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BREAKING THE ICE



Contestants in the 2026 Greater Pottsville Winter Carnival's three categories — Queen of Snows, Snowflake Princess and Snowdrop Princess — pose together at the Royal Tea Party at Mountain Valley Golf Course on Sunday, Jan. 18, 2026. **HYUN SOO LEE/STAFF PHOTOS**

Winter Carnival contestants mingle at Royal Tea Party

By Hyun Soo Lee
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BARNESVILLE — The Greater Pottsville Winter Carnival on Sunday held its annual Royal Tea Party, a light-hearted social event that gave contestants a chance to mingle with one another and meet the reigning royalty.

Held inside the Mountain Valley Golf Course banquet hall, the Royal Tea was this year's first public Winter Carnival event. It brought together all 70 of the young girls and women vying for the Snowdrop Princess, Snowflake Princess and Queen of Snows titles.

Accompanied by family members, the contestants enjoyed a relaxing afternoon with their peers, sipping tea, enjoying decadent desserts, taking pictures and participating in a basket raffle. The party drew around 180 total attendees.

This year, there are 23 candidates for Snowdrop Princess, who are in second and third grade; 26 for Snowflake Princess, high school juniors; and 21 for Queen of Snows, 18- to 29-year-old women.

T.J. Fitzpatrick, president, said all contestants are judged on poise, personality, voice projection and appearance.

Courtney McCabe, tea party coor-



Contestants for the Winter Carnival's Snowdrop Princess title — girls in second and third grade — pose with outgoing Snowdrop Princess Piper Markus on Sunday at Mountain Valley Golf Course.

It's a neat event for mothers and daughters and the contestants — some fathers as well — to come out and have a bit of a formal tea party,

— COURTYN MCCABE, Royal Tea Party coordinator

dinator, said the event allows contestants to break the ice and interact with the reigning Queen of Snows, Snowflake and Snowdrop Princess. This was the 16th edition of the tea party, now recog-

nized as an important, non-judged event typically held near the beginning of the carnival festivities.

"It's a neat event for mothers and daughters and the contestants — some fathers as well — to come out and have a bit of a formal tea party," McCabe said.

Each Winter Carnival features a different theme; this year, the theme is "I Love the Winter Carnival," a spin on the famous "I Love New York" marketing slogan.

The children's book "Eloise at the Plaza" was also an inspiration for the

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Lavelle Fire Co. unveils 'new to us' fire truck

Vehicle bought from Old Forge Fire Department

By Ron Devlin
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LAVELLE — Things looked pretty dim around the Lavelle Fire Company when its 30-year-old Pierce fire truck broke down with engine failure in November.

In a matter of six weeks or

so, with assistance from neighboring fire companies, Lavelle found a replacement — a 2002 E-One Typhoon/Saulsbury pumper at the Old Forge Fire Department.

"We are proud to introduce this 'new-to-us' Engine 4-12, the fire company said in a Facebook post earlier this month. "We're excited that this engine will serve the community for many years."

Fire Chief Russel Hummel said the new truck has a pumping capacity of 1,500 gallons per minute and a 1,000 gallon

booster tank. "We were so lucky to find something that fits our needs," said Hummel, fire chief since 2019. "The truck has been exceptionally well maintained."

Locustdale Fire Company lent Lavelle a truck until they could find a new one.

Aristes Fire Chief Greg Younger assisted Lavelle in locating the 24-year-old E-One pumper on Signal 5 Fire Apparatus, a fire truck broker.

A Signal 5 listing said the E-One has a Saulsbury stain-

less steel rescue body with roll up doors. It has a 6-person cab, LED lighting and a head-set communications system. There's room to store 14-foot and 24-foot ladders.

With just under 30,000 miles on it, the truck had been in service for 2,288 hours.

Listed in "very good" condition, the E-One had undergone complete servicing in 2025. It was listed at an asking price of \$80,000 — a fraction of the cost of a new truck.

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Lavelle Fire Company purchased a "new to us" 2002 E-ONE fire truck from Old Forge Fire Department in Lackawanna County. **COURTESY OF LAVELLE FIRE**

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