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## Miss Wisconsin gets deal on wheels

By MICHAEL MARTIN | [mike.martin@lee.net](mailto:mike.martin@lee.net)

Last Wednesday, when Brenengen Chevrolet presented Holmen's Kristina Smaby with a brand new Chevy Cobalt LT to drive during her reign as Miss Wisconsin, the event had the definite feel of a family reunion. In one sense, that's because it was.

Smaby's father, Frank, has worked at Brenengen's for 17 years. "And before that he and I worked together at Dahl Ford," said Don Brenengen. "I've watched Kristina grow up."



Kristina Smaby, recently crowned Miss Wisconsin, got her first look at her brand new Chevy Cobalt, hers to drive during her yearlong reign.  
Photo by Michael Martin

Noting that Frank was proudly wearing a button with his daughter's picture on it, Don had this to say: "I think that's going to be part of his wardrobe for the next year."

"I can remember Kristina coming to company picnics as a little girl," Cheryl Brenengen said.

"I've been down here (Brenengen's) plenty of times — enough to notice all the changes over the years," Smaby said. "And I think I had Paige (the Brenengens' granddaughter) in my dance class the very first year that I taught dance."

The Brenengens were proud to supply Smaby's transportation for the coming year. "They asked us and we were happy to do it," Don said.

In addition to the car, Smaby will get \$2,000 worth of gas donated by Kwik Trip. "After that, I'll have to pay for my own," she said.

As Smaby makes appearance after appearance around the state, the car will be her only mode of transportation. "I'm really excited about getting to be in so many different communities, but I know I'm going to be piling on the miles," she said.

The car will have a GPS system as well, so her map-reading skills will not be severely tested. "If it was just Kristina and a map that probably would not be good," the former Miss Holmen admitted with a laugh. In addition, she will always have a Miss Wisconsin official to ride along and keep her company while coordinating her appearances.

Smaby admitted she still hasn't had time to fully absorb that she really is Miss Wisconsin. "The first time I wrote that (in signing a contract), it just didn't seem real — I don't think it will really hit me until next year when I'm done," she said.

Just in the first few days of Smaby's reign, her life has become a whirl of appearances, with more requests for her presence being fielded every day.

"I've got parades to go to in Elkhart Lake and Columbus, and I already did a parade in Oregon — before this week I didn't even know there was an Oregon, Wisconsin!" she admitted.

Smaby is looking forward to using her position as a platform to promote one of her major interests — increasing the connections between the generations. "I'm going to be working with Big Brothers and Sisters. They have 19 locations in Wisconsin," she said. "I want to encourage more baby boomers to take on mentor roles."

The reigning Miss Wisconsin is also an ambassador for the Children's Miracle Network, another job Smaby is eager to take on. "Also, when I get back from the Miss America pageant next February, I'm going to host another Intergenerational Prom in La Crosse," Smaby said (the first Intergenerational Prom was held last winter).

Exactly what kind of car Smaby would be receiving was kept a secret until the last possible moment. Then, when her dad brought around the red Cobalt they'd prepared for her, Smaby got another surprise. Next to the driver's door handle were her initials "KKS" and below that a pair of dancing shoes in honor of her passion for dance.

"She never expected that," said her dad. "Did you see the tear in her eye?"

After Smaby's father brought the car around, the two embraced. Afterwards, Frank Smaby confessed to being about as proud as a parent could be: "I'm extremely happy. I guess I'm on Cloud Nine. She's a very talented young lady who works hard and has done it all on her own."

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