

[39th annual Moonlight Magic calls on residents to shop local on Black Friday](#)

By Madison Schofield, Staff Writer Published: 11-29-2024 7:34 PM

SHELBURNE FALLS — After a cloudy, rainy week, the village experienced a bit of holiday magic on Friday evening as hundreds of people swarmed Bridge Street for the 39th annual Moonlight Magic event.

Marching from The Mill at Shelburne Falls down Conway Street and then across the Iron Bridge as part of the Parade of Lights were safety personnel with ambulances and fire trucks, followed by snowmen, pandas, koalas and other creatures, the Franklin County 4-H Club, dancers and elves, and, last but not least, Santa and Mrs. Claus.

While the parade marchers captivated crowds, Moonlight Magic is more than just a holiday parade. The night serves as the village's annual push to shop local on Black Friday. Businesses stay open late, vendors set up shop on a closed Bridge Street and Shelburne Falls comes to life.

The event has been running since 1985, but this year is wreath and decor maker Sally Delaney's second year participating. The Erving resident said she had a great time meeting everyone at last year's event and she sold a lot of product, prompting her to return.

"I do a lot of fairs, but this one is my favorite," Delaney said. "It's a great little event that's very well-run and brings in a huge amount of people."

Painter and jewelry maker Rachel Federico agreed that the night was a great sales push as there were "a lot of people" attending. By 5:45 p.m., the West Springfield resident said she hadn't had a lot of people stop into her tent next to the Iron Bridge, but she wasn't worried as most people get in place to watch the parade and then go explore the village to shop.

Vendors offered shoppers everything they might need for the holiday season: unique gifts from local artisans, holiday decor such as fresh Christmas trees and wreaths, and food to snack on while shopping, including fried dough, cookies, hot cocoa and chestnuts roasted on an open fire.

Throughout the evening, families explored downtown, checking off items on the scavenger hunt, hopping on the trolley for a ride and decorating ornaments with Molly Cantor, a member of West County Arts and Culture, which organizes the event.

Cantor previously had a pottery studio on Main Street, but when she moved her shop to The Mill at Shelburne Falls on Conway Street, she still wanted to be part of the magical event. So, Cantor pushed to have activities available at The Mill, such as ornament decorating.

"There's places to shop for gifts, but there's also all these activities and crafts," she said.

The night also included performances from the Mohawk Trail Regional School jazz band and chorus, Hilltown Youth Recovery Theatre, Holly Jolly Horns, Jim Eagan, Davis Bates, The Riverbenders and Hannah French, with a puppet show.

And at the Masonic Lodge, Santa and Mrs. Claus set up shop and welcomed families for crafts, activities and photos in Santa's workshop. Mrs. Claus noted that Moonlight Magic is "a special night in a special town."

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