

Lilac Fairy Is Theme For Lilac Festival's Grand Parade June 19

By Jessica Delaney

Lilacs may not be in bloom just yet, but plans for the 56th Lilac Festival are already bursting out in full flower. Between the return of many familiar events and the barrage of new features, the Lilac Festival will offer something for everyone.

Since the festival is based upon the bloom of Mackinac Island lilacs, it stands to reason that one addition to the festival is rooted in the flower. This year a Lilac Walk and Talk will be a new feature.

The Lilac Walk and Talks will be set up at several different Bed and Breakfasts across the Island, all of which include lilacs in their landscaping. Speakers will talk about caring for lilacs and will include pruning demonstrations. Each show will have a different theme, including sessions on soil, pH levels, and recommendations to keep lilacs healthy.

"It's good for people with lilacs," said Tourism Bureau Director Mary Slevin. "This way people with lilacs can learn to properly prune them."

For those who prefer to look at flowers instead of tending them, Mission Point's Eurogarden will host a Martini and Cigar Putting Championship. Each hole will be set up to represent a different country that lilacs came from before arriving in the United States, such as Persia, Scotland, and Spain. Food and drinks will correspond to the different countries.

A Lansing-based cigar compa-

ny will be making hand rolled cigars. The event is a fundraiser for the Tourism Bureau and costs \$45.

Got a sweet tooth? Another new event, The Art of Entertaining, is for anyone who loves good food. Pastry chef Kim Sperl from Bella e Dolce will teach how to frost and make pipe flowers for a cake. Attendees will practice on a 10-inch cake, which they will take home. Jay Porcaro from Weber's Floral and Gift will demonstrate how to create a floral bouquet, which attendees will also have the opportunity to make and keep. The event costs \$45 and is limited to 25 people.

The Tall Ship *Manitou* will dock at the Star Line dock, and will be open for a tour. Also new, the ship will make two excursions around the Island. Wine-tasting will be included on the cruise. All benefits go to the Tourism Bureau to help support the costs of the Lilac Festival. Tickets are \$100.

This year the Tourism Bureau will collaborate with the Detroit Music Awards to bring up award-winning musicians from Motor City to perform on the Island. The Eddie King Band will perform during the Sunset Blues Cruise, while Larry Barris will perform on the Sunset Jazz Cruise. The cruises will be catered and include cash bars. Tickets cost \$25.

Not only will there be award-winning music on the

boats, but there will also be a free concert series on the Island. Local musicians will have the chance to shine in various concerts, including the concert in the Park at Surrey Hills.

One of the new events at this year's festival will be the Dog and Pony Show.

Friday, June 17, there will be a Feast of Epona Blessing of Horses at Mission Hill Stable. The following day will be the Epona & Barkus Parade, followed immediately by the Dog and Pony Show. Epona was the Celtic goddess of horses, while Barkus is a play on the Greek God of Bacchus. Mike Morgan of Mid-Michigan Kennels Inc. trains K-9 police dogs and will speak about training police dogs, and Larry Smith will speak about living with Haflingers ponies.

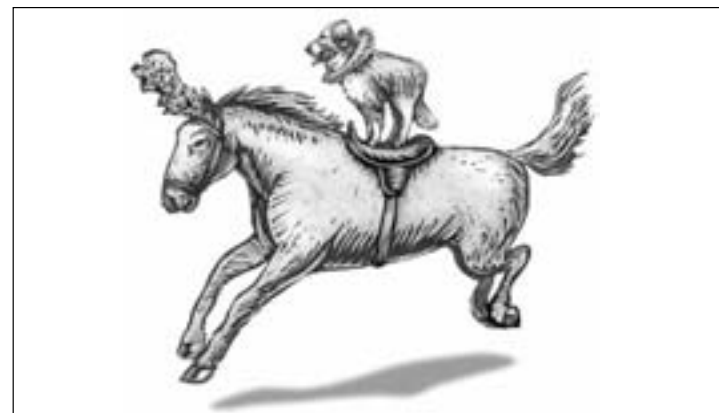
Sunday will close with the Grand Parade. This year's theme is the Lilac Fairy. The theme is based on a Victorian era book of fairy tales by Andrew Lang. Stories in the compilation were drawn from ancient legends from around the globe. The Tourism Bureau has donated a copy of the book to the Mackinac Island Library. All window decorators and parade entries are encouraged to follow the theme.

The Scottville Clown Band will march in the Grand Parade again. Many were disappointed last year when the band was unable to attend, due to a performance in Indiana.

Some changes in the logistics have been announced. The Tourism Bureau will once again ask local businesses to sponsor bands. Because of travel costs, they are often one of the more expensive parts of the Festival.

The Taste of Mackinac will be held at Harbour View Inn this year.

For information on all events, or to buy tickets, call the Tourism Bureau at 847-6418 or visit their Web site at www.mackinac.com.



The symbol for the Dog and Pony Club was designed by Donna Ikkanda, an illustrator who specializes in animal pictures.

New Club To Promote Island as Pet Friendly

By Jessica Delaney

The Dog and Pony Club is being organized this year to promote Mackinac Island as a good place to bring pets on vacation and to ensure health and safety for Island horses and pets. Mary Slevin and Sarah Chambers at the Mackinac Island Tourism Bureau, who came up with the idea, already have organized a number of activities for the summer, starting with several events at this month's Lilac Festival.

As the director of the Tourism Bureau, Mrs. Slevin receives hundreds of e-mails a day, four out of five of them, she said, related to pets.

"Most e-mails are about what to do with pets, so I felt there was a need to respond, to let them know this is a dog-friendly place," she said.

Visitors, she said, want to know which hotels will allow pets, which restaurants will allow them on outdoor patios, and what local restrictions there are regarding animals. The new club will compile answers to such questions and include a list of good trails for their canine companions, places to swim, and safety tips.

In the future, the organizers hope to work with the city to provide agility equipment for pets at a city park.

The Tourism Bureau will continue a program started last year to coordinate a dog-walking service, allowing visitors to hire a dog walker for an hour so

they can enjoy a nice dinner. Anyone interested in getting on the dog walker list can contact the Tourism Bureau.

The club already has several sponsors, and members will receive dog tags from Petco, dog bags from Pet Supplies Plus, gift baskets and treats from Nutro pet food, and dog bowls from Cindy Frez of Customized Memories of Mackinac.

Dog and horse related events have been added to the Lilac Festival calendar this year. The first one will be Wednesday, June 15, with a Mackinac Island Community Foundation benefit, the Feast of Epona, at the newly opened Seabiscuit & Grog Cafe.

Epona was the Celtic goddess of horses.

The event will feature a silent auction during a cocktail reception, with proceeds to support the Rex and Elizabeth Orr Fund for the Care of Animals, an endowment held by the Community Foundation. The fund pays to bring a veterinarian to the Island, and this year will be helping the Horseman's Association buy a horse for children to learn to ride.

The Feast of Epona is a collaborative effort of the Foundation and Tourism Bureau, said Jennifer Blowski, the foundation's executive director.

"It's going to serve a lot of purposes," said Ms. Blowski. "It will be a get-together, and some people who haven't seen each other all winter will get that chance, and it will let people see the Seabiscuit Cafe, which many haven't seen. We're hoping to have a successful turnout."

Friday, June 17, there will be a Blessing of the Horses at the Horsemen's Association Mission Hill Stable. Barn tours will be given by members of the

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PATRICK M. SHANNON

ATTORNEY AT LAW

MACKINAC ISLAND
906-847-8139
906-847-8140 Fax

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