

Ware could be colorblindness capital

By Eileen Kennedy
Staff writer

WARE – Chris Murphy wants to make Ware the colorblind capital of the world. He's also created a character, Color Blind Guy, partly in fun, partly to draw attention to color blindness and partly to raise money to help the town pull down an eyesore, a fire-damaged home on West Main Street.

His website, <http://colorblindguy.com/>, is a light-hearted look at colorblindness, with lists of famous people who are colorblind, and which will eventually offer T-shirts and other products with his Color Blind Guy and additional illustrations. Hopefully it may also build community for colorblind folks.

"About 6 percent of men are colorblind, but you don't hear much about it," he said. "There are plenty of famous colorblind guys, including Mr. Rogers, Mark Twain, Paul Newman, Mark Zuckerberg and Bill Clinton." A much smaller percentage of women are also colorblind he said, about .05 percent.

While he has been thinking of launching the website and colorblind awareness for a long time, it was only after retiring last month from teaching for 35 years at Newton North High School has he had the time to actually do it.

"I want to declare Ware as the colorblindguy capital of the world, no town claims that yet," he said.

"With this wildly optimistic hope, I want to sell enough products to have a positive impact on the town of Ware. I've settled on hoping to earn enough money to demo the house at 73 West Main St." The house burned in 2015, and the town, after a long process, now owns the structure and is working to find money to pull it down.

As a member of the Ware Business & Civic Association, Murphy is all too aware of the ruin signaling the entry to downtown that greets those headed into town on Route 9 from Belchertown.

"I want to see it come down because it's an eyesore," Murphy said. "It's a lofty goal, but if this all catches on, I would love to be able to tear that building down."

Murphy, who is the technology director of the WBCA, which he helped found, is also using the organization's Facebook page to reach other colorblind people, men and women, in Ware.

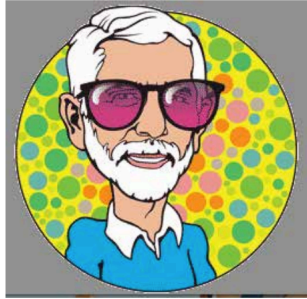
Ware artist Roc Goudreau has drawn the Color Blind Guy logo as well as a more personalized version of Murphy, both of whom are wearing the glasses used to test for colorblindness. Those who are not colorblind will see a pair of numbers within the colored dots and those who are colorblind will not.

He has already made the first order of colorblindguy T-shirts with KM Graphics, of Ware, owned by Kim Mulligan. They proclaim Ware to be the colorblind capital of the world and



Turley Publications courtesy graphics

Chris Murphy's Color Blind Guy, which graces his website, <http://colorblindguy.com/>, as he brings awareness about colorblindness and community to those who are color blind.



A more personalized version of Chris Murphy, as Color Blind Guy, a character he is using to bring more awareness about color blindness to others. The graphic will be used on his website and in other promotional ways, and was drawn by Roc Goudreau.

were designed by famous illustrator Tom Payne, he said.

He wants to identify colorblind people from Ware and give them a free promotional T-shirt, which will

be followed up by a national launch of products highlighting being a colorblindguy, and hopefully earn enough money to pull the ruined home down. "If successful, I want to have a positive impact in Ware," he said.

And although the website is a fairly light-hearted look at colorblindness, he's also using it to seek stories from others who are colorblind and to bring awareness to the difficulties of colorblind people without being pedantic.

"Colors can goof you up," Murphy said. Clothing selections must be simple and everyday decisions such as 'is this bread moldy?' become tasks that need another's assistance. Color-coded weather maps as well as colored charts and other graphics can be problematic.

"All the time we're coping and we become much more analytical," Murphy said.

But in the end, Murphy, who is also a stand-up comic, believes having sense of humor about yourself and the world, including colorblindness, is imperative.