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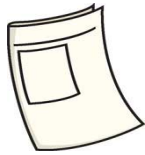


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## Sweet 16 for Winterfest

Written by Dave Palana

Wednesday, 09 December 2009 16:01

There is never a day of the year where crossing the four way stop in Whitman center does not require a look both ways from foot traffic. But Sunday afternoon, passersby were not scanning for oncoming cars; they were deciding whether to head toward the yo-yo show, the rock wall, the ice sculptor or the horses.

For the 16th year, Whitman center was shut down to traffic for Winterfest on Sunday. While it was a cold December afternoon, Richard Rosen, who heads the Winterfest Committee, said the lack of snow made for a well-attended day.

"We had more people than there have been at the last few," Rosen said. "It was a good day, and one of the better Winterfests."

"Last year, it was gorgeous, but it was snowing all day," said Norma Gardner, a member of the Winterfest Committee since 1994 who was selling buttons in the center. "This year, it looks like we have more people earlier."

The Committee added some new events for the 16th Winterfest, including pony rides in the town park in addition to the horse-drawn carriages. They also included a hunt for the Winterfest medallion, which was found by Whitman resident Kerri Pierce by the memorial statue at Town Hall, and a visit from Boston Red Sox mascot Walley the Green Monster.

"He was terrific," Rosen said. "There were also more dance academies participating. It was a very good time."

This year's Winterfest also saw the return of usual favorites, the Yo-Yo People and the Great Benafuchi, as well as trolley rides, hay rides, ice sculpting and face painting leading up to the parade and fireworks at the Holt School.

"Every year, the organization gets better and better and there are more and more things to do," said Whitman resident Geoff Diehl. "It used to be just a lot of people gathered trying to find stuff to do, and now there are so many things spread out for kids to do, it's just great."

Diehl, who is running for state representative this year, brought a float to the Winterfest that featured Christmas carolers from Boss Academy, run by Diehl and his wife.

"We have come every year as a family, but, with running for office, this was the first time getting the studio kids performing and it has been great," he said.

With Winterfest now in the books for another year, the Committee will begin preparations for their June carnival that funds the annual event. Come September, Rosen said preparations would begin for Winterfest 17.

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