Meet the Captain & Belle

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As the new Captain and Belle, Brooks and Joan Schild plan to clean up the 2011 Riverboat Days (RBD) celebration.

That is, they plan — despite their lofty honorary titles — to continue helping the Scouts collect trash during the Aug. 19-21 event, themed "It's A Zoo Out There."

When they moved back to Yankton, Brooks was the scoutmaster of Troop 133, which was in charge of garbage and can collection at Riverboat Days. The Schilds have spent many hours patrolling the Riverside Park grounds with other Scout families, keeping the park clean.

"People have to understand that we have done the garbage pickup over time. We still plan to keep doing it," Brooks said. "It's great because we get to meet and greet people and talk to the vendors. We will talk to the people all around the park and parade, thanking them for coming."

It's just one of many ways the Schilds, both teachers in the Yankton School District, plan to leave their unique mark on Riverboat Days. The annual three-day celebration draws an estimated 100,000 people to Yankton.

"We are doing things with a new twist," Joan said. "We don't own our own convertible, so we plan to ride our motorcycles in parades, or at least one of them."

Brooks said he looked forward to serving as Captain for another reason. Riverboat Days can unify area residents following the controversial May 24 opt-out election for the Yankton School District, he said.

"After the opt-out, we need to come together as a community," he said. "By focusing on Riverboat Days, we can bring everyone together."

The community shows an eagerness to do what it takes to make Riverboat Days a success, Joan said.

"Riverboat Days makes such great use of all volunteers," she said. "There have been some members who have been on the committee since its inception."

The Schilds view themselves as ambassadors not only for Riverboat Days but for Yankton. They already plan to appear at Czech Days in Tabor and Danish Days in Viborg, along with events in other surrounding communities.

"We hope to go to the Chicken Show at Wayne (Neb.)," Joan said with a chuckle, noting the unusual nature of the festival.

The Schilds are particularly looking forward to maintaining a family tradition. They will attend the annual Tabor fireworks display honoring Brooks' late brother, Rich.

Rich Schild was killed December 2005 in Iraq by a roadside bomb. He was serving with Brooks as part of the Yankton-based Charlie Battery of the 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery of the South Dakota National Guard.

"We go (for the fireworks) every year. This year, it's on June 16 and falls on our 27th wedding anniversary. I think Rich would like that," Brooks said. "It's also special that Joan and I will be in the Czech Days parade, which he always enjoyed."

Brooks and Joan Schild

The Schilds consider the military presence an important part of Riverboat Days.

Brooks joined the Army National Guard in Council Bluffs, Iowa, in 1990 and currently serves with Charlie Battery in Yankton. He deployed to Baghdad in 2005 and to Kuwait in 2009 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He currently serves as the unit's public affairs officer.

Joan has led the Charlie Battery family readiness group during the two deployments. She currently serves with the state family readiness program.

When not deployed, Brooks served with Charlie Battery soldiers on Guard detail and grounds patrol throughout the Riverboat Days weekend. Joan and the Charlie Battery Family Readiness Group entered floats in the parade over the past six years.

The Schilds are both educators in the Yankton School District. Brooks teaches eighth grade science at Yankton Middle School. He also coaches football and track at Yankton High School and Science Olympiad at the middle school. Joan is a special education teacher at Stewart Elementary School.

The Schilds, who were married in Yankton in 1984, have three children. Blake, 22, attends the University of South Dakota and works for Steamway Cleaning. Jordan, 20, also attends USD and works for South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks. Clara, 16, is a sophomore at Yankton High School and is involved with track and Science Olympiad.

The Schilds and their three children have participated at Riverboat Days through Scouting, 3-on-3 basketball, dance and the parade.

The Schilds said they weren't expecting to be named Captain and Belle.

"We were surprised," Joan said. "We got a call from Marlene Johnson and were told that people were coming over (to visit). I picked up the house and made something for them to drink. We didn't know what to expect, but we never thought it was for Captain and Belle."

Brooks said he remains stunned at the attention. "We want to tell people that being selected for Captain and Belle is both an honor and humbling," he said.

Cowboy Up And Check Out Some Bull Riding

If it's Riverboat Days then it's time for some great action at the Yankton Rodeo Grounds.

The Yankton Rodeo Association is switching things up a little this year. Instead of two nights of rodeo action they are presenting One Night of Extreme Bull Riding — 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 20th. This year's event is being presented by Ram Rodeo and Extreme Bull Riding Tour, with Double S Bull Company, LLC, providing the rough stock.

It's always a fun night when the bulls come out, so you won't want to miss one minute of the action!

Don't forget to sign up your little cowboys and cowgirls for the Mutton Bustin' and the Prince & Princess competition. For more information you can head down to Western Trails at 208 Walnut Street in downtown Yankton.

In the past we have seen some cowboys that have made it to the national finals, as well as some up-and-coming riders.

Doing the announcing this year will be Scott Grover from Kansas. He has worked all over the country and with some of the biggest names in the business. The Rodeo Association sends him a warm welcome to Yankton.

Also a big welcome goes to Shawn "Boom Boom" Thompson who will be serving as the rodeo clown this year. Thompson hails from Sidney, Iowa, and is sure to keep the audience entertained — and the cowboys safe.

Don't want to miss the excitement. Don't miss the adventure.

For more information on the rodeo, call Doug and Val Hevle at (605) 665-9231. To find the rodeo grounds from Highway 81, take 50 west and look to your right for the big barns; or take West City Limits Road, head north and watch for the signs.

The Kiddie Parade kicks off the weekend at 5:30 pm Friday. Entrants will meet behind Farm Credit Services, along Levee Street

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For information - Kathy Dovel at 402-330-4663