

December 17, 2018

*Photo Caption: Hudson Hot Air Affair volunteers Richard and Sharon Young celebrate the 2019 theme "Pirates Fly'n the Croix-ribbean".*

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## **Swashbuckling Good Time at Pirate Themed Hudson Hot Air Affair in February**

It's all things pirate for the 2019 Hudson Hot Air Affair. The annual winter festival and hot air balloon rally will be celebrating 30 years with a "Pirates Fly'n the Croix-ribbean" theme on February 1-3, 2019 in Hudson. Known as the premier winter balloon rally in the Midwest, the event is sponsored by WESTconsin Credit Union and supported by hundreds of sponsors, partners and volunteers.

Look for pirates everywhere—start at the Torchlight Parade Friday night. Pilots and parade units will sport the maritime swashbuckling theme. There's Peg Leg Pete the Pirate Parrot hot air balloon in the mass ascensions and other ballooning events on Saturday and Sunday. Kids can meet Jack Sparrow of Pirates of the Caribbean fame at the E.P. Rock School gym on Saturday afternoon and at the Moon Glow on Saturday evening. Also at E.P. Rock launch field will be the Pirates Treasure Drop fundraiser with proceeds going to the Hudson Police Department Canine Program. Come Saturday night, join your mateys at the Swashbuckler's Soiree at Madison Avenue Wine & Spirits. It's Caribbean inspired food and cocktails, rum sampling and live music plus another Jack Sparrow appearance. The pirate theme will emerge at numerous pre-events in January, including a pirates' treasure hunt, Caribbean cooking class and pirate parrot themed canvas party painting class.

The February 1-3 weekend schedule will include some new and revived events. Back by popular demand is the Chili Cook-Off—this year hosted by Big Guys BBQ Roadhouse on Sunday afternoon February 3. Airtec Sports will set up a Pirates Port! at the launch field on Saturday showing off snow and ATV toys. Returning as a pre-event: A crew school is scheduled for Saturday, January 19 for anyone wanting to learn how to crew for a hot air balloon.

Returning annual favorites include the 30+ hot air balloons in mass ascensions (weather permitting), fireworks display over the St. Croix River, button instant prizes, geocaching, pancake breakfast, marketplace and craft fair, youth entertainment, 5K fun run/walk, museum tours, kite flying, smooch board competition, ice carving, nature programs, bingo, pet costume contest and kids ice fishing derby. Live music, karaoke and DJ music will be featured every evening at numerous locations.

The Hot Air Affair pre-event schedule in January is especially busy in 2019. Events start January 11 and include fundraisers, grocery store events, crafts for kids at Dick's Bar & Grill and The Phipps Center for the Arts and the popular candlelight ski and hike at YMCA Camp St. Croix. The Taste of HHAA charity event, featuring wine, beer and spirits tasting, will move to Saturday night, January 26. This year's evening of food, live music, silent auction and wine pull will raise money for the American Cancer Society.

The 30<sup>th</sup> annual Hudson Hot Air Affair is coordinated entirely by volunteers. For complete schedule details, visit [www.hudsonhotairaffair.com](http://www.hudsonhotairaffair.com) or visit Facebook for the latest details.

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