

Spring into Green, Caterpillar Parade set to roll April 10

By Sherry Lucas

Clinton's beloved Caterpillar Parade returns in all its green glory and most of its associated festivities this spring, on Saturday, April 10, in Olde Towne.

A few minor adjustments will amp up the safety, as communities continue to wrestle with the pandemic, but all the smiles, silly fun and heartwarming connection this unique signature event offers townsfolk stay intact.

The event will be the highlight of the outdoor Spring into Green Market, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on April 10. Dozens of craft vendors will converge on Olde Towne's brick streets to tempt shoppers with handcrafted and handmade treats and wares that run the gamut from candles, soaps and jewelry to artwork, woodwork and baked goods.

As of late March, about fifty vendors were registered, with more expected as the event nears. The average count pre-pandemic for



Photo by Doris Bynum

After a one-year hiatus due to the pandemic, Caillope the Caterpillar is ready for Main Street Clinton's annual Spring into Green weekend.

the spring market was eighty to ninety vendors, Main Street Clinton Director Tara Lytal says, noting it's still uncertain whether the count will reach that level.

"I sort of anticipate it will be down just a little bit, but there's a lot of pent-up frustration ... for people wanting to get out and do things, and that's probably the same for vendors."

Spring fever will likely spur

attendees, too, to a market that, in typical years, can see 3,500 to 4,000 people stroll through, spread over the course of the shopping day.

Masks and social distancing are recommended, and booths will be spaced out (as they were at the November market), "just to give people a little more breathing room," Lytal says. Hand sanitizing stations will be onsite.

"People are going to sports events, people are going to the soccer fields, people are ready to do activities again as safely as possible," Lytal says. "This provides an outdoor shopping experience that is as safe as we can provide."

The crowning of the 2021 Caterpillar Queen will take place before the parade, at 9:30 a.m. at Lions Club Park, so onlookers will have plenty of space to spread out and socially distance. The parade follows at 10 a.m., with Grand Marshall George Ewing and the newly-crowned Caterpillar Queen leading the 13th annual parade through Olde Towne. The Caterpillar Queen will wave to admirers from her royal ride, Turner the Train. The route will be slightly different this year, to mitigate clustering and crowding.

The honor of Caterpillar Queen is bestowed upon a mature woman who has made significant contributions to Olde Towne.

cont. on page 6

School Board discusses graduation, testing, and bids for athletic and HVAC improvements

By Taylor McKay Hathorn

The Clinton Public School District's (CPSD) Board of Trustees held its regular monthly meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 9. The board began by recognizing the district's teachers of the year via Zoom, with Board President Dr. Felicia Gavin acknowledging that the educators had "typified excellence in unprecedented times" during her remarks.

The board then transitioned into the business portion of its meeting, unanimously approving the minutes from February's meetings before hearing an update from Mark Pipper of Bailey Program Management regarding the district's ongoing construction projects, with all of the brick-and-mortar projects progressing as expected. According to Pipper, projects at Northside and Eastside Elementary Schools are so near to completion that updates on their

respective construction might not even be included on the slate at next month's meeting.

Assistant Superintendent Anthony Goins presided over the academic portion of the meeting, sharing results from the recent district-wide case testing, which is intended to offer projections for student performance on the end-of-year state assessments. The 2020-21 school year saw several departures from the norm, as Goins noted that "the entire state [is expected] to see declines" due to the disruption of the 2019-20 school year caused by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite these grim projections, Goins says student performance thus far is "not that alarming."

Superintendent Tim Martin echoed this, saying that teachers and students in the district have "risen to the expectations."

Martin also reported on the district's present plan

cont. on page 26



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