



A CAST OF COLORFUL CHARACTERS IN KENOSHA

Mascots abound in society. Whether used as a good luck charm, a goodwill ambassador, a spokesperson, or a symbol, it's commonplace to see mascots at professional ball games, in television commercials, and on cereal boxes. Several Kenosha Area attractions also use mascots. And at least one is an award-winning mascot. How did the local mascots originate, and when can visitors see them?

Wilmot Mountain Ski & Snowboard Area introduced a new mascot at the start of its 2010-2011 season: The Yeti. "Originally we were going to have a contest to name him, but when we told people we were looking into adding a sasquatch mascot and immediately people started calling him The Yeti," Ryan Church of Wilmot Mountain explains. He calls the response "remarkable". "Expect to see The Yeti calling Wilmot Mountain his home for many years!"

Why a sasquatch mascot? "Wilmot Mountain was looking for

a fun lovable symbol to identify with a snowy mountain environment," Ryan explains. "Choosing the sasquatch as the mascot was determined by the fact that in an old painting of the mountain we found an abominable snowman creature pictured. It made us realize there was a history of Wilmot Mountain embracing this mythical creature. Now the Yeti has become a character that kids and adults adore. Everyone loves it when he's around and they are always eager for his attention."

"The Yeti is around during the weekends and the busy holiday season. He even made a special appearance in December with Santa! If you see The Yeti around feel free to high five him, give him a hug or even get your picture taken with him." Ryan says you might even end up on the Wilmot Mountain Facebook page!

A starfish is the mascot for RecPlex, the largest municipally owned recreation facility in America. Dazzle is his name, which was selected from a staff contest at RecPlex.

Dazzle was first introduced to the public during the RecPlex 6th Anniversary Celebration on October 1, 2006. Chris Lopour, Communications Director for the Village of Pleasant Prairie and RecPlex explains the significance of the starfish. "A starfish was chosen to represent the bright-eyed, adventurous and curious nature of the children and families who visit and participate in programs at RecPlex, Lake Andrea and Prairie Springs Park. Dazzle is particularly at home in both Lake Andrea and the indoor water park."

When can visitors meet Dazzle? "Dazzle can be seen during special events, such as: Prairie Family



The Yeti, Wilmot Mountain, with fans.

Days, RecPlex Anniversary Celebrations, and the annual Kids Expo. Dazzle also appears upon special requests and is available for RecPlex birthday parties.”

A must-see mascot is Monkey Joe, the mascot of Monkey Joe's, an indoor inflatable playground. His story goes like this, as shared on Monkey Joe's web site: “Monkey Joe, a furry purple monkey, lived on a secret island named Coconutty Island. All of the monkeys on the island were different colors and some even had stripes. Monkey Joe was a very active and healthy monkey who surfed ocean waves, climbed the coconut trees and skateboarded on slate rock.

One day, Monkey Joe was climbing the tallest tree on Coconutty Island and he slipped and fell, but didn't get hurt-- he bounced off a patch of vines and moss that had grown over a hole. "What fun this is to bounce!" thought Monkey Joe. He was so excited about his new found fun that Monkey Joe and his friends explored the island to find more bouncy places for everyone to enjoy. They even found a smooth rock covered by water and slippery algae which made a perfect place to slide.

Monkey Joe eventually left the island to share his bouncing, sliding fun with kids at Monkey's Joe's party and play center. Monkey Joe will even make a guest appearance at your kid's party and other events.”

The Jelly Belly Candy Company family tradition began in 1869. It wasn't until 1976 that the first gourmet jelly bean was invented, bringing the company international recognition. Mr. Jelly Belly, the company's very recognizable mascot, first came out in the early 1980s, according to Tomi Holt of Jelly Belly Candy Company. “The back of the packages



The Kenosha Area Convention & Visitors Bureau has its own mascot, Tripp the Tourist. The 3-foot tall traveling mascot is at the center of a social media promotion to encourage out-of-town visitors and local residents to visit the many fun and entertaining attractions, shops, and recreational opportunities located in the Kenosha Area. As Tripp visits some of his favorite Kenosha Area hot spots, visitors are invited to stop in, stay a while, and use their mobile device to take their picture with Tripp. When they TweetPic their photo with Tripp to @KenoshaAreaCVB using a special hashtag, they will be entered in a contest to win a prize from that business. Or, the photo may be sent via e-mail to twitter@kenoshacvb.com, with the hashtag as the subject line. “Like” the KACVB on Facebook - www.facebook.com/KenoshaAreaCVB - to find out where Tripp will be each week and what hashtag you should use in your TweetPic entries! Or follow the KACVB on Twitter - www.twitter.com/KenoshaAreaCVB - to learn of his whereabouts.

were signed by “Mr. Jelly Belly” then sometime later the costume character was designed.”

Mr. Jelly Belly can be seen during special events at Pleasant Prairie's Jelly Belly Visitor Center. He also makes appearances at other retail outlets, parades, and special events. Tomi recalls he was at the 50th anniversary of the Golden Gate Bridge. While the red Mr. Jelly Belly seems the most common version spotted, other colors including pink, yellow, green, and purple are used by the mascot.

Then there's Ranger D. Bear, the University of Wisconsin-Parkside mascot. In January 2011 he traveled from Kenosha to Disney World in Orlando, Florida to take third place during the Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA) Mascot National Championship. Competing in the Open Mascot division, Ranger Bear narrowly trailed “YoUDEe,” the University of Delaware mascot, and “SouthPaw” from the University of South Alabama in the final results. On campus, he can be seen at sports events and traveling the halls between studying at the university.

The Kenosha Area is also home to Woolly the Mammoth (Kenosha Public Museum mascot), Old Abe the Eagle (Civil War Museum), TyRex the Tyrannosaurus Rex (Dinosaur Discovery Museum), Scoopie (Culver's of Pleasant Prairie), Torchie (Carthage College), and more characters.

For more information about things to see and do in the Kenosha Area, contact the Kenosha Area Convention & Visitors Bureau at (800) 654-7309 or visit the Bureau's web site at www.KenoshaCVB.com.



*For more information
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