

Bundle up!

Winter Carnival returns to Greenfield this weekend

By AVIVA LUTTRELL
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GREENFIELD — Grab your warm clothes and lace up your ice skates, because Greenfield’s Winter Carnival returns this weekend for its 95th year, bringing the community together for a celebration of the season.

“It really speaks to the joy that it continues to bring our community year after year, especially in a time of year that can be dark and our days are short,” said Maddy Benjamin, program supervisor for the town’s Recreation Department, which puts on the event. “It’s nice to have something to look forward to every year that we’ve been able to look forward to for so long, so I think it’s really valuable to our community members in so many ways.”

The three-day festival kicks off Friday morning with live ice carvings throughout downtown by local artists, which will be illuminated at night and on display all weekend. The theme for this year’s carnival is “arctic blast,” which Benjamin said she hopes will serve as inspiration for several contests scheduled for the weekend, such as the third annual Parade of Lights Friday night and the cardboard sled race Sunday afternoon.

“You might see some arctic blast-inspired decorations (in the parade),” she said. “We also have a ‘best use of theme’ category in our cardboard sled race, so you might see it represented there, as well.”

The weekend’s festivities also



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Above, Becky McIntyre, of Greenfield, pushes her son, Johnny McIntyre, then 6, in his space shuttle sled during the Cardboard Sled Contest at Greenfield’s Winter Carnival in 2016. This year’s event will be held this weekend. Below, also from last year, Athol wood carver Mark Bosworth is sprayed with ice shavings as he carves his ice sculpture in front of 138 Main St. in Greenfield.

include tried-and-true favorites like the 4-mile Sleigh Bell Run and Family Fun Fest Saturday, Breakfast with Olaf at the Ninety-Nine Restaurant and outdoor fun, including skating, sledding and snowman-building, at Beacon Field Sunday.

Children can stop by the Recreation Department office at 20 Sanderson St. on Saturday to learn about small exotic animals during an interactive presentation by Animal Adventures, an animal rescue center in Bolton. The new event has been added to this year’s Family Fun Fest, and will



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feature live animals, including a rescued chinchilla, snakes and other reptiles.

“We were just looking for a new and interesting activity to bring in for Saturday, and we wanted to see what we could do to do something that was both educational and entertaining and a little bit different for the kids,” Benjamin said.

As part of the carnival's kickoff, illuminated vehicles will travel from Newton School to Beacon Field Friday, starting at 6 p.m., during the Parade of Lights. Parade entries are still needed, and an application can be found on the Rec Department's website. Following the parade, a bonfire and fireworks display will take place at Beacon Field. The fireworks display is scheduled to start at 7 p.m.

Seven ice sculptures will be on display along Main Street and members of the public can vote for their favorites until Sunday, when the votes will be tallied and prizes awarded. Summit Ice of Greenfield, which supplies ice for the carvers, is also donating an extra sculpture for the Town Common.

On Saturday, participants can jingle their way through the scenic Sleigh Bell Run course, beginning on Hope Street and winding through the Highland Park area. Runners can register online, at the



At left, professional wood carver Mark Bosworth of Athol carves his ice sculpture in front of 138 Main St. in Greenfield last year. Bosworth's ice sculpture depicted a scene of a boy with his tongue stuck to a light pole being pulled back by another boy. At right, Jager, a Staffordshire Terrier, runs to his owner, Paul Buldoc of Greenfield, pulling a beer keg during the K9 Keg Pull at Greenfield's Winter Carnival last year.



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Recreation Department or Town Hall, and on the day-of at Hope & Olive Restaurant. The race is set to start at 10 a.m.

For those looking for indoor fun on Saturday, the Family Fun Fest at the DPW Sanderson Street office will feature a Lego competition, running from 9:30 to 10 a.m., the live animal show at 10 a.m., face painting, crafts, games and a showing of Norm of the North at 12:30 p.m. Popcorn, pizza and drinks will be available for purchase. An art exhibit at Greenfield Middle School will be open from 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., while there will be youth league basketball games from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the

school's gym. Also a cribbage tournament is set to start at 3:30 p.m. and will be held on the second floor of the Youth Center and public ice skating at the Collins/Moylan Arena.

Sunday's events begin bright and early with Breakfast with Olaf at the Ninety-Nine Restaurant, from 8 to 10 a.m. The breakfast is a fundraiser for the Winter Carnival — tickets are \$6 per person and \$4 for children ages 10 and under. Under 2 are free. Tickets are available in advance or at the door.

“We'll see hundreds of people on Sunday morning, so we're very excited about that,” Benjamin said.

The carnival continues at Beacon Field starting at noon. The day's events include sledging down Beacon Hill, skating on the outdoor ice rink, a snow sculpture contest, and ski and snowshoe demos by Eastern Mountain Sports. Horse drawn hay or sleigh rides, community-wide tug of

war, a live DJ, ice bowling, broomball and a hockey match add to the fun. There will also be a cookie bake-off, chili cook-off, marshmallow toasting, hot cocoa and other warm offerings from the snack shack.

Back for the fifth year by popular demand is the K-9 Keg Pull at 1 p.m. Participants run,

pulling a beer can, while bigger dogs pull full sized, empty kegs. All proceeds from registration fees benefit the Friends of the Paws Park.

The annual cardboard sled race will conclude the Winter Carnival Sunday afternoon. Check in starts at 1:30 p.m. with the racing scheduled to start at 2:30 p.m. Prizes are awarded in the youth and group categories for fastest, most creative, zaniest and best crash. Adults can earn prizes for the fastest and most creative. Businesses are also encouraged to join the fun in the Corporate Challenge, with a prize awarded for best design. Overall prizes are awarded to best Arctic Blast theme and people's choice.

An award ceremony will follow the race for all competitions held during the weekend.

For a complete schedule of events and event map, visit greenfieldrecreation.com/wintercarnival.

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