

Offering 'something for everyone'

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Winter Carnival back for 104th year



Mark Bosworth of Athol uses a chain saw on the winged lion he is creating on Main Street as part of the Greenfield Winter Carnival.

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For the Recorder

GREENFIELD — As the Winter Carnival returns for its 104th year with a theme of "Yeti or Not," Greenfield Recreation Director Christy Moore is playfully warning attendees that they might experience a "potential yeti sighting."

This year's carnival, which runs from Friday, Feb. 6 through Sunday, Feb. 8, has a full schedule of indoor and outdoor activities for all ages. Ice sculptures, the Parade of Lights

and fireworks at Beacon Field will take place on Friday to kick off the three days of festivities, and Sunday will wrap up the weekend with competitions at Beacon Field, such as the K-9 Keg Pull and the Cardboard Sled Contest.

Moore said she is expecting the 104th Winter Carnival to be an exciting one.

“It’s the 104th annual Winter Carnival, and if you think about that many years in a row, it’s pretty amazing,” Moore said. “This year, I am super happy Mother Nature understood the assignment. We always want snow, and she gave it to us right on time. I’m really excited that we’ll have snow around Beacon Field and all around town because it’ll really feel like winter.”

For Moore, the carnival represents a great chance for people to come together at a time of year when they would otherwise be inclined to “hibernate.”

“In the heart of winter, it is nice to come together with your friends and neighbors and celebrate outside,” Moore said. “As a society, we aren’t outside enough, but there’s so many things you can still do in the winter.”

Out of the many offerings at the Winter Carnival, Moore has some favorites.

“The live ice carving downtown is really breathtaking,” she said, adding that she’s also partial to the Parade of Lights. “We have many businesses that have committed to decorating their vehicles with holiday lights, which is a great thing to experience. And the fireworks at Beacon Field are really cool, especially this year with the snow. I just hope it’s not too cold.”

However, Moore acknowledges there's plenty of indoor activities for those who don't enjoy the cold. One of those is the 17th annual Winter Carnival Cribbage Tournament, which will be held at the John Zon Community Center from 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 7. The tournament has a \$20 registration fee.

Greenfield resident and woodworker Rick Roy, who organizes the cribbage tournament, has seen the event grow in popularity with each passing year.

"When I started organizing the tournament in 2010, we had about a dozen players. But it has really grown," Roy said. "As of [Jan. 30], we have 98 people registered, and we only have room for 100, so soon we will need to start a waitlist."

The tournament will use American Cribbage Congress rules, and instead of cash prizes, will offer items from local craftspeople, with the winner and runner-up receiving cribbage boards crafted by Roy himself.

Much like Moore, Roy feels the Winter Carnival is an important event to bring the community together.

"There's not nearly enough time to talk to all the great people who come to the tournament," he said. "I really do love these people and there's a lot to catch up on."

As Greenfield residents, Roy and his wife Kay Lyons have some favorite events.

"It's great to go downtown for the ice carvings. We are preparing a sled for the Cardboard Sled Competition, and we always enjoy the fireworks," Roy said. "There really is something for everyone. The K-9 Keg Pulls are a riot. And, it's really cost-effective."

"I volunteer at the [Greenfield] Historical Society, and I love busting out all the old black-and-white photos from the past, and of the ice castle they built on the common," Lyons added. "We are fans of the Winter Carnival."

For those who like local history, The LAVA Center will be playing Chris Clawson's 9-minute film titled "Greenfield's Winter Carnival, 1923" on loop on Sunday, Feb. 8, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Last year, Clawson and Carol Aleman of the Greenfield Historical Society discovered a film reel from the carnival in 1923, which they had restored. The film was first shown last year. The LAVA Center will offer cider and encourages attendees to check out its other exhibits.

The Greenfield Public Library will have a variety of offerings over the weekend as well. Library staff will place literary quotes near the ice sculptures around the city. On Friday, they will offer hot chocolate and board games from 2 to 4:30 p.m. On Friday from 3 to 5 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., the library will offer two different arts and crafts opportunities: Yeti Valentines and Yeti Snow Globes.

Finally, the Friends of the Greenfield Library will host its annual Bingo fundraiser at the Elks Lodge, with games at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday. Bingo is for ages 21 and up, and there will be basket raffles and a cash bar.

Greenfield resident Pamela McBride, an information services assistant who is involved in programming at the library, feels the Winter Carnival is a great community event in the midst of a frigid winter.

“The Winter Carnival is a lot of fun. I think it is a great mid-winter activity. We get to meet our neighbors who we may not have seen in a bit,” McBride said. “You get to go out and play, and support our local businesses. It’s an important community event with something for everybody.”

Greenfield Mayor Ginny Desorgerher also stressed the importance of the beloved tradition.

“The Winter Carnival remains one of our city’s most cherished highlights,” Desorgerher said. “I am grateful to the Recreation Department for delivering another fun-filled schedule. I encourage all of our neighbors to come out and take part in the wonderful activities we have planned.”

Due to a forecast of cold temperatures on Sunday, the Recreation Department announced Tuesday that the activities planned at Beacon Field on Sunday will be condensed to a 1 to 3 p.m. time frame. Key events will still take place as planned.

The full event schedule can be found at greenfieldrecreation.com/wintercarnival.html.