

Nicole Lusk of La Plata named Queen Nicotina at Charles County Fair

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Surviving a torrential downpour right in the middle of festivities, Charles County Fair's 74th Coronation of Queen Nicotina took place despite Mother Nature's wrath.

The event was begun outside with convertibles bringing the contestants to their introduction, the rain started falling between the fifth and sixth princess, and from there Fair Board President Charlie Gardiner announced to the crowd that the proceedings were being moved to the pavilion.

Five minutes later, the skies opened. The fairgrounds cleared as patrons ran to shelter or vehicles, but the coronation continued.

Nicole Lusk, a senior from La Plata High School sponsored by the Hotshots 4-H Club, was named queen of the fair for 2014 from a field of 13 candidates.

"Actual judging took place last Friday when the committee hosted a dinner for the candidates," Master of Ceremonies Joseph Gardiner said. "Louise Stine has known the name of our new queen since last Friday, but she won't tell a soul who it is. In her twenty-five years as a board member, I have to say, Louise is a sphinx."

Katherine Polk was named Second Runner-up and presented a \$250 scholarship by Georgie Bennett of Community Bank of the Chesapeake. Maria Estevez was named First Runner-up and was presented a \$500 scholarship by Patty Murphy of County First Bank of La Plata.

As queen, Lusk received a \$1,000 scholarship awarded by Troye Kovach, teller supervisor at PNC Bank of La Plata.

Other candidates included Lauren Bodamer, sponsored by the National Technical Honors Society; Jasmine Dove, under the sponsorship of Westlake High School Cheerleading; Kayla Getgen, sponsored by the National Honor Society; Mary Ingwalson, under the sponsorship of South Potomac Church; Sarah Jones, sponsored by the Charles County chapter of Skills USA; Kristen Kreigh, sponsored by the North Point Student Government Association; Claudia McGuire, sponsored by Girl Scout Service Unit 1206; Taylor Proctor, sponsored by Leonard Hall Naval Academy; Elizabeth Willett, under the sponsorship of Charles County Garden Club; and Shelby Wright sponsored by La Plata Lions Club.

Gardiner said judges were from St. Mary's County, he said, so that judges do not know the candidates and vice-versa.

Herbie Redmond honored Lusk with a rendition of the "Queen Nicotina Song," a performance he has admirably performed at the Charles County Fair for 52 years.

Contact Joseph Norris at joe.norris@thebaynet.com

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