

1965

Superlatives come early for newest summer festival in northern Michigan

At its birth, Alpenfest drew superlatives as northern Michigan's newest summer festival.

"The biggest thing in the north since Paul Bunyon," said a Herald Times editorial quoting Leo Strapazon about the first Alpenfest, then called the Alpine Festival. The editorial appeared in the July 15, 1965 edition of the Herald Times.

Governor George Romney was on hand to crown Connie Wolf the first Alpine Queen.

Wolf is the daughter of Lloyd and Roberta Wolf.

According to the Herald Times, "The Governor's praise for the people of the county came as he commended them for the work and energy expended in making the Alpine Festival a great success, and for the idea which led to the remodeling of stores and store fronts following the Alpine influence, and the effect that it would certainly have on the tourist business throughout the area."

The first Honors Luncheon honored U.S. Plywood — then a newcomer to the community.

At the luncheon, a Declaration of Welcome signed by many Gaylord community members was presented to S.W. Antoville, chairman of the board of U. S. Plywood.

The beginning of what was called a "mutually beneficial relationship" by the Herald Times began at the first Alpenfest with signing of a joint resolution declaring Pontresina, Switzerland and Gaylord to be sister cities.



Fred Fahrni (r) of Zurich, Switzerland, helps Major Kenneth Campbell proclaim Gaylord and Pontresina sister cities at the city's old band shell.

A Gaylord city flag was presented to Fred Fahrni of Zurich, Switzerland, to take back to Pontresina.

According to the Herald Times of July 8, "One of the highlights of the official beginning of the Alpine Festival was a tribute to the late Don McLouth, founder of the Otsego Ski Club at Hidden Valley.

McLouth first conceived the idea of the Alpine appearance for the city of Gaylord and developed the motif in the construction of the buildings at Hidden Valley."

The Rotary Club won the top



Connie Wolf

prize in the senior division for the best float in the first festival.

The nine and 10 year-old division of the bicycle races was won by Tom Arthurs.

In an article headlined "After Glow of Alpine Festival," the Herald Times said, "Whatever else we may have done during the Alpine Week, the Bavarian Tent, with Leo and Minnie, Nellie and Bob (Schlang) in charge, is something most of us had never seen before... There will be another Bavarian Tent when the summer of 1966 rolls around."

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