



THE Deerfield Valley News

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The Great Duck Race returns

Thu, 05/26/2022 - 3:00pm Mike Eldred



A child secures the best view of a past duck race in downtown Wilmington. Photo by Richard Marshall Photography

By Tyler Lederer

WILMINGTON - The Great Duck Race will return from a pandemic-induced hiatus this Memorial Day weekend. The fundraising event was not held the past two years, making this the 33rd annual race.

The fundraiser was a collaboration between organizer Janet Boyd, her family, and others, who all saw the need to raise money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. “There were a lot of critically ill children in southern Vermont and nobody was really earning money to help fund their trips,” she said.

This year the race will be held in downtown Wilmington on Sunday, May 29, from 10:30 am to 2 pm. Tickets will be sold at the Southern Vermont Deerfield Valley Chamber of Commerce on Saturday and in front of the Crafts Inn on the day of the event.

From 11 am to 2 pm, the Deerfield Valley Rotary Club will be holding a barbecue featuring hamburgers and hot dogs, salads, chips, and watermelon. The ducks will be dumped in the river at noon behind the Old Red Mill Inn. The finish line of the race will be located behind the Crafts Inn.

The event has returned this year thanks to a number of circumstances, one of them being the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions on outdoor events. But Boyd said that the popularity of the duck race was another. “We have a beautiful following of people who really believe in Make-A-Wish and they’re always excited when we have this,” she said.

“Unfortunately, there’s no shortage of sick kids,” she added.

Boyd said the event raises an average of \$4,000 to \$5,000 a year and estimates it has raised about \$128,000 in total. She expects a similar amount to be raised this year.

“Make-A-Wish has a very good following,” she said. “They do good things with those funds. We don’t have a lot of high-paid CEOs.”

The event will also include a performance by the Morris Dancers as well as the quacking contest, where children quack to receive lollipops. Stores on Main Street will be open early on the day as will Memorial Hall.

Boyd is looking forward to seeing the people she couldn’t see due to the pandemic. “We barhop with the ducks Friday and Saturday night,” she said. “So I think it’ll be nice to see all the faces we haven’t seen in the past two years.”

Also returning from a COVID-19 break is the Deerfield Valley Rotary Club’s Memorial Day ceremony, occurring Monday, May 30, at Memorial Hall, from 10 to 11:15 am, in collaboration with the Nelson E. Pickwell American Legion Post 15.

The ceremony will include a presentation from the Quilters of the Deerfield Valley, who have knitted quilts for local veterans; and a performance by the Twin Valley Middle School chorus. Rotary Club president Angel Batch and veteran Mike Linnehan will present the American Legion Citizenship Award. A full schedule can be found at www.facebook.com/rotarydfv.

In Whitingham that day, the Cecil A. Davis American Legion Post 17 will help dedicate a new veterans memorial on Town Hill at 9:30 am. The Readsboro Historical Society will hold an open house from 2 to 4 pm at their Main Street location.

From Friday, May 27, to Sunday, May 29, at the History House, the Wardsboro History Group will hold their annual tag sale. They will be selling furniture and antiques from 10 am to 3 pm each day. In Wardsboro, on Saturday, May 28, the Friends of the Wardsboro Library will host their annual plant sale in front of the library from 9 am to 1 pm. The library trustees will be hosting a book sale and bake sale concurrently at the same location.

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