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Aye do! Couple weds aboard Pride of Baltimore II

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By: [Peter Passi](#), Duluth News Tribune

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Erin, a hairdresser, entered the wedding contest put on by Minnesota Monthly, but when Jamie Trost, captain of the Pride of Baltimore II, contacted the lucky winner, her initial reaction was one of disbelief.

“I was a little skeptical at first,” she said.

But Somers soon learned there was no catch to the offer, and on Sunday afternoon she became Mrs. Johnson aboard the Pride of Baltimore II.

In addition to exchanging vows on deck, the couple also was treated to guest accommodations at Larsmont Cottages, complete with a luau reception, featuring roast pig, courtesy of Ledge Rock Grille Chef Todd Torrcier. The Johnsons were chauffeured



Capt. Jack Sparrow impersonator Brendan Anderson of Maple Grove, Minn., (left) greets Erin Somers and RJ Johnson of Chanhassen, Minn., as they board the Pride of Baltimore II to get married during the Duluth Tall Ships festival Sunday afternoon. Anderson told Somers, “It would never have worked out between us,” a quote from the movie “Pirates of the Caribbean: At World’s End.” (Clint Austin / caustin@duluthnews.com)

to and from the ship by the Escape Limousine Service.

Johnson grew up sailing but never aboard a vessel the likes of the double-masted 170-foot *Pride of Baltimore II*, a replica of an 1812 warship.

“This is really cool,” he said after the ceremony.

Still, Johnson, who works as a lab technician in the oilseed industry, said he had some misgivings about the spectacle of getting married at a festival of ships.

“I’m pretty introverted, so I was a little nervous about it,” he explained, saying: “I was a little shaky when we first arrived.”

But Johnson’s nerves soon settled.

As the couple boarded the ship, Brendan Anderson of Maple Grove, Minn., dressed as Capt. Jack Sparrow from “*The Pirates of the Caribbean*,” congratulated the groom-to-be and told Somers: “Sorry, but it would have never worked between you and me.”

Trost said it’s unusual for the *Pride of Baltimore II* to host a wedding, much less a ceremony in the midst of a large festival.

“At what port other than Duluth would you do something like this?” he asked. To accommodate the wedding party, the vessel was closed to public tours for about 90 minutes Sunday afternoon.

Although final numbers had not been tallied, Terry Mattson, president and CEO of Visit Duluth, said he expects festival attendance since Thursday has exceeded 200,000 people. Public tours of the ships are over, but sailing excursions will continue today, with the full fleet of nine ships expected to depart throughout the week.

He said the event drew about twice as many people as a three-ship festival Duluth hosted in 2008. With three times as many ships in the lineup this year, Mattson said waits to tour ships were much more manageable.

“We had lines, but they were much shorter than in 2008,” he said.

The one exception was the *Bounty*, a crowd favorite that some people waited in line two to three hours to tour.

“That was more of a testament to the *Bounty* than anything else,” Mattson said.

He estimated that it took about 500 people to put on the festival, including a force of about 300 volunteers.

“This is the biggest event our region has ever seen,” Mattson said.

Plans are being hatched for a repeat event, but Mattson said this will require much advance planning.

“The next time we could even possibly see anything of this magnitude would be in 2013,” he said.