



# A taste of the Big Easy comes to Belmont for Old Home Day

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BELMONT — This year's Old Home Day in Belmont will certainly "jazz" things up when a taste of New Orleans comes to town on Saturday, Aug. 9.

"We had Mardi Gras as our theme about 10 years ago. Everyone had so much fun, and it was such a big hit that we decided to bring it back as our theme again this year," said Gretta Olson-Wilder of the Old Home Day committee.

The all day celebration will kick off bright and early that morning with a pancake breakfast sponsored by the

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COURTESY

An aerial view of Belmont Village shows the many beautiful renovations that have been made over the past few years, and on Aug. 9, the new Village Green will be filled with vendors, games, musicians, and lots of happy revelers as the Mardi Gras-themed Old Home Day celebration gets underway.

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First Baptist Church of Belmont. Their crews will set up inside the Belmont Senior Center, located on the second floor of the Belmont Mill building, to serve up a hearty meal that is sure to get everyone ready for all the activities to come.

At 8:30 a.m., the 46th annual Belmont 10-Mile Road Race will then get underway on Concord Street. This year, the start time has been moved up to accommodate the runners who will face summertime temperatures as they make their way along the grueling course.

"Some participants have given us feedback that they would like to see an earlier start time because the course is even more exhausting once the August day starts to heat up. So, we're trying that this year by starting a half hour earlier," said Olson-Wilder.

The course is certified by USA Track and Field, and each year, distance runners from all over New England and, even beyond, par-

ticipate in this challenging race.

Those who love to run but perhaps want less of a challenge are also invited to sign up for the shorter, approximately 1.5-mile, Fun Run, which begins at 9 a.m. from Concord Street as well. Both races will end on Main Street by the Belmont Public Library, where trophies and awards in several divisions will then be presented to the top finishers.

After cheering all the runners on, people are invited to take a stroll behind the Belmont Library where vendors will turn the Village Green into a summer marketplace, filled with crafts, food and other great items.

From 10:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m., there will also be games for the little ones, including the popular Pedal Tractor Pull, and everyone is welcomed to find a bench or pull up their lawn chairs to enjoy the music of the three-piece jazz band, "Soggy Po' Boys."

Besides shopping and entertainment,

there will be local civic organizations on hand and a nostalgic look at the town through the Belmont Historical Society's photos, exhibits and gifts, which will be on display in the library.

No Mardi Gras celebration would ever be complete without a parade though, and at 1 p.m. floats, bands, horses, antique vehicles and other fabulous entries will make their way along Main Street to entertain the crowds. Sticking with the theme, there will be colorful beads and plenty of candy passed out and revelers are also encouraged to share in the spirit of the day by wearing traditional Mardi Gras colors- purple for "justice," gold for "power," and green to represent "faith."

After a slight break in the afternoon, Belmont Fire Department will be sparking up their grills and the public is invited to stop by the fire station to enjoy their famed chicken barbecue at 5 p.m. Cost for the meal is \$10 per person and tickets may

be purchased in advance (recommended) or at the door if they are not sold out. More information on the dinner is available by calling BFD at 267-8333.

Once dinner is over, the focal point of Old Home Day will then move to Bryant Field, off Route 106, for a fun filled evening under the stars.

At 6:30 p.m., Vertical Dreams will open their rock climbing wall for those who love a challenge while the band "Small Change" gets everyone else rockin' on the field. Starting at 7 p.m., there will be more games for children as adults enjoy the music or spend some time catching up with both old friends and new.

Finally, Atlas Fireworks will cap off the day with a spectacular display at 9:30 p.m.

Registration forms for both parade entries and the Belmont 10-mile Road Race, along with vendor applications, are available on the Town of Belmont Web site, [www.belmontnh.org](http://www.belmontnh.org).