

GREENFIELD

Michael Legassey of Winchendon carves a double run toboggan chute on the common for the Greenfield Winter Carnival. Sleds will travel down a small incline and coast across the common when he is finished.



STAFF PHOTO
PAUL FRANZ

Ice toboggan chute on common recalls Winter Carnivals of long ago

By **MARY BYRNE**
Staff Writer

GREENFIELD — A century ago, an ice castle used to sit on the Greenfield Common each winter — a dominating presence of the downtown area that

symbolized Winter Carnival was in full swing.

Although an ice castle wasn't in the cards for the centennial celebration of the annual winter event, Christy Moore, director of the Recreation Department, said her

staff still wanted to do something "to make this weekend feel magical."

"We originally thought about building the ice castle that used to be on the common," Moore said Friday morning, as employees of the Greenfield-based

Summit Ice unloaded dozens of ice blocks onto the common. "But that was too complicated and too many blocks, so we thought we could make a scaled-down version that the

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public and the kids and everybody who's going to be downtown can interact and play on."

A longstanding tradition, the carnival dates back to the winter of 1922, according to Moore. After a largely remote schedule of events last year due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the return of the weekend-long celebration kicked off Friday with a number of events scheduled throughout the evening.

The ice toboggan chute, Moore said, aims to be reminiscent of the old chute that was at Beacon Field.

"On Beacon Field ... where everybody goes sledding, we obviously didn't want to take away the special sledding hill for our community," she said, adding that plastic sleds will be provided by the Recreation Department for the public to use on the common. "We wanted to spread the ice event downtown."

An outdoor ice bar, the "Glacier Hideaway," was also sculpted Friday, Moore said, welcoming people for winter-themed beverages on Friday and Saturday from 1 to 8 p.m. outside the Hawks & Reed Performing Arts Center.

About 54 blocks of ice were delivered to the common early Friday morning for the toboggan chute and the bar, as well as for the seven contestants in the ice carving competition.

"A typical year would be about 14 blocks," said Adam Provost, vice president of Summit Ice. "Summit Ice is happy to be part of the 100th year of the Winter Carnival."

While members of the Recreation Department worked with Summit Ice to set up blocks along Main Street for the ice sculpture competition, Athol native Mike Legassey began carving and constructing the roughly 20-foot toboggan chute.

"It's a little bit of architecture and a little bit of artistry at the same time," Legassey said, as the rain pelted down on Friday morning.

Legassey, who recently moved to Winchendon from



STAFF PHOTO/PAUL FRANZ

Artist Robert Markey of Ashfield carves an ice angel on Main Street for the Greenfield Winter Carnival.



Rachel Roberts of the Greenfield Business Association and Ben Goldsher of Hawks & Reed Performing Arts Center at the ice bar that will be serving drinks on Court Square for the Greenfield Winter Carnival.

STAFF PHOTO PAUL FRANZ

Athol, said he has been carving ice the last five years.

"I started carving wood," he said. "Maybe after 10 years I got introduced to ice."

He said when Moore reached out hoping to hire him for the "special project," he was flattered. Legassey also plans to take part in the ice carving competition as usual.

"I knew it was going to be a

bigger task, going from two blocks to almost 30," he said.

Last week, as Moore finalized the weekend of events ahead, she said that following last year's modified event, her department was "very happy" to offer the community a full-scale celebration once again.

"We want people to reminisce about fun times they've had over the years at Winter

Carnival ... and build memories that last a lifetime," she said. "And what better place to do it than Greenfield?"

For a full list of events, visit greenfieldrecreation.com/wintercarnival.html.

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