

Pumpkin Festival
Photos, A11

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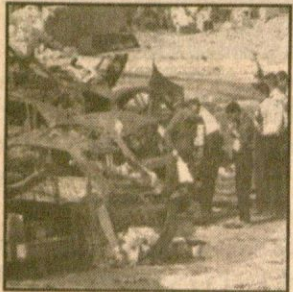
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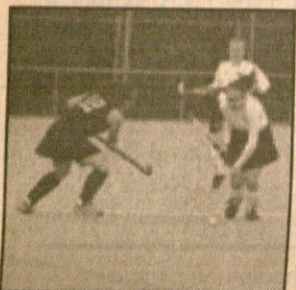
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Plenty Pumpkins

Keene maintains pumpkin crown

By Kyle Lyons
Staff Reporter

Perfect weather and a healthy, competitive spirit helped to make this year's Pumpkin Festival the biggest one yet, with the world record for lit jack-o-lanterns being shattered Saturday evening.

The crowd of roughly 70,000 people erupted into cheers upon hearing the final tally of 28,952 pumpkins, beating the old record by more than 5,000.

Keene's main competition, the Portland, Maine Pumpkin Festival, managed only 15,001 pumpkins in its first year.

The Keene Pumpkin Festival began in 1991, and was created by the Keene Downtown Association in an attempt to create more business for Main Street businesses.

That first festival produced only 600 jack-o-lanterns and took place entirely on Central Square.

The idea took off, however, with the next year producing 1,628 pumpkins, which was a world record. The record was continually broken again and again until 2000, when 23,727 jack-o-lanterns lit the streets of Keene.

During the next two years, due to poor weather and turnouts, the town failed to

establish a new mark. This year it did the job nicely.

Heidi Hale, a staff member for Center Stage, the company that organizes the event, said that there is nothing like Keene's Pumpkin Festival.

She described it as "absolutely the largest event in Keene", and said that this year the record was almost certain to be broken, as forecasts called for mild temperatures and sunny skies.

She said that this year, participants were made more aware of the fact that pumpkins had to be checked in to be counted, and also that a pumpkin without a lit candle inside wouldn't be counted by the 30 or so counters combing the streets during the day.

"A lot of people don't realize that without a lit candle inside, it's not a jack-o-lantern, so it doesn't count," she said.

Keene Mayor Michael Blastos was also very confident of a record breaking night. He also mentioned that the Pumpkin festival is not merely a regional event.

"People come from all over the world to see this," said Blastos.

Pumpkins weren't the only attractions on display at the festival, however. There was plenty to keep the crowds occupied for the day.

There were many live shows, including folk, rock, and acappella groups. One

group performing on the Central Square Gazebo, the New Hampshire Gentlemen, was particularly popular with the crowd.

"They just look like they're having so much fun" said Grace Gravelle, a fairgoer.

B. Carey-Block & R. Block, a fiddling duo, also attracted a lot of attention from people leaving the festival after the fireworks at 9 pm.

Grace Coatey, a UNH student in attendance, said she thought the classical folk music was very interesting.

"They definitely

sound really good" she

said, adding

"it seems like

Keene really

likes folk and

country

music".

Another

popular

attraction was

the marriage

of Frances

Kveitkus and

William

Boden in the

FESTIVAL, A3

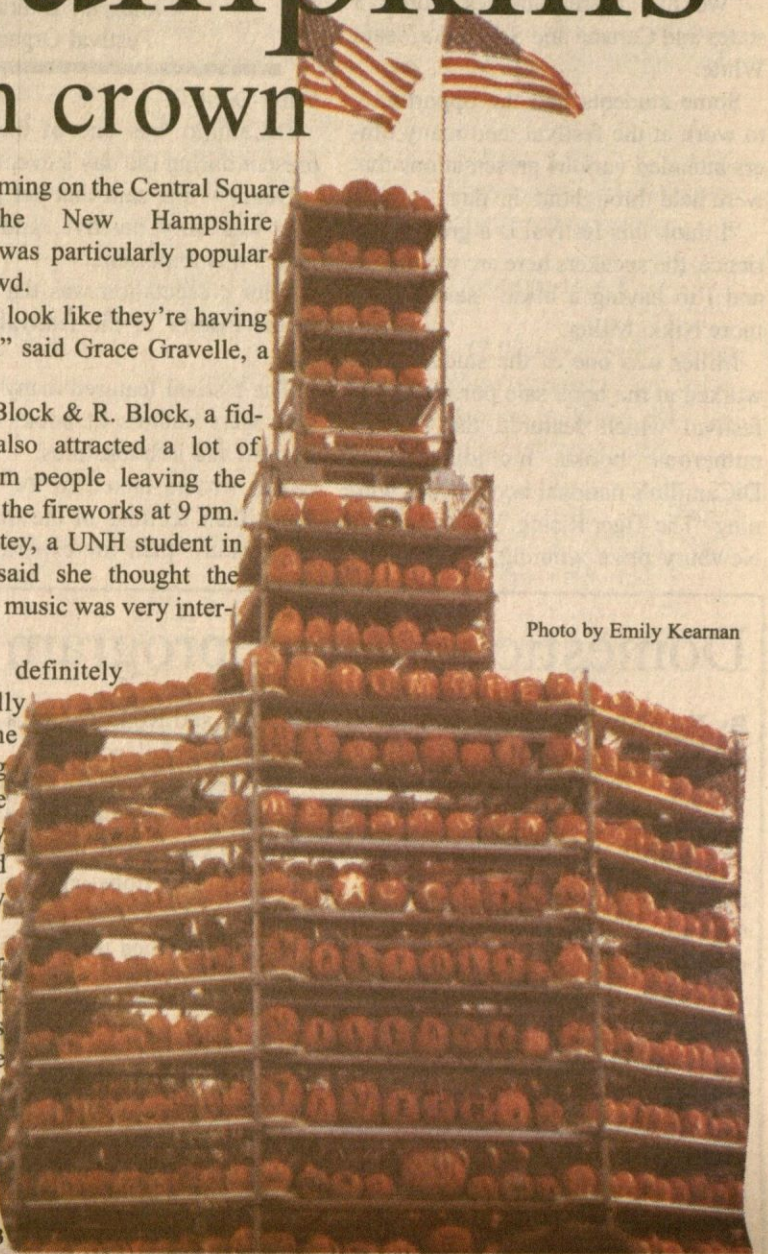


Photo by Emily Kearnan

Students turn out to carve 1,700 pumpkins for festival

By Katie Dominello
Staff Reporter

Keene State College held its annual Pumpkin Lobotomy on Friday, Oct. 24, giving students an opportunity to carve a pumpkin that would be counted at the city Keene's twelfth annual Pumpkin Festival in an attempt to break the world record for the most lit jack-o-lanterns.

While the Pumpkin Lobotomy has been a tradition at KSC for many years, a number of changes took place this year to help improve the event.

For this year's Pumpkin Lobotomy, 200 more pumpkins were brought in hopes of breaking the world record.

According to Student Body President Ben Spaulding, there were 1,700 pumpkins at this year's lobotomy on the Fiske quad.

A wash station was also added so participants were

able to clean up after carving their pumpkins.

Hundreds of students took part in the lobotomy that was held from 2 p.m. until 6 p.m. on the Fiske Quad.

Participants were able to choose their own pumpkin from the selection and use tools provided to create a design.

While carving pumpkins students listened to a live band and were able to get snacks and refreshments from numerous clubs, Greek organizations, and societies that had tables set up around the Fiske quad.

Spaulding said he was impressed by the turnout and variety of people that attended the event.

"There's so many people, and you see different people that live off campus and people that live on campus coming to the event and freshman and seniors, it's so much fun," said Spaulding.

Many students at the event agreed there seemed to be more students this

year than at any of the PumpkinLobotomy's they attended in the past. "I have participated in the pumpkin lobotomy every year since 2000 because it's a good event, there are more people here this year than I have ever seen at any of the pumpkin lobotomy's before," said senior David Russ.

According to Spaulding, planning for the annual Pumpkin Lobotomy begins on the first day of school. The pumpkins are then ordered for the event in mid-September. Spaulding added that there are a lot of man-hours that go into making the event a success.

Many students attended the lobotomy for various reasons, but most students said the event is a great way to spend time with your friends.

"I love hanging out with my roommate and the lobotomy is a good way to get outside and hang out and spend some time

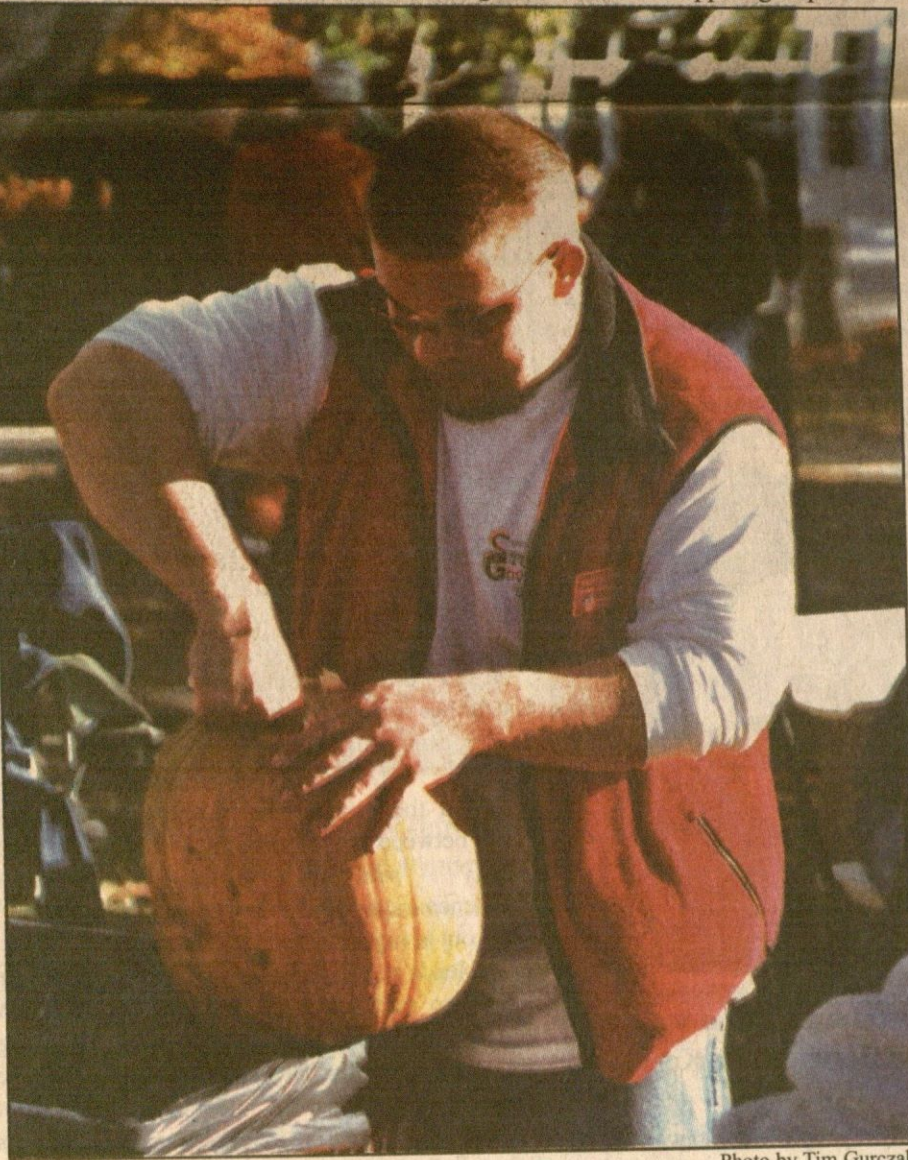
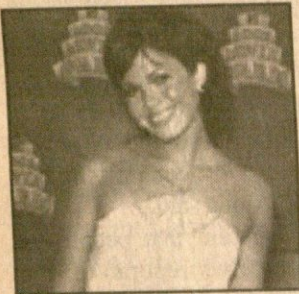


Photo by Tim Gureczak

Andrew Pappass was one of many Keene State College students that attended the Pumpkin Lobotomy on Friday, Oct. 24 in order to carve their own jack-o-lantern.

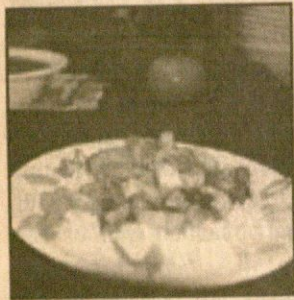
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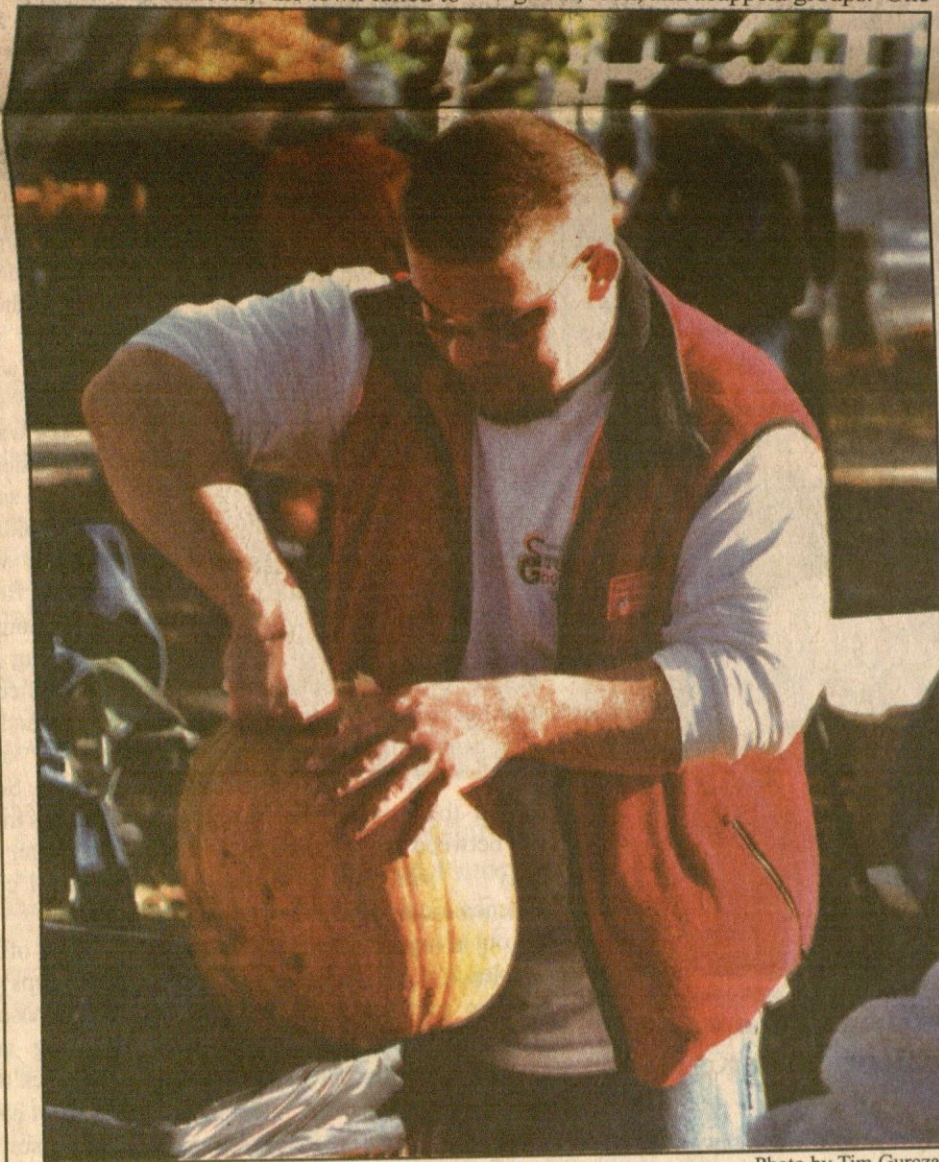


Photo by Tim Gurczak

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Keene State College
William Boden in the

FESTIVAL, A3

Students turn out to carve 1,700 pumpkins for festival

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"I love hanging out with my roommate and the lobotomy is a good way to get outside and hang out and spend some time

LOBOTOMY, A2

Student health insurance coming, not without costs

By Nick Archer
Copy Editor

Student health insurance is likely coming to Keene State College in the near future, but not without additional fees and paperwork for students.

Last spring, the University System of New Hampshire's finance committee passed a resolution that requires USNH schools (Plymouth State, KSC, University of New Hampshire) to make available a health insurance program for students starting with the fall 2004 semester, according to Corinne Kowpak, KSC vice president of student affairs.

That resolution has led to a

serious discussion as to what form such a plan may take, and how much it will cost students in terms of time and money.

According to Kowpak, most insurance companies prefer to offer colleges health insurance through a "hard-waiver" system, where all students are required to have health insurance, and are charged a specific fee for the school's health plan.

In order to get this fee deducted from their tuition, students must provide documentation that they already have insurance coverage via their family or employer.

"The 'everyone has to have it' model is one that, for the insurance companies, puts them

in a much better place, because they have more people paying the premium, and the claims made against it are not at the level of those people who really need it," Kowpak said.

Under a voluntary plan, which KSC supports, only students who want the health insurance coverage would pay the extra fee, and health insurance would not be a requirement for admission and continued enrollment in the school.

Currently, KSC requires students to have coverage as a condition of enrollment, but will not deregister or penalize a student who lacks it or loses coverage during enrollment.

"It really is a philosophical

"Insurance companies are concerned with the bottom-line figure..."

Corinne Kowpak
Vice President of
Student Affairs

question that we've been tossing around," Kowpak said.

"Should we be telling every student that he or she must have health insurance in order to stay

enrolled in school?"

Voluntary systems remain unpopular with insurance companies, according to Kowpak.

She said that often the small pool of people paying into the premium are individuals with chronic health problems and large bills, and they file claims that exceed the fee they paid.

"Insurance companies are concerned with the bottom-line figure, they want to make sure they're bringing in more money than they're paying out," she said.

The University of New Hampshire had experimented with a voluntary system for the last two years until the insur-

INSURANCE, A10