

ELVIS SHAKES UP YPSILANTI



Steve Perez / The Detroit News

Chris Ayotte, front, an Elvis impersonator from Canton, arrives in a Cadillac convertible Friday with other impersonators to a horde of screaming fans at the Marriott Eagle Crest hotel, to kick off the seventh annual Michigan Elvisfest in Ypsilanti.

Fest has burning love for the KING

BY CHRYSTAL JOHNSON
The Detroit News

YPSILANTI — There was a lot of collar-popping, leg-jerking Elvis jail-house rocking Friday afternoon at the seventh annual Michigan Elvisfest.

The party kicked off at the Ypsilanti Marriott Eagle Crest hotel, when seven Elvises pulled up in a limo and a classic Cadillac convertible, to throngs of screaming fans.

Some raved about meeting the many incarnations of the 1950s, '60s and '70s music and movie star on Friday.

"They were all cool and one said, 'You ain't nothing but a hound dog,'" said longtime Elvis Presley fan Mary Mullins of Ypsilanti, who attended a meet and greet at the hotel with her daughter.

The festivities moved to the city's historic Depot Town at Shady Riverside Park and will continue there today from noon to midnight.

Seventh annual Michigan Elvisfest

What: Elvis and other impersonators, costume contests, food, games and activities for children

When: Noon to midnight today

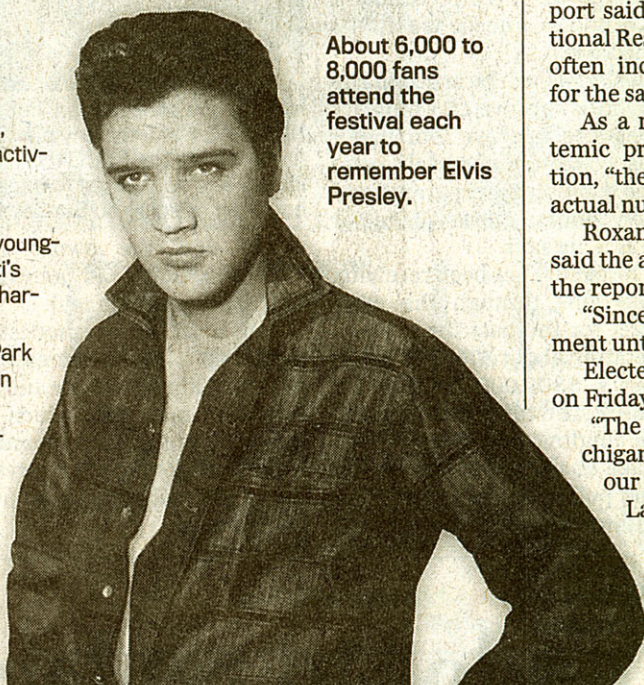
Tickets: Adults \$15; children 10 and younger are free; proceeds benefit Ypsilanti's park improvement efforts and local charities

Where: Ypsilanti's Shady Riverside Park Depot Town, on Huron Street between Michigan Avenue and Cross Street

For information: Visit www.mielvis-fest.org

Eleven Elvis impersonators — spanning his early days in the 1950s through his 1970s Las Ve-

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About 6,000 to 8,000 fans attend the festival each year to remember Elvis Presley.

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BY JIM LYNN
The Detroit News

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Elvisfest

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gas-era — will be joined by Tom Jones, Blues Brothers and Ray Charles imitators.

Dwight Icenhower, 25, arrived at the meet and greet wearing leather pants and a classic black shirt. He twitched his legs and quivered his lips as he talked about his plans to perform his personal favorites, "In the Ghetto" and a "Heartbreak Hotel" medley, among other Elvis tunes.

"My mother got me into Elvis around 5 years old," Icenhower said. "My favorite era is black leather Elvis in 1968."

In addition to a steady stream of Elvis performers, activities include adult and children's Elvis costume contests, karaoke, rock climbing and face painting. There will also be raffles, the Elvis Autorama classic car show and the Viva Las Vegas tent, which will feature Texas Hold 'Em and blackjack tournaments.



Elizabeth Conley / The Detroit News

Fans swoon over Elvis impersonator Kavan, who goes by only one name, during his performance at Ypsilanti's Elvisfest, which continues today from noon to midnight.

Mullins' 12-year-old daughter, Jessica, is just as fascinated.

"I'm going to try to be one of the '50s and '60s girls," Jessica said about her plans for one of the costume contests today.

She proudly showed off her handmade Elvis necklace and her Elvis purse.

"We are hoping to get 10,000 people; that would be a record for us," said Casey Wooster, director of sales for the Ypsilanti Convention and Visitors Bureau.

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