Last year's Tournoi Champ, Derek Marcantel, is noted

Ten-time Tournoi Champ Mitch Soileau retired following the 1995 competition.

A new champion was born last year with the victory of Derek Marcantel.

Marcantel, who also took the sportsmanship trophy, earned the low average time of 13:02 and landed a total of 19 rings to come out the top rider in last year's contest. He was riding "Wall Street News."

The number two man was Keith Guillory, riding "Princess" with an average time of 13:33 and 19 rings.

Rounding out the top three was Jude Vidrine, who averaged a time of 13:39 and 18 rings. His mount's name was "Thunder."

Queen Brooke Tate and King Chris John

Continued from Page 4A

Understands the needs of the local farmers and hopes to ensure that upcoming farm legislation will be beneficial to their needs. Congressman John will serve on the General Farm Commodities Subcommittee and the Subcommittee on Forestry, Resource Conservation and Research. He intends to use his position on these subcommittees to boost rural development and increase trade opportunities for the region's farmers.

Congressman John strongly supports efforts targeting deficit reduction and greater fiscal responsibility, including a balanced budget amendment. He is a member of the Blue Dog Coalition, the conservative voice for the Democratic party within Congress, and hopes to use this affiliation to forge a bipartisan consensus on a variety of topics. Congressman John is the co-chair of the Blue Dog task force on regulatory reform.

Congressman John is married to the former Payton Smith of Leesville. They make their home in Crowley.
Jennifer Vidrine: Enjoying Tournoi Queen reign

Jennifer Lyn Vidrine
Louisiana Tournoi Queen
invites everyone
to attend the
1997 Tournoi
4:00 p.m. Sunday
(Located next to Cooper Tools)

By DANIELLE WOOD
Editor

Being the 1997 Tournoi Queen is something Jennifer Lyn Vidrine was hoping to become and now really enjoys. Jennifer said she wanted to be the Tournoi Queen because she enjoys riding horses and she wanted to make the Tournoi more recognized in the state. She said she entered the Ville Platte Tournoi Queen contest with only the hope of being the Tournoi Queen. Winning the contest was one of her best experiences, she said.

"It was awesome," Jennifer said. "Derek Marrus (Tournoi Champion) walked around the stage with the roses and he passed me up so my heart dropped. Then, he turned around and put the roses on my lap," Jennifer said.

Jennifer said she wanted to be the Tournoi Queen because she enjoys riding horses and she said she was hoping to make the Tournoi more recognized in the state.

Jennifer, who is a 1996 graduate of Sacred Heart High School, is the daughter of Richard and Cindy Vidrine. She is very close to her sisters, Jillian Vidrine Ardoin and Jessie Lane Vidrine. She also adores Jillian's daughter, Brittany Love Ardoin.

In high school, Jennifer was involved in numerous activities. Some of which include: the pep squad, head squad leader her senior year, homecoming court, senior class president, member of the National Honor Society and a top 20 student.

Jennifer was also a student of the month, an Alpha Honor Roll student, a member of 4-H, SADD (students against drunk driving), a member of the newspaper and yearbook staff and a member of FBLA (future business leaders of America).

Jennifer was also named to Who's Who, a Trojan scholar, a science olympiad and was part of a documentary featured on Channel 4 Star Cable that was also on video, she said.

Now that she attends McNeese State University in Lake Charles, she is involved in a number of other projects and activities such as being a member of Phi Mu Sorority and the Junior Panhellenic Council, a freshman senator and an honor roll student. Jennifer is majoring in pre-medicine.

Jennifer said she will be bringing some of her sorority sisters to join her at this year's Tournoi event.

"It's funny because a lot of people don't even know what the Tournoi means," Jennifer said.

Jennifer Lyn Vidrine
Louisiana Tournoi Queen
invites everyone
to attend the
1997 Tournoi
4:00 p.m. Sunday
(Located next to Cooper Tools)

Jennifer with sisters Jessie Lane Vidrine and Jillian Vidrine Ardoin
Jennifer with her niece, Brittany Love Ardoin
The significance of the Tournoi being in Ville Platte is that Ville Platte is so French oriented and the original Tournoi was run by French knights, Jennifer said.

Jennifer said she would also like to see more incorporation of the Tournoi into Cotton Festival activities since the purpose of the Tournoi is to battle the “Seven Evils of Cotton,” which are polyester, rayon, silk, nylon, flood, drought and the bollweevil.

Jennifer said she is looking forward to being here for the festival this weekend and will ride on a horse with the Tournoi riders.
By DANIELLE WOOD
Editor

The 1997 Cotton Festival parade will feature a special treat with the performance of the Tabasco Girls of New Iberia. Jodi Sylvester of Ville Platte will be one of the featured dancers.

Jodi is the 14-year-old daughter of Jonell Fontenot of Ville Platte and is a freshman at the Academy of Sacred Heart in Grand Coteau.

It has always been a dream of Jodi's to be a Tabasco Girl since the first time she saw them perform.

The Tabasco Girls are the official entertainers for the McIlheny Company and must come from Franny's Studio of Dance in New Iberia, Jodi said.

A dancer must be 14-years of age to qualify, but very few high school freshmen achieve the honor, such as Jodi has.

The girls went to Las Vegas last summer to perform and have been invited to perform on Disney's Big Red Boat.

The girls will also be performing for some of the Louisiana IceGators games in Lafayette this hockey season.

The Tabasco Girls have attended many events, such as the County Festival in Jeanerette, The Sugarcane Festival in New Iberia, the Cattle Festival in Abbeville, the Christmas Festival in Broussard, the Omelette Festival and the Rice Festival in Crowley.

The girls will also attend the Festival of Lights in Natchitoches on Dec. 6.

Jodi, who has been dancing for 11 years, said she is looking forward to performing in her hometown for The Cotton Festival.

Jodi also emphasized that it is very important for the crowd to cheer the girls on.

"The more you cheer - the better we dance," she said.

The group is a non-stop high-energy danse line that takes a lot of work during performances.

Throughout the parade, the girls never take breaks or stop dancing, which is especially difficult on steamy, hot days.

Jodi is very proud of her accomplishment of being part of the team, however.

"It just goes to show that hard work pays off sometimes," Jodi said.