

November 7,

# Sunday FOCUS

Heritage Sunday

## Role model for teens

By Pat Andrews

Focus Editor

—Dawn Martin has not appeared in *The Downriver* publication in some years, not since the days the Keosauqua High School graduate was making headlines as a teen beauty queen and band majorette and was featured in the *Mellus News* papers.

—She includes those stories and photographs in a new book she has written, not so much as a trip down memory lane, but as an example of how times have changed for a young woman.

—The book is titled "Fast Girls Finish Last" and it takes but a second to realize the important message the author wants to convey.

—Martin, now in her 30s and living in southern California and since she left this area has had a successful career appearing for several years in recurring roles on the soap opera "Days of Our Lives" and as a runway and print model.

—Martin continues to make commercials and appear in stage productions, but it was not until the concept for her book surfaced, that she began to establish herself as a much sought after talk show circuit guest.

—The book is one-of-a-kind and a bit of a literary shocker at first. She provides an authoritative commentary on issues facing young women today and in graphic style.

—Her bluntness may be controversial in some eyes, but is appropriate with candor and a language style geared to teen readers.

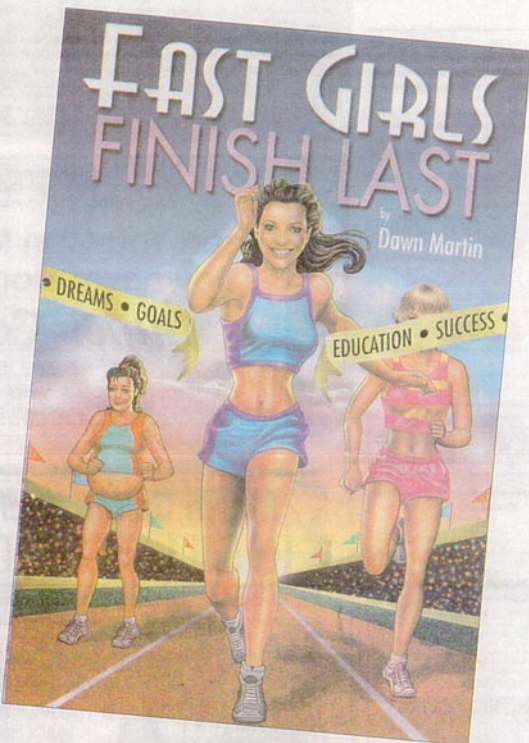
—During a recent phone interview, Martin stressed that she is not anti-sex; but that "a mismanaged sex life, especially at a young age, can affect you the rest of your life."

—That is the message she has taken to programs hosted by Oprah Winfrey, Geraldo Rivera, Montel Williams, Leeza and Jenny Jones with great response.

—Martin considers herself one of the lucky ones. "I kept myself busy with activities and my mother kept me busy," she recalled.

—Unlike many teens today, I always knew where my mother was and she always knew where I was."

—Martin could have easily been the fast girl she now warns oth-



Dawn Martin

ers about

"And I didn't have the worries that are present today," she added. "My mother gave me the staying a virgin until marriage talk geared to the 1970s. Now teens have to worry about contracting AIDS, venereal diseases or enduring deep emotional scars premature sex can bring."

Martin had the looks in high school that other girls envied and was pursued by not only her male high school peers, but by older men, as well, as the pursued beauty pageant titles.

It would have been an arena she

was ill prepared for had it not been for the guidance of her mother and the rest of the family.

Martin said she believes that our society is sexually out of control. "Why are we passing out condoms in high schools instead of teaching teens how to control their sexual desires?"

Martin stated that the greatest gift you can give yourself is self-respect.

"It took me years to realize that being virtuous in high school was important to my successes later in life."

"My first true love, or so I

thought, came at age 15. I thank God now that I was able to withstand the pressure and remain a virgin."

Martin went on to study for a year at Michigan State University before going off to California to pursue a modeling career.

"I promised my mother that I would finish school there and I did," she said. "I have a degree in journalism from California State University and attended law school at the University of Southern California."

As she grew older, Martin said she continued to be her own per-

son and took charge.

"A man is a luxury, not a necessity," she joked.

She is single by choice at the moment, but reflects back on her male relationships as educational. "It is like a train, if you miss one, you can always catch another," she said.

The right man is still out there for Martin and she is willing to wait.

Martin began her book about four years ago and she approached but one agent who did some shopping around to publishers, a number of whom were interested.

"Then came the rules," Martin said. "The title was to go first, then some of the advice I was giving and then other bits and pieces. I put it back on the shelf."

A year ago, she found a small company, EOS Publishing in Beverly Hills. Officials there agreed to do it her way.

Maybe it was the timing, Martin isn't sure. She added a few things, including a warning about gamma hydroxybutyrate, a date-rape drug, using a Downriver girl, Samantha Reid, as a tragic example of what could happen.

"There were times when a girl could go out, leave a beverage on the table and head out to the dance floor," she said. "That is an absolute 'no' in today's world. Sad, but a 'no'."

Martin also gives a very personal guide to hygiene, down to describing what to avoid in public or even school bathrooms.

"If the toilet tissue has been sitting on the floor," she said, "don't and I mean don't use it. Germs are everywhere."

"For the critics who think Martin has gone too far in her descriptive advice, remember that, unfortunately, these are different times."

"Basic sex terms are not coming from parental sources or an educational forum in most cases," she warned. "How is a girl to know what is out there and what to do?"

Martin said just look at the statistics in any state or city. "Teens are getting pregnant in record numbers and believe me, many of them don't even realize how they could have prevented the pregnancy or that they are in danger of disease."

Dawn Martin's book in soft cover sells for \$19.95. Her publishing contract calls for it being available in such stores as Waldenbooks and Barnes & Noble sometime in December. You can order it direct by calling 1-800-929-7889.