

NEWS

PEPPER FEST



HANNAH COYLE/STAR OBSERVER PHOTOS

Left: The spectators were nearly as fun as the parade floats. Right: The Hudson Marching Band was one of the first to make their way through the parade route.

Pepper Fest parade

Royalty, community faces, fun fill day

BY HANNAH COYLE

Staff Writer

The Pepper Fest parade was one filled with visiting royalty, community faces and fun on Saturday, Aug. 20. The 2022 Pepper Fest court kicked off the parade followed by the lineup of 12 royal court candidates.

The Hudson and New Richmond marching bands were close behind. Hudson soccer, cheer and hockey also made their way through the parade route, which went east on Michaelson and then south on Sixth in North Hudson.

Little faces lit up as dozens of crowned young women waved as they passed by on floats, candy was tossed and bubbles were suspended in the humid afternoon air.

Although the late morning parade started off a bit gloomy, the sun began to peek through toward



The River Falls Royal Ambassador crew made their way over to their neighbors stomping ground for the Pepper Fest parade.

the end.

Later on Saturday, the three parade winners were announced. A panel of three parade judges select three parade units to receive the King, Queen and the Pepper Awards.

King's Award: Cottage Grove Strawberry Festival.

Queen's Award: Lakeville Pan-O-Prog.

Pepper Award: North Hudson Kwik Trip. This award is typically given to the parade unit that is the most creative or unique.

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The Hudson Ambassadors made the long trek across Lake Mallalieu to support their North Hudson Pepper Fest friends.



Everyone was cheering for Pepper Fest.

PEPPER FEST

Meet Queen Ava Prissel

Ava Edin, Josie Hedin, Adeline Mitchell are princesses; Scott Hendrix is king

BY HANNAH COYLE

Staff Writer

The 2023 Pepper Fest royal court is here.

Queen Ava Prissel and princesses Ava Edin, Josie Hedin and Adeline Mitchell were crowned at coronation on Sunday, Aug. 21. Alongside them, to represent North Hudson and its Italian heritage, is King Scott Hendrix.

The weather reflected the hot-pepper spirit of

Pepper Fest as it was sunny and steamy in the late afternoon. Of course that didn't deter a large crowd, far bigger than the available sitting room, from gathering to support the 2022 court, candidates and newly crowned 2023 royalty.

It was a special year for the Pepper Fest royal family, past, present and future, as one of their 2017 Pepper Fest princesses returned with a

new title – St. Paul Winter Carnival's West Wind Princess Shannon Baier. She addressed the crowd and commended the 2022 court for their spectacular year in crown and gown.

Her words were followed by the 2022 court. Queen Emma Hatch and princesses Marisa Gunderson, Bella Sophie and Kayla Klatt said their farewell speeches before passing on their titles.

"I've always dreamed



HANNAH COYLE/STAR OBSERVER PHOTOS

Left: 2022 Queen Emma Hatch passes on the title to 2023 Queen Ava Prissel. Right: Current St. Paul Winter Carnival West Wind Princess, Shannon Baier, and 2017 Pepper Fest Princess, spoke to the crowd as she returned home with her new royal family.

of this experience, since I was a little girl," Gunderson said. It was a bitter-sweet moment for Gunderson and Hatch, who were kindergarten best friends, to sisters in crown and now will be attending college together.

Gunderson and her crown sisters were able to pass their lived-dream on to the four young women who will reign for the next 365 days.

The coronation would not be complete without some words from the outgoing king, Joe Steiner. For him, it was an emotional

speech to make to the four young women he has grown with throughout the last year. He commended them for their poise, spunk and spectacular year as ambassadors of the festival. He signed off in his own version of "for the last time in crown and gown."

"For the last time sweating through this three-piece suit, I'm Joe Steiner, your 2022 Pepper Fest king."

His title will be taken on by Hendrix, who grew up in Kansas City, Kansas, has three grown kids

and has been volunteering with Pepper Fest regularly. He is currently employed with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers after retiring from the Army after 22 years and working in veteran affairs for eight.

The five newly crowned members of the court, will be attending parades and events like River Falls Days, New Richmond Fun Fest, Red Wing River City Days and many more over the year.

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The family of Kay Martell wishes to thank you for your outpouring of love, kindness and support. Your generous donations were graciously received by the charities that Kay was most passionate about. We were able to see, firsthand, how much Kay was loved by everyone who knew her.

With Deepest Gratitude to You All!



The royal court for 2023. (back l) Princess Ava Edin, Princess Josie Hedin, Princess Adeline Mitchell. (front l) King Scott Hendrix, Queen Ava Prissel.