

KALAMAZOO GAZETTE

Sunday August 13, 2006



Zoe Zeglin, 3, of Glencoe, Ill., and her sister, Keira, 2, sample blueberries from Stephenson's Farms Saturday in South Haven. SARAH HICE / GAZETTE

A blueberry lover's dream

Blueberry Festival celebrates the tiny, blue fruit in more ways than one

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SOUTH HAVEN — A little after midday during the National Blueberry Festival, a parade rolled through the small lakeside community of South Haven with balloons, cheers and laughter.

Bands, which played near the town's beach, filled the rest of Saturday afternoon with throbbing music. People shopped for jewelry, purses and colorful clothing at sidewalk sales on the city's main downtown street, Phoenix Street.

The clang of steel swords pulled a crowd at the booth of Knight Winds, a 14th Century renaissance group, which demonstrated how to fight with swords.

But you couldn't step too far at the Blueberry Festival without running into, well, blueberries.

Blueberries dunked in chocolate. Blueberries sprinkled on sundaes. Blueberries nestled in chocolate cheesecake.

Cafe Julia, on Huron Street, may have had the most blueberry offerings of any one restaurant. The restaurant sold blueberry muffins, blueberry turnovers, blueberry Danish, blueberry lemon baby cakes, blueberry white chocolate crunch and blueberry milkshakes.

Sandy O'Neil, of Spring Lake, near Grand Haven, tasted Leading Brands' Blueberry Pomegranate juice at a sidewalk booth, then bought two 64-ounce bottles. Leading

Brands, based in Vancouver, Canada, was displaying several flavored blueberry juices at the festival for the first time.

"Because this is the Blueberry Festival, I bought the juice to remember the day," O'Neil said.

The festival continues today with two pancake breakfasts, a craft fair, a sand sculpture contest, the musical, "You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown," at South Haven High School and The Tall Ship Trio at the Michigan Maritime Museum.

Sarah Bell, 18, who is Miss South Haven and National Blueberry Queen for 2006, said she got up in the morning thinking about blueberries. She gave out samples of blueberry pie at the Village Market, the supermarket

down the street from the high school on Friday (the store sold 100 freshly-baked blueberry pies that day), and began her Saturday at a Kalamazoo blueberry pancake breakfast.

She spoke as she piled into the rear of a ruby Sebring convertible with the rest of her Miss South Haven Pageant court in the parking lot of the high school following the parade. The group's sparkling pink and green Barbie-themed float, which was parked nearby, was one of 50 entries in the parade.

Following the parade, the group was to ride through the community and wave.

"We're going to cause some ruckus," joked Annette Rahrig, co-chairperson of the Miss South Haven Pageant, as the group rode off.