



The crowd reacts as three giant pumpkins explode after one gourd was dropped from 100 feet in the air onto a stack of two giant pumpkins. The gourds weighed anywhere from 600 to 1,000 pounds. (Gazette staff photos by Matt DeBow)



Samuel Stewart, 1, sits in a broken pumpkin piece after the pumpkins were destroyed by dropping them from the air during annual Harvest Fest and Pumpkin Weigh off on Oct. 10. His brothers Syrus and Stanley play in the mess as well.



Jake Johnson won this year's pumpkin weigh off with a gourd that weighed 1,966.5 pounds.



Lars Carlson & The Secondhand Hipsters perform at the annual harvest fest on Sunday, Oct. 10.

## GOURD

(Continued from page 1)

cliché he could think of.

Moldan was talked into piloting a pumpkin at the last minute, he is an avid kayaker, but steering a pumpkin down river with an oar presents its own challenges.

"It's not buoyant like a kayak," Moldan said. "It's all about balance."

The sidewalk by the river was crowded with onlookers along the river watching the regatta from the shoreline, and the Historic Lift Bridge was packed as well.

## Legals

### NOTICE AND ORDER OF HEARING ON PETITION FOR DESCENT OF PROPERTY

STATE OF MINNESOTA  
COUNTY OF WASHINGTON  
TENTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
DISTRICT COURT  
PROBATE DIVISION  
Court File No. 82-PR-21-3604  
Estate of  
Philip Arthur Walen,  
Decedent

A Petition for Determination of Descent has been filed with this Court. The Petition represents that the Decedent died more than three years ago, leaving property in Minnesota and requests the probate of Decedent's last Will (if any), and the descent of such property be determined and assigned by this Court to the persons entitled to the property.

Any objections to the Petition must be filed with the Court prior to or raised at the hearing. If proper, and no objections are filed or raised, the Petition may be granted.

**IT IS ORDERED** and Notice is further given, that the Petition will be heard on November 9, 2021, at 11:00 AM, by this Court at 14949 - 62nd Street North, Stillwater, Minnesota.

Via a Virtual Zoom Hearing

1. Notice shall be given to all interested persons (MINN. STAT. § 524.1-401) and persons who have filed a demand for notice pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 524.3-204.

2. Notice shall be given by publishing this Notice and Order as provided by law and by:

Mailing a copy of this Notice and Order at least 14 days prior to the hearing date.

Dated: October 8, 2021

#### BY THE COURT

By: /s/ John C. Hoffman  
Judge of District Court  
By: /s/ Annette Fritz  
Court Administrator  
Attorney for Petitioner  
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Jason Moldan, far left, slowly edges for the lead before eventually crossing the finish line first. Chris Brown, Brandon Lamb, Alexander Eder also competed in the regatta.

Quoting another sports cliché, Moldan pretended that the crowd was there

specifically there to cheer him on, "the fans were fantastic, and I couldn't have done this without them."

Chris Brown, Brandon Lamb, Alexander Eder were the pumpkin pilot runners up.

The four individuals were competing in one of many events during the 17th annual Stillwater Harvest Fest and Giant Pumpkin Weigh Off.

Cory Buettner, a Harvest Fest organizer and owner of Leo's Grill & Malt Shop, said with the clear skies, and temps in the low 70s, it was a perfect day to have the event return. Last year, the annual harvest fest was cancelled, but organizers still held a pumpkin weigh off at a private event that was broadcast and livestreamed by Valley Access.

"It was so great to see friends, community members, and neighbors having a good time on the waterfront," Buettner said of this year's event. "It felt normal. From start to finish we killed it. So overall, we were super happy with the event."

On land, a few other activities included a kid's



A crowd gathers at Lowell Park to watch the pumpkin Regatta on Sunday, Oct. 10.

"It was so great to see friends, community members, and neighbors having a good time on the waterfront. It felt normal."

— Event organizer Cory Buettner

area with bounce houses and a rock climbing wall, food trucks and a chili cook off.

As for the pumpkin regatta, Buettner said that was the best race he's seen in the 11 years the organization has hosted it.

"By far it's the most successful one we've done," Buettner said. "The race was close, and in the end no one got hurt."

While Harvest Fest organizers take many precautions such as having a scuba diver in the water following the makeshift boats, the pumpkin pilots wear wetsuits along with lifejackets and there is a safety boat, paddling a hollowed out 600 to 1,000 pound pumpkin down the St. Croix River isn't the safest activity.

"We're taking some risks," Buettner.

Buettner worries each year with the large holed-out pumpkin that because it isn't the easiest (as the winner noted) to balance, someone will tip over into the water.

But that didn't happen, and all pilots made the trek safely.

While Buettner is thankful for current sponsors that help fund the event each year, the group is hoping to secure a larger regional sponsor so they can entice pumpkins growers to keep pumpkins in Minnesota and draw growers from other Midwest states by offering a larger cash prize for the heaviest pumpkins.

"We've given out \$5,000 in the past and we're hoping to up that," he said.

This year the winner of the pumpkin weigh off this year was Jake Johnson with a pumpkin weighing 1966.5 pounds.

To round off both days, a giant pumpkin was dropped from 100 feet in the air onto two other pumpkins creating a smashing good time.

After the pumpkins were destroyed, kids ran and played in the aftermath, and many searched for seeds on a quest to grow their own giant

pumpkin for next year's festival.

Stillwater native John Branch, and one of the founders of the festival, was the one who came up with the idea to destroy pumpkins by dropping them from the air, Buettner said.

He saw another pumpkin drop on the internet and decided that they could follow suit.

Each year, the Harvest Fest organization has had to borrow the crane to use as a drop apparatus. On the morning of Oct. 11, Branch donated the equipment to the Harvest Fest organization.

"So we're set for years to come," Buettner said.

Buettner reiterated that after canceling last year's festivities, the annual event went off without a hitch.

"We smashed it out of the park," Buettner said. "I heard businesses downtown felt happy with how the event went and it was a beautiful day to walk downtown to get the whole Stillwater experience. If people have never been down they should put it on their calendar for Oct. 8 and Oct. 9, 2021."