

Dip, Shuffle and Leap

Benefit events abound this weekend in the Lakes Region

By BOB MARTIN | Mar 13, 2015

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FILE/Maureen Bieniarz-Pond

WOODSTOCK POLICE Chief Doug Moorhead does his annual belly flop in last year's Winni Dip. This year's event will take place on March 14.

LACONIA — Residents of the Lakes Region have plenty on their plates for activities over the weekend, including taking a plunge into icy Lake Winnepesaukee for a good cause, stretching out those runners' legs for multiple 5K events, or participating in an indoor triathlon.

Winni Dip

The seventh annual Winni Dip will take place at noon at the Margate on Saturday, where law enforcement officials from around the state and other participants will blast into the icy cold waters of The Big Lake. Last year the event raised \$66,725.79 for the Special Olympics of New Hampshire.

This year's theme is Disney, so Laconia Police Chief Chris Adams said he and members of his department will be all decked out, dressed as characters from "Toy Story". Adams said there will be at least eight of his staff competing this year.

Some may have noticed members of the Laconia Police Department sporting fuzzier faces. Those are the people who donated to the cause and will be dipping on Saturday. He said those who are not dipping and donated at least \$100 for another dipper were permitted to grow facial hair as well.

While there is a minimum of donation \$250 to take part in The Winni Dip, Adams said many people raise much more.

Adams has great pride in the partnership between law enforcement and the Special Olympics, saying they have had a close working relationship for many years. This includes supporting both the winter and summer Special Olympic Games, bowling events at Funspot and Fueling Dreams at Irving.

Adams is all amped up to help the cause.

“I’m not really looking forward to jumping into those icy cold waters, but it is quick and it’s for a great cause,” said Adams.

One thing to look out for is the annual belly flop by Woodstock Police Chief Doug Moorhead. Last year he was the top individual fundraiser, with \$5,570 toward the cause.

The following day is the High School Winni Dip, also taking place at noon. Last year was the inaugural event which raised \$12,309.05 with the help of 49 dippers from 12 schools. Each dipper is required to raise \$175, but like the original Winni Dip, most go above and beyond this amount. Those who do not wish to dip can also donate to the cause.

Special Olympics of New Hampshire spokes-person Bridget Carleton explained that the Winni Dip is part of the Law Enforcement Torch Run. The run is a year-round fundraising and public awareness campaign that provides financial support for the Special Olympics.

She added that the relationship with law enforcement has spanned three decades and has raised more than \$3.8 million for Special Olympics of N.H. The Winni Dip has raised \$248,543 since its inception.

For more information, and to register for either event, log onto SONH.org.

Shamrock Shuffle

If plunging into water hovering around 33 degrees isn’t your forte, perhaps taking a leisurely walk or run sounds a little better. The Shamrock Shuffle in Plymouth is hosted by Speare Memorial Hospital and takes place on Saturday morning. This is an untimed, 5K event where people are encouraged to get in the St. Patrick’s Day spirit and wear green.

Last year was the first time the event was held, and it attracted 120 runners and walkers. Organizers encourage people of all skills to get out and shake off the winter blues in the casual race beginning at 9 a.m. at the Plymouth Regional Senior Center.

Leprechaun Leap

Also on Saturday is the Leprechaun Leap 5K in Belmont, where runners and walkers of all ages will be participating. The event is a way to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day, the beginning spring, and get people out and about.

While there is snow in the forecast for Saturday, organizer Gretta Olson-Wilder said she believes the majority of it will come after people are done with the race. Either way, the race will go on.

The Leprechaun Leap is in its third year, and Olson-Wilder said they have had 12 more preregistrations than in the past. She is hoping for about 40 participants. The race will be hand timed, and results will be on Cool Running.

The top male, female and youth will receive “pots of gold.”

“These will be overflowing pots of gold, but just a reminder – pots of gold doesn’t always mean money,” said Olson-Wilder, who didn’t want to give away the surprise. “Gold is subject to interpretation.

Olson-Wilder added that she realizes many people will be seeing Belmont-Gilford face Berlin-Gorham in the Division 3 Boys Ice Hockey championship in Manchester. She said with the race starting at 10 a.m., people should be able to complete the race and dart down to the Verizon Wireless Center to cheer on their team.

Funspot Indoor Triathlon

The Funspot Indoor Triathlon will also be taking place on Saturday beginning at 10 a.m. The event is in its 11th year and benefits the New Hampshire Humane Society.

Competitions include bowling, golf, skee ball, darts and pinball. There will be trophies, prizes and raffles and all team members receive a T-shirt and a free pizza and soda lunch. The cost is \$160 per team. All proceeds raised will be used to benefit the care of animals at the Humane Society in Laconia, located off of Meredith Center Road.

For details, see nhhumane.

joinme.org/MyEvents/2015FunspotTriathlon/tabid/576701/Default.aspx.

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