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More than a century later, the festival's trademark land and sea parades, races and a ceremonial court of high school students remain an Astoria tradition, one Grothe remembers fondly.

"My mom has a photo of me standing on the side of the street as a very small child, watching the parade and collecting candy," Grothe said. "My uncle was a volunteer firefighter, so we would get to ride on top of the fire truck as kids with him and the volunteer fire department."

Flash forward a few years and Grothe has been involved in the Regatta from many angles. She's walked as a parade musician with the Astoria High School marching band, been a Regatta court princess, served on the board and has now taken on a leading role.

For this year's event, with a theme of "Just Wanna Have Fun," the goal, according to Grothe, is to "just throw a giant party." Festivities will begin with a coronation ceremony, an opportunity for outgoing Regatta queen Annalyse Steele to reflect on two years of community service and pass on the crown to a new queen.

On Thursday, kids are invited to decorate bikes, participate in a parade and enjoy a movie showing at the Old-Fashioned Picnic and Movie Night, held at Warrenton City Park. Meanwhile, sailboat races, featuring the Astoria Yacht Club, will be underway on the Columbia River.

Friday's events will begin with an invitation-only luncheon at Astoria's Lovell Showroom, followed by the annual Seaman's memorial at Maritime Memorial Park, honoring those who have served or worked on the water.

A Friday night event will honor retired local businessman Pete Gimre. Asked to fulfill the duties of the Admiral, an annually

awarded dignitary position, Gimre settled on a fashion choice.

"He asked me if he should wear this blazer from the '90s, (from) when he was one of the escorts for the court," Grothe said. "I think he was just happy to be thought of and really excited ... He was ready, that's for sure."

After Saturday morning's rose planting, honoring Grothe, Gimre and this year's Regatta queen, downtown festivities will be plenty. Think decorated storefront windows, a sailboat open house, live music, vendors and a fun run — all before the start of two parades, one on land and one on the river.

"You just can't miss it," Grothe said of the Grand Land Parade. "I love seeing the streets of downtown lined with all of our community members ... Business owners coming out from their storefronts to enjoy the parade and families setting up their camp chairs, kids on blankets — it's just such high energy."

Out on the water, vessels will arrive in full regalia for the Highwater Boat Parade.

"We have members of the Astoria Yacht Club that are going to be a part of the parade with all of their beautiful boats. We get historic boats that come out, as well, like the Arrow No. 2," Grothe said. Other participating vessels include local water taxis, tour ships, sheriff and Coast Guard boats. "They all decorate themselves up with flags and different themes," Grothe said.

As for Grothe herself, she'll be riding with the Regatta court on one of the vessels of the Columbia River Bar Pilots. "It's just really neat to be out on the water with them," she said of the court, "to see our history just constantly present at the festival, it doesn't go away, it doesn't disappear. And the fact that people are still passionate about keeping it alive, I think, is really important. It's what sustains us and keeps us moving forward."



Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

TOP LEFT: In a unicorn princess dress, Antoinette Hill, 2, runs around in the grass with other children before an outdoor movie at a previous Astoria Regatta event. **ABOVE:** Kimberly Bown, the Lord High Chancellor of the Royal Rosarians, tips her hat to the passing crowds at a previous Astoria Regatta.

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