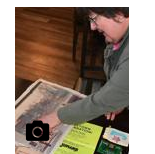
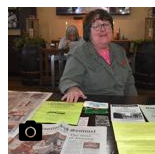
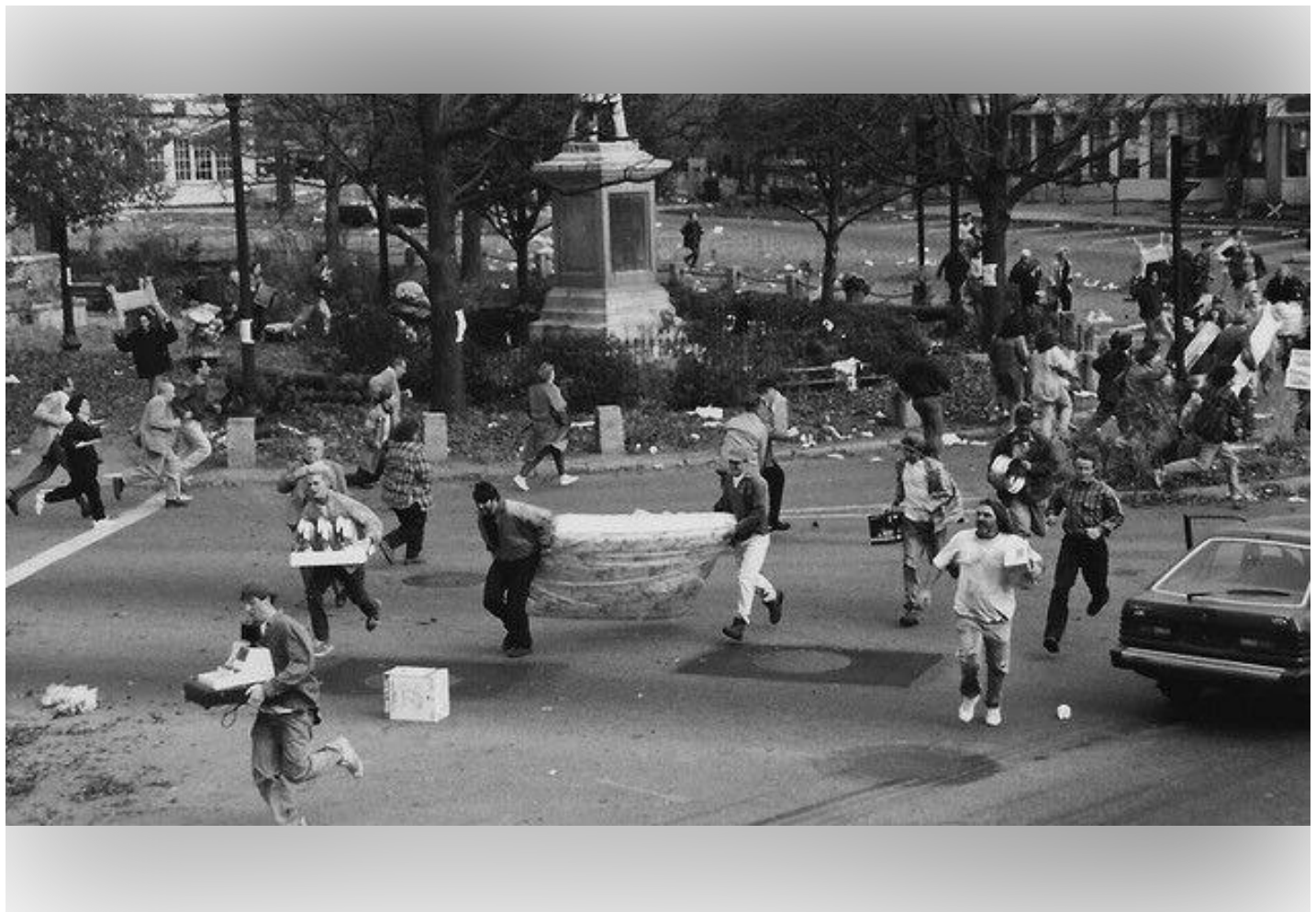


https://www.unionleader.com/news/human_interest/keene-to-celebrate-30th-anniversary-of-jumanji-with-summer-festival/article_4a375bf4-d83c-11ef-9a46-d3763e968659.html

EDITOR'S PICK

Keene to celebrate 30th anniversary of 'Jumanji' with summer festival

By Dave Pierce Union Leader Staff
Jan 21, 2025



Maureen McHugh

THEN: Extras in Keene's Central Square run for their fictional lives during the stampede scene while looting goods in the movie "Jumanji."

MADELINE MURPHY still has a copy of her one and only paycheck for being an extra in the movie "Jumanji."

She made \$60.47, but meeting Robin Williams was worth being on set at 4 a.m. for an all-day shoot in Keene's Central Square in November 1994. Even if she's only on screen for about five seconds.

Murphy and about 125 other locals also have the rare distinction of avoiding a stampede of elephants, rhinos and zebras in New Hampshire thanks to ahead-of-their-time special effects.

This summer, organizers plan to celebrate that wild time downtown once again. A festival is planned for June 20-22. Although the original date has changed and planners haven't firmed up all the details, they hope to recreate the stampede with a road race of people in inflatable animal costumes and commemorate the anniversary with a parade, other activities and even custom-made Parrish sneakers.

Folks like Murphy brought ticket stubs, newspaper clippings, flyers, photographs and knickknacks to Tempesta's Restaurant at the Best Western Hotel on Saturday to share memories and help plan the upcoming celebration. The Best Western's ballroom was the site of the local casting call.

"I have to say meeting Robin Williams is my favorite memory," she said. "He was so sweet. He took his time with everyone. He met everyone and shook their hand."

Extra-special

Dan Shepardson of Keene also had a brush with fame, or rather a bump, while he was walking between trailers and equipment on the Main Street set.

"I ended up bumping into this cluster of Keene police officers and I turned around and I'm face to face with Robin Williams," Shepardson said. "I said, 'Whoa, hi.' I shook his hand and said, 'Thank you for being here.' He said, 'No, no, thank you.' And then Robin Williams and the police kept going, and I went to find the prop manager in the Woolworth building."

Shepardson's 1969 Dodge Charger was among the vintage cars used in scenes depicting 1969, but didn't make the final cut. His mother's car, however, did.

"She has a maroon 1964 Chevy Impala SS and you can clearly see that in the film, and she was driving it. So I got to be in a movie with my mother," he said.

Unlike Shepardson, **Dave Szehi** of Hancock had an on-screen bump with Williams. It helped make up for the shin splints he got running back and forth in the square in his hiking boots over and over for 12 hours a day.

You can see Szehi when Williams, wearing his jungle tunic, bumps into him and another extra.

Szehi liked the experience so much he decided to keep pursuing work as an extra and has been in more than 100 movies and television shows. Most recently, he was in "The Holdovers," which was filmed in Massachusetts.

Cathy Bergstrom said she and other planners are adding a mental health awareness component to the celebration. The festival will include a dedication of a new mural that pays homage to the film, Keene, Williams's body of work and mental health, she said.

Late Keene police officer Joe Collins was ever-present protecting **Kirsten Dunst** and **Bradley Pierce**, the two featured young actors in the movie, during filming, said Susan MacNeil, who along with Bergstrom is a driving force behind the anniversary festivities.

"(Collins) unfortunately committed suicide this past year. So we want to honor Robin Williams, Joe Collins, and I believe there is another officer who also took his own life about five years ago, and we want to honor him as well and have someone from a mental health organization talk about the importance of awareness and the resources available," Bergstrom said.

More information

More updates, including a website for the celebration, are in the works. To learn more about the event in June, visit the Jumanji 30th Anniversary Celebration's Facebook page at facebook.com/jumanji2025.

dpierce@unionleader.com

MORE INFORMATION

Nov. 16, 1994: Robin Williams' 'Keene' Wit in NH For Filming of 'Jumanji' This Week



Keene residents adopted Robin Williams during filming of 'Jumanji'

David Pierce