

WCA Hosts 13th Annual Black Fly Blitz 5K Walk, Run

Monday, May 29 starting at 9 A.M.

Press release

Register by Friday, May 26 for the Wilmot Community Association's (WCA) Black Fly Blitz 5K and save \$5. The 13th Annual 5K Walk/Run will start at 9 A.M. Monday, May 29 at the intersection of Valley and Village Roads.

Until Friday, May 26, race registration is: free for children 8 years and younger; \$15 for kids 9 to 17 and \$20 for adults 18 and older. On race day, registration will be free for children 8 years and younger, \$20 for kids 9 to 17, and \$25 for adults 18 and older.

Advance registration is available online or by mail. Online registration is available at: wilmotcommunityassociation.org.

A downloadable mail-in entry form

also is available on the WCA's website. Forms accompanied by payment, can be dropped off in the box, in the front hall of the WCA's Red Barn. Online, mail, and drop off registration closes at noon Friday, May 26. On Memorial Day, race registration will open at 7:30 A.M.

The Kearsarge Regional High School track and cross-country teams will receive a portion of the race proceeds.

Awards will be presented at 10:15 A.M. The Cloud Duo will play classic rock and country music. Activities for children will include temporary tattoos and an assortment of games.

More information is available from the WCA website: wilmotcommunityassociation.org, the WCA office at 603-526-7934 or at wca@tds.com.



The Franklin skyline from the 6th floor of the Franklin Business Center

Picturing Franklin: Urban Renewal Brings New Hope to Former Mill Town

Tom Morgan

Passing another "For Lease" sign, this one duct-taped to the inside of an empty storefront window, on our way down Franklin's Main Street, we stop and snap pictures. The sidewalk is crumbling, the doorway littered: an empty pack of cigarettes, bits of straw, a broken piece of crown molding. Within the angular brick shadows of once-bustling paper and fabric mills, 8,000 cars a day pass but business has retreated elsewhere. The rail bed lies empty and the final mill shuttered as the town's last hardware and grocery stores have followed the Interstate, arching east and away from downtown.

Franklin's story is the story of America's deindustrialization.

"For Lease" signs populate Main Street storefronts in Franklin

"I think people had lost their pride in Franklin."—Jo Brown, owner of the Franklin Studio

The (mostly) white working class families in this once-thriving town have been hit hard the past half century, and the Great Recession brought with it a set of pernicious twins: a crippling economic landscape with an explosive opioid epidemic. The decline of businesses coupled with a citizen-imposed tax cap have prevented the city from raising revenue as the needs of the community have grown. As a consequence, 24% of the city residents are living at or below the poverty line and 58% of the school district families qualify for free and reduced school lunches. Emergency services have reported a 113% call volume increase since the 1990s. Facing a \$1.3 million shortfall, the school board fired ten teachers last year. The picture of Franklin, in other words, isn't pretty.

"Franklin is a really beautiful community, but there is not a lot of pride of place. The condition of the high school isn't great. There are holes in the floor; the walls haven't been painted in 15 years. Bandwidth is bad. Students complain they can't use the internet. It's not surprising that young families don't want to move to Franklin."—Andrea Costanzo, Franklin High School Eng-

lish Teacher.

A rainbow of exposed wires, Franklin Business Center

Amid the rising drug crisis, a declining tax base, and significant drops in school enrollment, City Manager, Elizabeth Dragon, sought a lifeline. She found one in the National Endowment for the Arts' Citizens Institute on Rural Design (CIRD). The CIRD grant that Dragon secured provided funding, contacts, and expertise for the groundbreaking Franklin for a Lifetime event (2015), which brought together university experts, common citizens, non-profit leaders, community organizers, and government officials in order to brainstorm solutions to Franklin's most pressing challenges.

"I would credit Franklin for a Lifetime with giving the city it's first chance for improving," Jo Brown recalls, sitting inside her newly renovated non-profit coffee shop, The Franklin Studio. "But, these old buildings are hard to rebuild and expensive to refurbish."

Old Mill building stairs, Franklin Business Center

A spark of hope emerged out of the Franklin for a Lifetime workshop, and along with the Franklin Studio, a steady progression of Main Street storefronts have opened for business in the past two years, such as Marty Parichand's Outdoor New England retail store, Oscar Gala Grano's Take Root Coworking space, Matt Charlton-Nidey's Franklin Clothing Company, Colby-Sawyer College's Franklin Field Office, and Cast-Away Bait and Tackle. Renovations are also underway to turn the former Toad Hall art gallery into the Toad Hall Tavern featuring beer from Last Hop Brewing. Not to mention the 45 affordable CATCH Neighborhood Housing apartments being constructed inside the old Franklin Light and Power Mill.

"Once the CATCH Housing project is complete, Franklin will finally have high-quality affordable housing. I see it as an anchor for downtown."—Elizabeth Dragon, Franklin City Manager.

Kayaking equipment for sale inside

See Franklin on page 37

Andover Institute Sponsors Fourth of July Photo Contest

Notice of intent due by June 15

Press release

The Andover Institute is sponsoring its Second Annual Photography Contest as part of this year's Fourth of July celebration on the Andover Village Green. Participants may enter up to two photos, ready for hanging, and the photos must have been taken within the town of Andover (including East Andover and Potter Place). Entry is free and the public will get to vote on their favorite photos on parade day.

The contest is open to amateur photo enthusiasts of all ages. Those who wish to participate should notify contest coordinator Jay Fitzpatrick by Thursday, June 15, by simply emailing him their intentions to: jall@tds.net. Upon notification, he will send further instructions.

Images may be printed, matted and framed, or mounted on foam core, or printed on aluminum or other substrates, such as canvas, wood or fabric, framed or unframed, with maximum final size of 16x20 inches, oriented horizontally or vertically. Each entry must be ready to hang, with entrants providing hanging wire or hooks on the backs of their entries, as well as their name and phone number on the back.

Each participant may enter up to two photos, so they are encouraged to carefully select their best!

Submitted photos should be delivered to the Village Green between 8 and 9 AM on Tuesday, July 4. The Institute will have an EZ tent set up near the Stone Chapel, where the photos will be displayed throughout the day. The public will be given ballots so they can vote for their top choice.

Awards will be given based on the



Cindy Benson of Andover won third prize in last year's July 4 Photo Contest sponsored by the Andover Institute. She took this picture of a dory on the edge of Proctor Pond as the sun was setting on a summer evening last year. Photo enthusiasts of all ages and abilities are encouraged to participate in this year's contest.

popular vote, and a "Best of Show" award will be selected by a panel of judges. Ribbons will be given to all participants and the vote-getters will receive special recognition, including having their images published in the Andover Beacon and various other publications and media outlets.

For more information or to express interest in participating by Thursday, June 15, please contact Fitzpatrick at: jall@tds.net.

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