

## Leprechaun Leap runners enjoy luck of the Irish

*Annual 5K race draws dozens of participants in Belmont*

By ED PIERCE | Mar 16, 2015

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*Photo by: ED PIERCE/CITIZEN*

PARTICIPANTS DEPART from the starting line at the Belmont Mill for the Leprechaun Leap 5K race in Belmont on Saturday morning. About 25 runners ranging in age from 12 to 65 ran or walked in the St. Patrick's Day themed event.



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**BELMONT** — Dozens of would-be leprechauns took off on Saturday morning searching for pots of gold while competing in the 3rd annual Leprechaun Leap 5K race at the Belmont Mill.

According to Belmont Special Events Coordinator Gretta Olson-Wilder, the race course took participants who both ran and walked through scenic surroundings on paved and unpaved roads in Belmont.

"The event is held as a fun way to celebrate the St. Patrick's Day holiday and to promote a healthy lifestyle in the Lakes Region," Olson-Wilder said. "We started this as a way to offer something positive for community members and to attract new people to our community."



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First-time Leprechaun Leap participant Andy Lowe of Belmont, 12, said he decided to enter the race after his mother showed him a story in the newspaper about it.

"I have been training for this race and training in snowshoes too," Lowe said. "I have competed in a 10-mile race here before, so I think I'm going to do OK."

This was the third time that Nicole Sturgeon of Belmont has competed in the race.

"I've gotten better here every single year," Sturgeon said, "The reason I come for this is that I just like making new friends and bringing my family out here to do this with me."

Sturgeon said she tries to participate in three or four 5K races

every year.

"I usually walk for them, but this time I am going to try and run it," she said.

Participants were encouraged to compete in the race wearing green costumes in honor of St. Patrick's Day and they did so with a flair for humor as some runners sported green-striped leggings, some wore fake green mustaches and even two dogs accompanying runners sported green fairy wings.

Participants ranged in ages from 12 to mid-60s, Olson-Wilder said.

The course took runners from Mill Street to Concord Street, on to Wareing Road, South Road, Shaker Road and then back to Mill Street before finishing.

Arriving back at the finish line, participants were treated to traditional Irish music and refreshments.

Every participant who pre-registered for the Leprechaun Leap 5K received a commemorative fleece headband.

Crossing the finish line first was Alan Barrett, 52, of Alton, who did so with a time of 20:36:56.

Lowe was second in a time at 20:44:30.

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## Comments (0)

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### Staff Profile



**Ed Pierce**  
**ED PIERCE**  
**(603) 581-1970**  
[Email Me](#)

I'm a general assignment reporter covering Laconia and the Lakes Region of New Hampshire.

My coverage responsibilities include Laconia city government and Laconia schools, feature writing, veterans issues and breaking news coverage. I'm originally from Rochester, N.Y. and obtained a bachelors degree in journalism from the University of New Mexico.

My career has included serving as an Air Force journalist and I've worked as a reporter, sportswriter, columnist, section editor, managing editor and editor-in-chief for daily and weekly newspapers in New Mexico and Florida.