

The nomadic year of being crowned Miss International 2017

BY EVAN WILLIAMS
ewilliams@floridaweekly.com

For Kelsey Craft, a 26-year-old who lives in Estero and is a physician assistant at Gulfstream Urology in Fort Myers and Bonita Springs, it has been the year of being crowned Miss International. Since then her life was “flipped upside down.” It was the year of visiting all 50 states and six foreign countries as a Miss International spokesperson for her chosen platform: to decrease preventable diseases, including obesity and heart disease, through healthy choices.

It was a year of ups and downs in planes and sometimes on the ground: the year her grandfather died, of getting stuck in London because of Hurricane Irma, of keeping her belongings in a storage locker in Bonita Springs and living out of a suitcase, and the year of graduating with a master’s of medical science degree from Nova Southeastern University.

The Miss International organization sets itself apart from other beauty pageants in that besides beauty, community service is emphasized, specifically the winner’s reigning year of promoting whatever message she chooses.

“It isn’t all about the glitz and glamour,” she said, “It’s about, what do you want to do with this year?”

Contestants are scored most heavily on personal interviews with judges and on fitness, evening gown, and fun fashion wear events (there’s no swimsuit competition). Miss International started 30 years ago, according to the organization’s website, and the rules include that



PAULA PRESTON / COURTESY PHOTO
Kelsey Craft is crowned Miss International 2017 on Aug. 5, 2017 in Charleston, W.Va.

a contestant must be age 19 to 30, single, without children and “of good health and moral character.” Ms. Craft also had to win the Miss Florida International statewide competition before moving on to compete for the highest crown.

The prize package is worth upward of \$10,000, she said, including a travel allowance, wardrobe and makeup sponsorships and other odds and ends such as luggage. During her travels she represented American Heart Association’s Go Red for Women, attending Heart

SEE INTERNATIONAL, A26 ►



YOUR STYLE. YOUR BUDGET. YOUR HOME.



30-70% Off Retail!

Buy it off the floor or have it delivered the next day!



Monday thru Friday
9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
One-Stop Shopping for Your Home

Furniture Factory Direct

(239) 390-5111
MiromarDesignCenter.com
I-75, Exit 123, in Estero
across from
Miromar Outlets

MIROMAR DESIGN CENTER

07252618-1610

YOU’LL FIND IT **HERE!**

Say Goodbye to ED

Over 80% of Erectile Dysfunction (ED) issues are caused by poor blood flow. NeoWaves therapy is a scientifically proven, non-invasive procedure that uses low intensity shockwaves to increase blood flow to the penis. The procedure is based on a large series of clinical studies showing a greater than 75% success rate in treating ED.

The NeoWaves procedure optimizes erections, sensitivity, and sexual performance. The low intensity shockwaves repair aged blood vessels, stimulate growth of new blood vessels, and remove decades of micro-plaque. The therapy is painless and there is no need for medication, surgery or downtime. NeoWaves uses a specific protocol designed to optimize efficacy, safety and results.

NEOWAVES
REPOWER YOUR LIFE

Call 239-301-4475
to schedule a **FREE**
Consultation!

Or visit us online
NEOWAVES.COM

Individual results may vary. | © All rights reserved

The Enterprise Way

Need a rental?

1 800 rent-a-car • enterprise.com

Reference Account # **FLAWECK** to receive a 10% Florida Weekly discount.



We'll pick you up.®

Applies to Economy through Minivan vehicles reserved in advance for rentals up to 30 days at all Southwest Florida locations. Rates are as posted at time of reservation at enterprise.com or by calling 1 800 rent-a-car. Rental must end by December 31, 2017. Offer may not be used with other coupons, offers or discounted rates. Vehicles are subject to availability. Standard rental qualifications apply. Offer does not apply to taxes, surcharges, recovery fees, and optional products and services including damage waiver at \$18.99 or less per day. Check your auto insurance policy and/or credit card agreement for rental vehicle coverage. Other restrictions, including holiday and blackout dates, may apply. Pickup and drop-off service is subject to geographic and other restrictions. Void where prohibited. Original coupon must be redeemed at time of rental. Pick-up subject to geographic and other restrictions. Enterprise, We'll Pick You Up and the "e" logo are registered trademarks of Enterprise Rent-A-Car. ©2016 Enterprise Rent-A-Car. H00618 8/16

Lifetime Eye Care for the Entire Family

Since 1971
EyeCenters of Florida
Clearly, the right choice

- Cataract Surgery
- LASIK Vision Corrections
- Macular Degeneration Treatments
- Eye Exams
- Optical Shop & Contacts
- Pediatric Ophthalmology



David C. Brown, MD, FACS
 Founder & Medical Director

Dial ****EYE** on your Mobile Phone for an Appointment Today!

Call **239.939.3456**

ecof.com

We're In Your Neighborhood

INTERNATIONAL

From page 7

Walk events, and teamed up with the Blue Zone Project, which advocates for health initiatives that increase longevity.

Last year was the third time Ms. Craft entered the Miss International pageant after moving to Florida following the completion of her bachelor's degree in Idaho.

Ms. Craft was born in Alaska. This year she returned there, finally taking a small plane into Tuluksak, where her dad lives. But she grew up in Longview, Wash., with an older brother, raised by a single mom who worked as a phlebotomist. She misses Washington state's beautiful landscapes. She doesn't miss the rain.

She is also quite tall. Even in middle school she wore pants that didn't fit, as if she'd rolled them up to walk through a deep puddle.

"I was nicknamed High Waters Girl at one point because I couldn't afford pants that were long enough," she said.

This year she made appearances at her old high school, at Girl Scout meet and greets, at Florida Gulf Coast University, at her old sorority. She served meals at a homeless shelter, and let a little girl try on her crown. Across the U.S., she pointed out that heart disease could be prevented through healthy lifestyle choices such as diet, exercise and mental health. She talked about "the simple things we can take control over" such as regularly checking your blood pressure, body mass index, blood sugar and cholesterol.

On the road, she found that the other pageant contestants, who had won vari-



COURTESY PHOTO

Miss International appears with other contestants in the "Mrs." International pageants (like the "Miss" contests but for married women).

DESIGNER HOME DECOR, AT WAREHOUSE DIRECT PRICES!

Always The Freshest New Looks In Home Design,
 Always At A Fraction of What You'd Expect To Pay!
 Always Ready To Take Home With You or
 Next Day Delivery!



Alison CRAIG
 HOME FURNISHINGS

5450 TAMiami TRAIL N. NAPLES 239.594.1555

ACROSS FROM WATERSIDE SHOPS ONE BLOCK NORTH OF PINE RIDGE ON U.S.41

M-SAT 9-5 SU 10-5 • WWW.ALISONCRAIGHOME.COM



LOCALLY OWNED & OPERATED!
 CELEBRATING OUR 17TH YEAR!



COURTESY PHOTO

Miss International at a Heart Walk in Washington D.C.

ous Miss International state contests, were gracious.

“The women I competed against, or with, they were my biggest fans this year,” she said.

“It isn’t all about the glitz and glamour. It’s about, what do you want to do with this year?”

— Kelsey Craft, Miss International

She took a day trip through six Northeastern states with Miss Vermont, attended the Southern New England Heart Walk with Miss Rhode Island, visited the 9-11 Museum with Miss New York, and stayed with Miss Hawaii for a week on the island of Oahu. Miss

Arizona introduced her to her favorite barbecue place in Phoenix, Bobby-Q.

And still, the year of her reign is not quite over. Ms. Craft was awarded the crown on August 5, 2017 in Charleston, WV., and will soon leave to crown next year’s pageant winner. Then it will be time to resume “the simple life” — full-time work, repaying student loans, reconnecting with friends. But for a few more weeks she’s the Miss International of healthy choices, armed with information aimed at living longer as well as better: stress relief, sleep, and a sense of purpose are among the Blue Zone Project’s Power 9 fundamentals. And, heart disease is the leading cause of death among women, but some 80 percent of those deaths are preventable.

Her nomadic 26th year wasn’t always easy, but it was also the year that she chose, with her passion for travel. It was a year that added to her thirst for visiting other places more than quenching it.

“That will never stop, there’s not even enough time in a lifetime.” ■



Make Your Home, Vehicle or Business COOLER!

MENTION THIS AD TO GET **10% OFF** WITH 50 SQFT MINIMUM PURCHASE EXPIRES 8/31/2018



ENERGY EFFICIENT | CLEAR VIEW OUTSIDE | PRIVACY LOOKING IN!

UP TO 80% TOTAL SOLAR ENERGY REJECTION AND REDUCES GLARE
(RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL FILM)

Change the look of your entryway with our **DECORATIVE WINDOW FILM**



CALL FOR A FREE ESTIMATE: 239-275-TINT (8468)

Cell: 239-219-5857 • bestchoicewindowtinting@aol.com • 92-A Mildred Drive, Fort Myers, FL

LICENSED & INSURED **www.BestChoiceWindowTinting.com**

VOTE Smart Growth
BRAD SCHIFFER
For Collier County Commission, District 2

SUPPORTED BY:



Brad Schiffer Wants To **Protect** YOUR **Quality of Life** in Collier County. Please **VOTE** on or before **August 28, 2018**. For more info: <https://bradschiffer.com/>

Political advertisement paid for and approved by Brad Schiffer, Republican Party of Florida, for County Commission, District 2.