

MOVING MINIONS



Forrester, 11, and Julian Bellanger, 8, take off with a little help down the Beacon Field sledding hill on Sunday during the Greenfield Winter Carnival cardboard sled race. Recorder/Micky Bedell

Movies fuel cardboard sleds Greenfield Winter Carnival contest fun for all

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GREENFIELD — Three days of winter festivities culminated Sunday with flying snow and collapsing cardboard in the perennially popular cardboard sled race as young pilots put their home-made, and generally parent-engineered, sleds to the test.

Organized by the Greenfield Recreation Department, the 93rd annual Winter Carnival began Friday with ice carving, fireworks and an illuminated parade and included basketball games, a road race,

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hockey, ice skating and sleigh rides.

Sunday afternoon, children shot down every slope in Beacon Field on plastic sleds until organizers cleared the main hill and marshaled the children and their parents for the cardboard competition and a procession of rickety, collapsing sleds took off one-by-one with laughing pilots.

“It was good, right when I jumped out I kind of tipped over,” said Leo Franceschi,

10, of South Deerfield. Leo’s mother Lisa Middents turned a crank on the side of the closed box before pushing it down the hill and, as the sled slowed,

Leo, with a jester’s cap and painted face,

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The “Best Crash” winners of the Greenfield Winter Carnival cardboard sled race brace themselves before colliding with a pile of snow built up as a jump on Sunday.

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popped out to cheers from the 150 or so spectators. Leo said the idea was his older sister’s, and it was good enough to win them “most creative” in their category. Sleds competed for speed, creativity, “zaniest” and best crash.

The theme of this year’s winter carnival was the 2013 Disney animated musical “Frozen,” but it wasn’t the only movie on the slopes.

Greenfield friends Miles Chattman and Thomas Twaddell, both 7, dressed as Ripley and the alien from the 1986 sci-fi thriller “Aliens,” Miles’s arms attached to the yellow jointed arms of a sled representing the robotic fork-lift from the film’s most memorable fight scene.

“This was my idea. We have done a series of ’80s movie sleds over the years, so this is another,” said Caitlin von Schmidt, Thomas’ mother. Miles’ mother Jo Chattman started the ’80s film sled series with the Eddie Murphy comedy “Coming to America,” followed by “Star Wars” and “Back to the Future.”

“Because we loved Eddie Murphy, and they’re so fun to dress up,” Chattman said. “We’re trying to mold their movie tastes.”

For the moment, though, the adults decided against showing the 7-year-olds the violent “Aliens” fight scene they were portraying.

Seamus Collins, 6, of Greenfield rode a double-decker couch in a cardboard LEGO man costume, a second LEGO figure about his height seated on the upper level. The 8-foot-tall sled was a reference to 2014’s “The LEGO Movie,” with a speaker playing the theme song from inside Seamus’ cardboard counterpart.

His mother, Alyssa Collins, said the sled race is a family project every year. Seamus said he has participated since he was 2. Past sleds have included Snoopy’s dog house and Lightning McQueen from the Pixar animated film

“Cars,” his favorite sled to date.

Alyssa Collins said Seamus and his father Sean thought up this year’s entry. Little brother Malakai was a little too small to join in. “Maybe next year, when he’s three,” Sean Collins said. The sled won the peoples’ choice award.

The Caron brothers of Greenfield — Jackson, 8, Logan, 6, and Max, 4 — fit into a three-seat penguin sled, with some difficulty.

“They barely fit in, snow clothes weren’t part of the plan,” said their mother, Katie Caron. This was the first year the family entered the event, and the penguin sled’s streamlined body and pointed face brought the brothers a win for speed in the group category.

Snow was plentiful for the winter celebration this year, following a year when cold rain kept the crowds away.

Tending the bonfire, Dave Podlenski of the Department of Public Works said this looked like the biggest carnival in years.

“It was a very successful but yet cold winter carnival,” said Greenfield Recreation Director Christy Moore. “Very pleased with the turnout and continued support for this event; the parade of lights was definitely a hit and it was so nice to have the cardboard sled race actually be able to race down the hill.”

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