

# Fairy 'Tail' of Fun

## Annual Dog, Pony Event Celebrates Victorian Era

By Sean Ely

Cinderella found her glass slipper when she met up with Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Mary Poppins gave Rumpelstiltskin a spoon of sugar to help the medicine go down, and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs climbed with Jack up the beanstalk.

Mackinac Island is a place where it is common to have dozens of dogs and horses walking by at any given time, but it doesn't usually resemble a book of fairy tales.

Saturday, June 16, it did.

German sheperds had to learn to get along with poodles, and ponies tolerated the sound of barking during Mackinac Island's Epona and Barkus Parade and Dog and Pony Show. Epona is the Roman and Celtic goddess of horses and protector of all animals.

Ponies and dogs, sporting fairy tale outfits from the Victorian era, marched along the boardwalk from the school to Windermere Point, where they paraded in review, and stopped before the judges to answer questions.

Judges Kay Hoppenrath, Mimi Cunningham, Nancy LaFelier, and Mary K. McIntire asked the owners the name and breed of their horse or dog and the fairy tale they represented.

"I just love seeing these dogs, especially the rescue dogs that were there," said Mrs. Cunningham, vice president at Grand Hotel and long-time Island resident. "The contestants would stroll by, we'd take notes, and we conferred afterwards in the library. I really wish there were more prizes that we could give out, because they all looked so great in their costumes."

The prestigious Dog and Pony Club Grand Award went to The Prince of Fairies and Thumbelina, portrayed by Skeeter, a miniature schnauzer, and Redford, a Shetland pony, owned by David and Phyllis Brugger. Their ponies also won best hitch award in the Grand Parade Sunday, June 17.

First place was awarded to three golden retrievers and a yellow lab that were dressed as Dorothy, the Cowardly Lion, the Tin Man, and the Scarecrow from the Wizard of Oz. Their human companions are from Bloomfield Hills and Clarkston.

Second place was given to a black Labrador and black Labrador puppy dressed as The Princess and the Pea, entered by Paws with a Cause. Third place went to Winston and Webster, two Boston terriers wearing Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum outfits. They won first place last year for a Snoopy comic strip characterization. Their owners are Jim and Sandie Bonczyk of Lapeer.

The judges also gave honorable recognition to the pets from the Great Lakes Mastiff Rescue, Mid Michigan Boxer Rescue, and Greyhounds of Eastern Michigan teams.

Because some of the costumes sparked loud reactions from the spectators, five new categories were born. Best pair went to two dogs dressed as Peter Pan and Captain Hook. The Prince Charming award went to Murphy, a mixed breed, accompanied by his princess. The Tinkerbell award was given to a dog dressed as Little Red Riding Hood. The Miss Congeniality honor went to Pumpkin, while the Mackinac Beauty award was given to the Panda Fairy Princess from Dog Scouts of America, with human companion Lonnie Olson.

"I'm a huge animal lover," said judge Nancy LaFelier. "Everyone gave such a big effort to dress up their dogs on such a hot day; it was great for the community. It was such a tough decision, so we had to add more categories. It really showed the owners' imagination, as well as how the dogs behaved while dressed up like that. Some just really stood out because of how difficult it was to control an animal wearing all that heavy stuff. It was just amazing."

The Greyhounds of Eastern Michigan, Great Lakes Mastiff Rescue, Inc., Mid Michigan Boxer Rescue, Leader Dogs for the Blind Puppy Raisers, and Nutro Natural Choice Pet Foods helped promote equine and canine awareness on the Island.

During the entertainment part of the afternoon, two Pinto horses were shown by Dave Davis. One is trained in high level dressage, while the younger horse is learning the tricks of the trade, such as counting and kneeling. Mr. Davis taught the crowd some basic techniques in training, and said that a horse will please the owner if it knows exactly what the owner wants.

Dan Wallen's buckskin horse, Warrior, stood on a pedestal, and Mr. Wallen also performed lasso tricks. He is a fourth-generation animal trainer whose father, Darryl, is in the Circus Hall of Fame.



Murphy, right, and Panda take a break from the Mackinac Island Dog and Pony Show. Murphy has been dressed as a prince in the Epona and Barkus Parade five times. Panda is dressed as a fairy princess. Both dogs represent the Dog Scouts of America.



The Dog & Pony Club Grand Award went to the pair playing The Prince of Fairies and Thumbelina. Skeeter, a miniature schnauzer, and Redford, a Shetland pony, played these fairy tale roles while being sponsored by Pink Pony Bar and Grill. David and Phyllis Brugger of Brugger's Other Farm own the two. Skeeter and Redford are pictured with Mrs. Brugger (left) and 11-year-old Emily Ladd.



Winston and Webster, two Boston terriers, took home third place honors while dressed as Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum Saturday, June 16, at the Epona and Barkus Parade. They also won first place last year for a comic strip snowmen interpretation from "It's a Dog's Life Snoopy." They are pictured with human companions Jim and Sandie Bonczyk of Lapeer.



Dynamite the Clown begins the Epona and Barkus Parade Saturday on the Boardwalk, walking David Rowe's two golden retrievers, Katie (left) and Livvy, June 16. "I don't know who's walking who!" he said. Dynamite the Clown was also the Grand Marshal in the Lilac Festival Grand Parade Sunday, June 17. More than 100 dogs participated in the event.