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Reigning Lilac Festival Queen Ava Sehoan to Open Fort Mackinac with Cannon Firing

MACKINAC ISLAND — Reigning Mackinac Island Lilac Festival Queen Ava Sehoan will officially open Fort Mackinac for the 2021 season by firing the ceremonial first cannon of the season at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 1.

Sehoan gets the rare honor of firing the opening cannon for the second year in a row, as the 2020 Lilac Festival Queen Coronation was suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic and Sehoan's reign as Queen continued through 2020.

"We're thrilled Ava will join us to officially kick off the season," said Steve Brisson, Mackinac State Historic Parks Director. "We're excited to get the 2021 season started and open our new Kids' Quarter exhibit and debut a number of new tours and programs."

The Kids' Quarters will receive an update for the third time in the exhibits history, helping to fulfill MSHP's mission in presenting the history of the Straits of Mackinac. Housed in the oldest public building in Michigan, the Kids' Quarters will allow guests to experience how soldiers and civilians lived at Fort Mackinac in the 19th century. Here you'll be able to play various musical instruments used by the military, try on clothes, or design your very own fort, among many other activities.

New tours and programs will also debut for the 2021 season, including programs on army life in the 1880s, the National Park phase of Mackinac's history, women's roles in the fort, and a hands-on

signal drill activity, among other new programs. Additionally, an updated version of the film *The Heritage of Mackinac* will be presented every 20 minutes in the Commissary.

Fort Mackinac, with its 14 original buildings, daily cannon and rifle demonstrations, tours and programs, will be open from May 1 through October 24. Hours vary throughout the summer. Visit mackinacparks.com for more information on daily event schedules, hours of operation, tickets, and opportunities to fire the iconic Fort Mackinac cannon.

Pictures are available upon request. A downloadable version of this release can be found [here](#).

Mackinac State Historic Parks, a family of living history museums and parks in northern Michigan's Straits of Mackinac, is an agency within the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Its sites—which are accredited by the American Alliance of Museums—include Fort Mackinac, the Biddle House, The Richard and Jane Manoogian Mackinac Art Museum, Historic Downtown Mackinac, and Mackinac Island State Park on Mackinac Island, and Colonial Michilimackinac, Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse, Historic Mill Creek Discovery Park and Michilimackinac State Park in Mackinaw City. Mackinac State Historic Parks is governed by the Mackinac Island State Park Commission, established in 1895 to protect, preserve and present the parks' rich historic and natural resources for the education and recreation of future generations. Visitor information is available at (231) 436-4100 or on the web at www.mackinacparks.com.

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