

"Seek Arenac County Queen for Mackinaw Bridge Dedication Festival"

Arenac County [Michigan] Independent and Omer

Progress

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Researched by Phyllis Klender, Sep 2025

Transcribed by Gaynol Fales, 25 Sep 2025

An Arenac County Queen was hastily initiated here [?]day afternoon. The girl selected will represent the county at the Mackinaw Bridge Dedication Festival later this month.

A misunderstanding by various county and city officials concerning the queen program was corrected Monday when two officials of the state queen committee contacted The Independent [?].

Information received previously led local authorities to believe the queen was required to ride on a float furnished by the county. The financing for construction and care of a float seemed an unwarranted cost.

Ed Edson, queen committee co-chairman, informed The Independent Monday that the floats were an entirely separate part of the dedication program.

The queen from each county, he explained, will ride in an all-white Oldsmobile convertible furnished by the company in cooperation with the local dealer. Bob Wiltse Motor Sales, the Old dealer in Arenac county, is giving full cooperation to the program.

EDSON ALSO stressed the desire of his committee to have Arenac represented with a queen as it was the only one of the 83 counties that would not be present at the dedication.

To expedite the search for the county queen the Arenac County Independent is sponsoring the contest and the queen who will be selected. Since time is of the essence the deadline for all contest entries has been set at midnight of Monday, June 16.

The winner will be announced in the Independent next Wednesday. She will receive a \$25.00 check from The Independent in recognition of her newly won honor.

Rules for the contest are simple. To be eligible for participation the state committee has established four qualifications:

1. Girls must be 17 years or older.
2. All contestants must be single.
3. Contestants must be residents of the county represented.
4. Queens must be able to attend the bridge festival June 26, 27 and 28.

The Arenac queen will be chosen from photographs mailed to Arenac Queen Contest, Arenac County Independent, Standish, prior to the contest deadline. All photographs will become the property of the sponsor and will not be returned.

Interested girls are requested to send portraits only and not snapshots. The committee is asking for the familiar billfold size gradation type picture or a larger photo.

All Picture are to be accompanied with the contestant's full name, age and address. Anyone interested in entering a name other than her own must have the girl's consent. The committee in charge of selecting the queen must have the assurance that anyone entering the contest will be able to make the trip on the scheduled dates.

THE ONLY wardrobe requirement announced by the state committee is a suggestion that each queen bring two informal "dressy" dresses. The two key events of the programs are the queens' dinner Friday evening and the formal dedication Saturday noon.

The queen will be accompanied from Standish by a female chaperon and a male driver for the car. The Wiltzes have agreed to furnish the above two persons in addition to the car. The party will depart sometime Thursday, June 26.

The complete itinerary for Friday and Saturday including times and locations of meetings and parades has been prepared by the bridge festival committee.

The trio representing Arenac County will return home Saturday afternoon. All expenses of the group are being paid by the sponsoring organizations.

Arrangements have been made for lodging the queens and their chaperons on the campus of Michigan College of Mining and Engineering located at Sault Ste. Marie. The drivers and the cars will be quartered at Kinross air base just south of the city.

STANDISH, ARENAC COUNTY, MICHIGAN, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 25, 1958



OFF FOR THE MACKINAC BRIDGE—Queen Peggy Tomaszewski will be off for the Mackinac Bridge tomorrow afternoon and a busy two-day schedule during the dedication ceremonies. She'll ride in this white Oldsmobile convertible driven by Don Wiltse. The car is at Peggy's disposal for this week-end (Independent photo)

"Tired But Happy Queen Peggy is Home"

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NOTE: Newspaper pages were book bound, hiding left-hand text.

"It was tiring but it sure was a lot of fun and I wouldn't have missed it for the world," said Miss [Peg?] Tomaszewski, back from a [?] week-end at the Mackinaw Bridge dedication where she represented the home folks of Arenac County.

[?] and her chaperones, Mr. [and Mrs.?] Don Wiltse, became practically a part of the white Oldsmobile convertible which was [?]for the week-end. Friday [?] paraded the car from [?] breakfast until after mid-[?].

"[?] had good breaks all the [?] through the week-end," Peg [?] her return. "Our car was [?] we were always close to [?] and didn't miss a [?]."

[?] 57 girls to register at [?] on the College of Min-[?] at Sault Ste. Marie [?] taken to Canada for an ex-[?] Friday morning. "It [?] getting up earlier but I [?] that extra trip as much [?] of the week-end," said [?]. "They were just wonderful [?] in Canada and it was [?] all of us having breakfast [?] the border."

[?] close to the front of the parade put Peg among the [?] queens Saturday noon [?] dedication ceremonies. [?] white convertibles were [?] clear across the bridge [?] intervals and a green [?] was stretched from car [?]. During the dedication [?] each end of the bridge, were [?] together at the north an-[?] as a symbol of Big Mac joining the two Michigan peninsulas together.

THE CEREMONY was impre-[?] the girls in the end con-[?] were forced to walk, [?] well over a mile, to the [?] block for the formal cere-[?] Winds never go below [?] per hour at the Straits [?] a long walk in high [?] a hot sun beating down on you and 30 mile per hour winds buffeting you from the side. Peg, the fortunate one, walked only six car lengths.

Being one of the first to arrive at the anchor block Peg reported that she was given a chair. A truck bringing chairs fro[m] the ceremony had broken down in Bay city and over half the queens . . . those who had walked from the far ends of the bridge . . . were forced to stand throughout the two-hour ceremony while politicians al tried to take credit for the bridge. Two of the fainted before it was over.

AFTER THE early trip to Canada Friday morning the girls returned to Brady Hall for formal pictures and a box lunch. Then it was back to parading in the afternoon including a four-abreast crossing of the bridge.

Cars stayed in parade at 35 miles an hour for 180 miles that day. On passing through every town the queens were poised on the back of the rear seat and tops of the convertibles were

down at all times. Sunburn became a serious problem and two girls required medical attention. Our queen is burned and still a little uncomfortable but no serious damage was done nor did the burn spoil the fun.

IN THE evening the girls dined at Cheboygan with the Michigan Legislature. Peggy and others from the Arenac District joined Rep. Nakkula at this table and each received autographed copies of the 1958 Michigan Manual.

It was 12:30 Saturday morning, 18 hours after the busy day motorcade pulled back in to the Soo. And exactly five hours later the alarms rang and the girls were off again for the final day of parading. Box lunches were eaten that day on the bridge just prior to the formal dedication.

DON WILTSE, who drove the car throughout the three days, agreed with Peggy that the experience was well worth it but neither were anxious for a repeat performance this week-end.

all of them had high praise for the corps of Detroit motorcycle police who escorted and ran the parade. As the cards rolled down the highway at 35 mph motorbike patrolmen raced up and down the parade keeping other traffic off on the far shoulder.

Many time they rode a bumpy divider strip. Often they roared down the highway at speeds of up to 70 miles per hour. Few of them got off their bikes except for lunch and dinner during the 18 hour stretch.

THERE WASN'T a breakdown during the parade, no cars were lost and everyone got the word at the right time. "First time I've every has a parade that long for so many hours and didn't lose someone," said the Detroit police captain who ran the show.

So Big Mac is dedicated and Mr. and Mrs. Wiltse thought the Arenac queen should be complimented. "She looked like a million dollars, gave the parade committee excellent cooperation in everything that was asked of her and throughout the week-end was a queen of whom the whole county should have been very proud."