

GREENFIELD



STAFF PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ

Suki competes in the K-9 Keg Pull at Beacon Field on Sunday during the 102nd annual Winter Carnival in Greenfield.

# Carnival unites community

## Season Switch-Up theme rings true with warm weather

By **BELLA LEVAVI**  
Staff Writer

and **AALIANNA MARIETTA**  
For the Recorder

GREENFIELD — Neighbors and newcomers gathered at Beacon Field on Sunday to play Tug-of-War and cheer on dogs of all sizes that were competing in the K-9 Keg Pull to close out the 102nd annual Winter Carnival.

“It brings people together,” said Greenfield native Jackie Aiston, whose chocolate lab Tia competed for the first time this year. Dogs pulled appropriately sized “kegs” ranging from beer cans for smaller dogs to full-size kegs for larger ones.

Roger, the corgi of longtime Greenfield resident Sue Louisignau, ran for the fifth time in a tie-dye shirt and swim trunks, matching this year’s Winter Carnival theme, “Season Switch-Up.”

“It’s a beautiful day. We’ve had so much bad weather. ... It’s just fun to be out and around people,” Louisignau said.

For many visitors, the carnival cleared a space to escape the homebody routine of winter and get



STAFF PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ

People check out an ice sculpture of an angel crafted by Athol resident Mark Bosworth on Friday night during the 102nd annual Winter Carnival in Greenfield.

SEE CARNIVAL A8



STAFF PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ

People enjoy the bonfire at Beacon Field Friday night during the 102nd annual Winter Carnival in Greenfield.

## Community enjoys 102nd Winter Carnival

### CARNIVAL FROM A1

outside while reconnecting with the community.

"It's just great to see everyone. I feel like in the winter we all get inside and hunker down, and it's nice to see the community out and about," said Greenfield resident Sara Lark. She returns to the Winter Carnival each year for traditions like Friday's Parade of Lights and bonfire, as well as Sunday's horse-drawn wagon rides.

"It's a non-politicized space where everyone can enjoy themselves and see their neighbors and people that they haven't seen since they've gone inside for the winter," Lark continued. "We love that we can come regardless of what the weather throws at us."

Instead of snow like in past years, sunshine and 40-degree weather filled Beacon Field, encouraging newcomers like Greenfield residents Ginger Maley and Syd St. John to attend.

"It's been so gross this winter, and just hiding from the rain and ice and everything, and now we're all out here seeing each other," said St. John.

"It's just really nice to get the whole community out," Maley agreed.

Daniel Piasecki, a member of the Greenfield Recreation Commission, said the committee organizes events like the K-9 Keg Pull and Tug of War with community connection in mind.

"I like to give back to the community that I live in and being able to help run these events really brings the community together," explained, Piasecki who works for Coldwell Banker Community Realtors, the sponsor of the keg pull.

According to the commissioner, the Winter Carnival is

his personal favorite and "one of our biggest town-wide events."

Mary Phillips, a fellow Greenfield Recreation Commission member, helped out for her fourth year, serving chili from the annual chili cooking contest to visitors. Each year, Phillips looks forward to the events geared toward children.

"It's so much fun seeing their faces light up," she said, beaming herself. "You see faces you rarely see or never see."

Greenfield resident Ashlee Costa visited Beacon Field with her kids for the flash mob that children had practiced at Dawn's School of Dance the day before. For Costa, the carnival is a breath of fresh air from the day-to-day routine.

"It's nice to see the good side of Greenfield," she said. "I'm a psychiatrist here and oftentimes I see the hard stuff; it's nice to see the happy stuff."

For the past three years, Dawn Morin, owner of Dawn's School of Dance on Hope Street, has organized a dance for the Sunday festivities, involving around 100 participants, including toddlers and parents. This year's performances featured a dance to the Chuck E. Cheese song "Beach Party Bash," aligning with Winter Carnival's "Season Switch-Up" theme.

Morin shared her family's love for the event: "Every year we just add to the memories."

She also highlighted the positive impact the Winter Carnival has on local businesses, citing increased foot traffic and spending. She said she personally enjoyed Friday night at Main Street Bar and Grille, where she savored a front-row view of the Parade of Lights.

On Saturday, attendees



STAFF PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ

A fire dancer entertains at Court Square in Greenfield Friday night during the 102nd annual Winter Carnival.

strolled through downtown, admiring masterfully carved ice sculptures and participating in indoor activities for all ages.

Mesa Verde restaurant at 10 Fiske Ave. contributed to the carnival's unique attractions with a pop-up ice bar, supported by a literal block of ice commissioned by the Recreation Department. The bar, featuring a luge for pouring drinks, attracted families and contributed its proceeds to the Recreation Department's budget.

Amy McMahan, owner of Mesa Verde, praised the Recreation Department for creating "Insta-worthy events" and emphasized its impressive accomplishments with limited resources.

Beyond the economic boost for businesses, the winter festivities provide a platform for like-minded individuals to connect. Rick Roy, organizer of a cribbage tournament for the past 15 years, witnessed its growth, reaching capacity at 80 participants this year and raising more than \$1,200 for the Recreation Department.

The cribbage tournament,

with seven rounds of games, awards points for wins and "skunks," where a player wins by more than 30 points. Custom cribbage boards and various prizes from local businesses were awarded to the top 20 players. Participants traveled from as far as Southington, Connecticut. Shelburne resident Roland Giguere, a returning champion, expressed his enjoyment of the event.

"This tournament is fun," he said. "It is the only time I get to play cribbage all afternoon."

McMahan echoed the sentiment, appreciating the community's energy during the darkest winter moments.

"You go to Europe and you see people out all winter long. In New England, we hunker down and hibernate. It is the darkest moment in the winter and people are out," she explained. "I love the energy of this weekend and the community coming together."

Bella Levavi can be reached at 413-930-4579 or [blevavi@recorder.com](mailto:blevavi@recorder.com).