HollyDays promises fun for the entire family

Community celebration grows to a three-day event

By Sally Rummel
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An entire weekend of fun awaits visitors to HollyDays in Holly on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 7-9.

“HollyDays is a really great way for families to get back together in September after a busy summer of vacations,” said Katy Hughes, Holly Downtown Development Authority (DDA) director.

Last year’s one-day community celebration was so popular that organizers have added events for all three days. They also changed the celebration to one week ahead of last year, so as not to conflict with Applefest in Fenton on the weekend of Sept. 13-16.

This is actually the fourth year of HollyDays, which kicked off in 2015 with Holly’s Sesquicentennial on Sept. 16.

Unofficially, it got its start as the Carry Nation Festival many years ago, celebrating the American prohibitionist who was famous for using a hatchet to demolish barrooms while she typically sang or prayed.

HollyDays organizers will pay homage to these roots by acting out excerpts of a play written by the late Ardath Regan of Holly about Carry Nation, with Fenton Village Player veteran thespian Karen Craner playing the part (see related story).

One of the most anticipated events will be the Friday night showing of the original “Jaws” movie at Holly Beach. The inflatable screen will face the water and guests are required to bring an inflatable seat or device to sit on.

“You can dangle your toes in the water while watching ‘Jaws,’” Hughes said.

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HollyDays will recall its roots of Carry Nation Festival

By Sally Rummel

Karen Craner of Linden, formerly of Holly, isn’t “burying the hatchet” of prohibitionist Carry Nation anytime soon.

She’ll actually be wielding it, just like the ruthless, sometimes violent temperance advocate Carry Nation who came to Battle Alley and the Holly Hotel in 1908, breaking glasses of spirits and beers and clubbing patrons of the hotel with her umbrella.

Holly was just one of Nation’s stops around the country, where she turned her crusade into violent assaults in bars, restaurants and dinning establishment before her death in 2011.

Karen, known for her thespian talent with the Fenton Village Players, will be playing Nation during the HollyDays’ Parade on Saturday, Sept. 8 at 11 a.m., yelling out to people and showing her temper against the moral decay of alcohol and “lawlessness.”

Karen Craner (right), an unsmiling and dressed in black and white, performed as Carry Nation at one of the last festivals bearing her name, in 2009. Photo submitted to the Times

Excerpts from a play about Carry Nation, “Carry and Her Hatchet,” written by the late Ardath Regan, co-founder of the Carry Nation Festival in Holly, will be performed after the parade.

Craner also plans to wield her ax at the Holly Moose Lodge Beer Tent on Saturday night. “I will yell out things, make a scene and leave,” Craner said.

Nation’s rampage in Holly was remembered for nearly 40 years during the Carry Nation Festival, an annual Labor Day weekend tradition.

While HollyDays is not trying to replace the Carry Nation Festival, it is bringing back to Holly the excitement of a September community celebration and recalling its roots, said Katy Hughes, Holly Downtown Development Authority director.

Whiskey Fixx will headline, joined by eight other bands on Saturday

By Sally Rummel

Music will fill the air in Holly on Saturday, Sept. 8 during HollyDays, from the country music edge of “Whiskey Fixx” to the lively ukulele sounds of Jenna Venda, who performs with a group called “The Human State.”

A total of nine bands will be taking the stage from 1 to 11:30 p.m. near the Holly Moose Lodge Beer Tent at Broad Street and Junction, by the railroad tracks in downtown Holly. A Battle of the Bands will also compete at A Joyful Noise Music Studio in Fenton.

“Whiskey Fixx,” a mix of band veterans who have been playing country music or hard rock for their entire lives, will hit the stage from 8 to 11:30 p.m.

Heather Nicole, “Whiskey Fixx” lead vocalist, leads “her band of boys” with energy on and off stage. On lead guitar, Danny Justice has transitioned from hard rock to modern country. Aaron Christoff holds it all together with an attention to detail in his playing, recently touring with Detroit Music Award nominee Alan Turner.

Members of this band have opened for acts including Lynyrd Skynyrd, Blake Shelton, Sawyer Brown, Brett Michaels, John Corabi of Motley Crue and more.

“Whiskey Fixx” is being sponsored by the village of Holly and Holly Moose Lodge 1168.
HollyDays will accommodate your family’s needs

Priority parade seating, Mom’s Tent are new features of this community celebration

By Sally Rummel

Organizers of this year’s HollyDays want the event to be all-inclusive so that all residents can enjoy the family activities during this three-day community celebration, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 7-9. They have made arrangements with volunteers to help make these possible:

Priority parade seating

The HollyDays Parade will step out on Saturday at 11 a.m., beginning at the Holly VFW Hall and ending at Holly Elementary School, an approximate one-mile route.

Senior citizens, veterans and disabled residents can take advantage of priority seating for the parade, thanks to chairs donated by the Holly American Legion Post #149.

Seating will take place at the Coleman & Sons Auto Repair corner at South Saginaw and Maple streets. “Just show up and let us help you,” said Katy Hughes, Holly Downtown Development Authority director. “If people need to be dropped off close to the seating area, there will be someone near the post office who can help them get seated.”

This prime seating area will be next to Parade Emcee Kent Barnes, former Holly Area Schools superintendent, who will announce parade entrees as they go by.

Mom’s Tent

A new family-friendly addition to the Saturday festivities will be a Mom’s Tent in Crapo Park, sponsored by the local La Leche League. This will be conveniently located near the Community Play Date activities, and next to Holly Presbyterian Church’s Baby Pantry.

“This will be a private area, complete with rocking chairs, for parents to feed and change their babies,” Hughes said.

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“You’ll get a glow necklace you’re required to wear, with the purchase of your ticket.” Advanced tickets are available for $5 and at the event for $6.

The Holly Vault in downtown Holly will present “Music & Trivia” on Friday, and the Holly Moose Lodge will host a Friday night fish fry.

Kicking off Saturday’s events will be the Holly Area Community Coalition Family Fun Color Run at 9 a.m., followed by the Holly Hills Primitive Show from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Karl Richter Community Center.

The HollyDays Parade will step out at 11 a.m. from the Holly VFW to Holly Elementary School. Emcee will be Kent Barnes, retired Holly Area Schools superintendent. “Priority seating will be available for seniors, veterans and those who are disabled,” Hughes said.

Vendors Row will take place on Broad Street, from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., while families can enjoy a Community Play Day, from 1 to 4 p.m., at Crapo Park, followed by a tug of war between the Holly police and fire departments. Watch for a 5 p.m. on-stage dance exhibition and a 6 p.m. dunk tank “dunking” village councilors.

You won’t want to miss the Saturday evening Street Dance and Entertainment Tent, featuring “Whiskey Fixx” and other local bands. The evening will end with a spectacular fireworks display at Crapo Park, over the water tower, at 9 p.m.

Sunday will feature Sunrise Yoga at Crapo Park, followed by a 10 a.m. community church service and farmers market, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. A Hot Dog Eating Contest will whet your appetite at 1 p.m., followed by a softball game, both at Cyclone Park.

Ending the weekend events will be a Cemetery Walk at Lakeside Cemetery on Sunday, from 4 to 7 p.m. Craner will be playing the part of Vera Husted, a well-known community organizer who passed away in 1990. “I’ll be standing by her tombstone,” Craner said. Volunteers will play the parts of about 10 or 12 other well-known Holly residents, now deceased.

“HollyDays is like a big potluck party. Everybody is taking a piece of the event and doing their part very well,” Craner said.

Katy Hughes
Holly DDA director

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Holly Police Chief Michael Story is dragged into the water during a previous HollyDays tug-of-war bout with the Holly Fire Department. Photo: Times file photo

Local Businesses supporting HollyDays 2018