, and rule the world of pageantry...

As it turned out, the pageant Gods selected Miss Indiana. But Tara and Leigh-Taylor did themselves and their homestate proud. LT was able to snag 3rd Runner-Up, and got $15,000 in scholarship money, which is the big difference between Donald Trump's Miss USA (more exposure, less for the contestants- including clothing) and the Miss America Organization.

Speaking of clothing, it wouldn't be a trip to Las Vegas without some shopping. And Gwenn snagged this Betsy Johnson sweater... was it for the fashion, or was this a sign to all the ladies of the night swirling around her man in Vegas? Or a none-too-subtle sign to Miss Virginia that she wants that dress back?

Positively Yours,

Shawn

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