

Cortez festival packs 'em in

FESTIVAL from Page 1

Robert Semler delighted art lovers at the Florida Maritime Museum at Cortez, a restored schoolhouse that anchors the growing historical village of relocated buildings at the east end of the village. Local artists and craft-people offered Florida souvenirs ranging from handblown glass fish to

handpainted "Cortez" signs. The Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage (FISH) recognized several people for their community service, including festival art contest winner Justin Garrison, who won \$100 for rendering the festival's theme, "White Boot Ready," into a graphic of a white pelican - a true local "snowbird" - wearing white boots. The artwork was printed on festival posters and T-shirts.

Kathe Fannon of Capt. Kathe's Charters won an award for providing public education about Cortez and the environment on her ecotourism boat cruises based at Star Fish Co. Musicians Clyde Wiggins, Tom Murphy, Arnold "Soupy" Davis and Gordon Perry were honored for their musical contributions to Cortez life. Mark Green received an award for his work with the Cortez Village

Historical Society, and Joe Hankin was honored for volunteering with the Florida Maritime Museum at Cortez. Kathy Picarra was recognized for working on the FISH website, www.cortez-fish.org. Proceeds from the \$2 festival admission go toward expanding and restoring the 95-acre FISH Preserve on the east end of the Cortez fishing village.



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Left, the Anna Maria Island Privateers were a welcome presence at the festival, offering tours of their ship, the Skullywag, as well as beads and a few well placed "aaarrggs."

Right, Karen Kostka samples one of the more popular delicacies at the festival - raw oysters with horseradish sauce and crackers.



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Left, a hungry festival goer points out exactly which smoked mullet he wants to Chef Wilford Cleveland, who also is preparing a variety of seafood, including crawfish, crab legs and shrimp.

Below, Adam Hansel takes great care in cooking one of the Cortez Commercial Fishing Festival's signature dishes - grilled crab cakes.



SUN PHOTO/MAGGIE FIELD



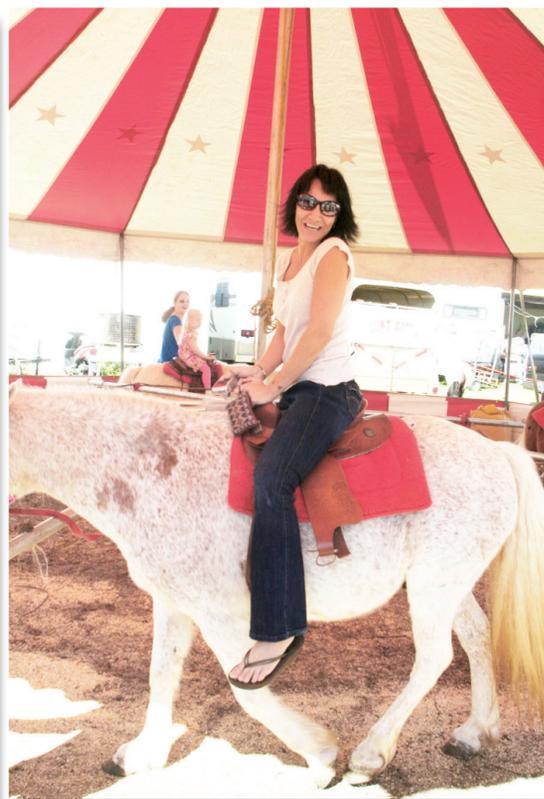
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Above, a pelican makes itself at home on handmade wooden kayaks displayed at the Cortez Commercial Fishing Festival.



SUN PHOTO/MAGGIE

Right, Isabella Grace and her mom, Joanne, take a ride on the ponies. Joanne explained she was riding long in the saddle because Isabella wouldn't get on a pony unless she did.



SUN PHOTO/MAGGIE FIELD



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Above, Arnold "Soupy" Davis won a community service award from the Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage for his musical contributions to Cortez life.



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Right, Star Fish Co. was a popular spot during the festival, with demonstrations on how to remove stone crab claws and free boat tours of the Cortez waterfront.