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THE VOICE OF THE VILLAGES

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SNEAK PREVIEW

Pinball on the Ave!

By PETE WACKERNAGEL

TURNERS FALLS - Within the next month, a pinball parlor will open on Avenue A. Mystic Pinball will feature 22 token-operated games chosen from the collection of collector, proprietor, and geological entrepreneur Mark Hankowski.

Hankowski did not play pinball as a kid, but did spend a lot of time at the Dream Machine at the Hampshire Mall. "I gravitated to the early arcade games, I think, because of the video screens," he remembers. Then, after having a mind-blowing pinball experience at Quarters in Hadley, he bought a pinball machine on eBay, and was hooked.

"This is way cooler than an arcade machine," he says, "because every game is different. You have to build skills. It's like gaming with-

out the screen; it's physical."

Hankowski cites a new problem - screen fatigue - as one reason for renewed interest in pinball. "I think people are tired of looking at a computer screen," he says. "They want mechanical entertainment. As a kid, it was novel. Now, how novel is using a screen?"

Nostalgia is a powerful component of the will to collect. "When I started collecting pinball machines, it brought me back to my youth," Hankowski says. The parlor is named for one of the machines in his collection, 1979's *Mystic*. "When I started collecting pinball machines I had a focus on magic: games like *Wizard*, *Sorcerer*, *Mystic*."

The games in the room are organized by era and manufacturer. There are electromechanical

see PINBALL page A3



Mystic Pinball owner Mark Hankowski is excited to share his collection of games, spanning 45 years, with the public.

The Week In TFHS Sports

By MATT ROBINSON

The Turners Falls sports teams ended their regular seasons this week, and prepared for the playoffs by competing against top-ranked teams.

The boys' tennis team battled one of the best teams in the west, the baseball team hosted the number-one team in their division, the softball team beat two of the best teams in the state, and Owen Ortiz jumped his way to first place in the regional track meet.

Track and Field

On Saturday, May 27, Westfield State hosted the Central-West Boys Division II Track and Field

Championship Meet.

Owen Ortiz competed in three events, representing Franklin Tech. He scored 4 in the long jump, 7 in the 100m, and in the triple jump, he took first place with a distance of 43' 2.5".

Along with other athletes from central and western Mass., Ortiz will compete in the Massachusetts State Track Meet later this month.

Baseball

South Hadley 5 - TFHS 0

On May 24, the school's Senior Night, Turners hosted the South Hadley Tigers. Six days later, the MIAA ranked the Tigers as the best D-III team in the west. This was a

see TFHS SPORTS page A7



Newton North's Caroline Bass can't beat the throw to Turners' Aly Murphy at first base. Turners tamed the Division I Tigers, 2-1.

GILL SELECTBOARD

Gill Joins Montague, Leverett In Leaving Immigration Enforcement To Feds

By MIKE JACKSON

On Tuesday, Gill's selectboard approved a policy directing the town's police force to ignore requests from the federal government to hold non-criminal detainees for violations of immigration law. The policy was modeled after one adopted in Holyoke, and follows similar actions taken by the Leverett selectboard and Montague town meeting members this spring.

Tuesday's meeting was the fourth session in which the board discussed the policy, first proposed February 6 by Seth Montgomery and Rachael Abernethy, two town residents who work as teaching fellows at the Northfield Mount Hermon School.

Over the course of the debate, John Ward had said he supported the measure and chair Randy Crochier said he opposed it, while Greg Snedeker had asked for more time to research the issue.

"These are real fears that are impacting us in real ways," Snedeker concluded on Tuesday. "That is the point I wanted to extend to those that disagree... It actually is having negative impacts on the community."

Snedeker said that police chief David Hastings had told him the ordinance would be acceptable to his department, and that a representative from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) indicated that a pending grant application to buy new air packs for the town's fire department stood no chance of being rejected in political retaliation.

He also reported that Claude Anderson, dean of enrollment at Northfield Mount Hermon, had told him the private school has "felt the negative impacts of the rhetoric that has been implied in these executive orders" aimed at restricting international travel and enlisting



Greg Snedeker (left), previously the swing vote on the issue, said he had come to the conclusion that fear of police targeting immigrants was having a negative impact on the town.

local jurisdictions in the enforcement of federal immigration law.

Snedeker read a quote Anderson had relayed to him, from a prospective parent in Mexico, that due to "deep concerns about the constant anti-Mexican statements of the current US administration, we feel it is not the right timing to send our daughter to the US." The parent also expressed concern over access to travel visas that would permit the family to visit the student in Gill.

"There are people in this town that I've lived with for 25 years, and they have valid reasons on the other

see GILL page A8

The Reporter Interviews... Montague Town Planner Walter Ramsey

By MIKE JACKSON

After receiving a tip that two salmon had recently passed through the Turners Falls Fishway, I headed over there to ask a few easy questions. The Fishway workers, though, while charming and always eager to share their knowledge with the general public, were under strict orders to refer reporters to the offices of their employer, the power company.

I didn't really feel like talking on the phone, so I wandered across the bike path, into the town hall, and up the stairs to pay a visit to the man who has, in seven short years, thumbed through every last three-ringed binder in Montague: Walter Ramsey, the town planner.

Ramsey was going over a deck of slides for a public forum that evening on the town's new Open Space Plan, but he tolerated the surprise interview very well. We checked in about many of the current or proposed development projects the town of Montague has a hand in.

MR: Thank you for taking time out of your busy Wednesday afternoon to meet with the Reporter!

So, what's the Open Space thing you've got planned for tonight?

WR: It's a recap of our Open Space Plan - something we've got to update, per state law, every seven years; the last one was done in 2010. We've accomplished a lot of the goals in that plan: things like building the skatepark, finishing up Unity Park.

We put a couple of pieces of farmland into protection; two fifth-generation family farms, off of Millers Falls - part of the Mormon Hol-



Ramsey reflects on his first seven years at the helm of Montague's planning department.

low Landscape Partnership.

MR: And they're going to be having a big event on Sunday for that corridor project...

WR: They are. A big celebration to cap the project. It was a partnership between both Montague and Wendell, a total of 700 acres into protection. Most of that was in Wendell, but two farms are in Montague.

And a lot of smaller projects that were visions in that plan: things like rehabbing the pedestrian footbridge in the North Street Wildlife Management Area -

MR: That's the Meadows?

WR: Yep. And reforming an agricultural commission, and passing a right-to-farm bylaw. These are just examples of things that were identified in the plan and then carried out over the last seven years.

So, this plan is looking forward to

the next seven. It's got a pretty ambitious list of projects. We've been working on this plan since September of last year; there was a big community survey that was done, and the conservation commission has taken the lead on this, meeting every month and developing the plan...

One of the new goals is to develop a comprehensive trail network for walking and cycling, that connects the villages to each other, and to open space networks.

MR: So a townwide trail system, like some other towns have?

WR: Yeah. We're looking at planning for, and building out, a more comprehensive trail network.

MR: I know that last summer, some of the trailhead kiosks went in over on Dry Hill. This would be building out from there?

see RAMSEY page A4



LOCAL BRIEFS

Compiled by DON CLEGG

Ed Hines is back in concert at the Greenfield Savings Bank in Turners Falls this Saturday, June 3, from 10 a.m. to noon. Hines' musical instrumental ability has been a huge hit with the captive audience that he has had the three times he was featured at the bank. Ed will be playing his "one of a kind Middle Eastern lute." This will be a relaxing morning for all who come to enjoy. Light refreshments provided courtesy of GSB.

Greenfield Community College's 2017 Commencement will take place Saturday, June 3, at noon. The celebration is held on the east lawn at the main Campus.

Don't forget to check out the "Party in the Hollow" - A Festival to Save our Local Farms at the Diemand Farm on the Millers Falls/Wendell town line on Sunday, June 4, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Mount

Grace Land Conservation Trust has been working with farmers, landowners, and community partners to conserve 700+ acres of farmland and forestland in Wendell and Montague, and the Party is a celebration of that effort.

A road race kicks off the event, with all other festivities starting at 11 a.m. There will be live music featuring The Equalites, Shokazoba, and the Gaslight Tinkers, as well as vendors, local food, stories celebrating farmers and the land, and family-friendly kids' activities. Tickets are \$15; children under 12 get in free. Contact mountgrace.org or call (978) 258-2055 x15.

Enjoy spelling? Join the Friends of the Greenfield Public Library for an evening of fun at their 2nd Annual Spelling Bee, part of Greenfield's Bee Week celebration. The Spelling Bee will take place at 6:30 p.m. on June 9 at the Second Congregational Church on Court Square. New this year is a costume com-

petition with prizes awarded in various categories. Prizes will be awarded to the first, second, and third place spelling team winners, and there will be food, refreshments, and raffles. Everyone is bound to increase their vocabulary at this event, and even if you are an abecedarian, come along and cheer on your friends.

Grab some logophiles from your hive and form a team of three "bees" to compete with the swarm! Teams can preregister at the library, or via email to rothki@dcomcast.net. Entry fee for each team is \$15. Registration is by June 7.

On Sunday, June 11, Diemand Farm in Wendell will host their second annual BBQ to benefit the Arredondo Family Foundation. The proceeds will go toward supporting military families who have lost a loved one.

Join in from 1 to 4 p.m. for food, fun, guest speakers, music and raffles. The meal includes a combo of BBQ chicken, baked potatoes, BBQ turkey ribs, black bean quinoa salad, and more. Suggested donation is \$30 for adults, and \$10 for children 2 to 10 years. A family package - for two adults and two children under 10 - is also available for \$60.

The mission of the Arredondo Family Foundation (www.arredondofoundation.org) is to empower

military families in the prevention of military related suicides and to provide support through education, financial relief and support services. Carlos and Melida Arredondo are Gold Star parents. Their son Alex was a US Marine in Iraq, and they lost their younger son Brian to suicide. You may recognize Carlos as being one of the first spectators to rush to the aid of injured spectators and runners at the Boston Marathon bombings.

Tickets are available at Diemand Farm at (978) 544-3806, or online at EventBrite.com. For more information, contact Anne Diemand Bucci at (978) 544-3806 or Melida Arredondo at (857) 719-4569.

We're still looking! Gill subscribers to the Montague Reporter are currently receiving the newspaper in the mail. The Reporter is looking for someone - or even a small team of folks - to take on the task of delivering the paper around Gill, including the Riverside section of town.

If you or someone you know may be interested, please contact Mike or Don at (413) 863-8666. The newspaper can customize your route, and your efforts will be compensated.

Send your local briefs to editor@montaguereporter.org.



Hankowski inspects the crude electromechanical computer in 1965's Hula Hula.

PINBALL from page A1 machines from the '60s and '70s, Bally and Williams machines from the '70s and early '80s, and finally '90s and modern dot-matrix display machines. The oldest, *Hula Hula*, was produced in 1965.

A Mystical Vibe

Filling empty Avenue A storefronts has long been a goal of the town of Montague. The 2013 Downtown Turners Falls Livability Plan identified filling the spaces at 104 Avenue A building as a high priority for the community.

The possibility began to take shape when Oliver Miller bought the building a year ago. Part of the reason the stores were empty was that they had no utilities. "None of them had electricity or running water," explains Miller. "We had to redo everything from the bottom up."

Miller wanted to make sure that the ground floor storefronts would be open to the public. "A lot of people wanted art space. I wanted to stay away from services and offices, closed spaces. I wanted retail that would bring people to town." Miller says that Rodney Madison, former proprietor of Madison on the Ave, did not approach him about moving back into the building.

Mystic Pinball has a neo-minimalist interior that features vintage

leather chairs and strange plants. Hankowski explains that the vacant space originally "had an Art Deco vibe that we wanted to continue." He describes the interior now as "Art Deco with a mystical vibe."

The light fixtures are modernistic chrome spheres, essentially giant shiny pinballs that hover over the room. He is having Deco-inspired benches built for the windows. The walls have been painted black and are decorated sparsely with posters that feature Art Deco and Art Nouveau imagery. The door handle is a tiny dragon, arching its back and holding a silver orb, as if it were the setting for a mid-'80s American ninja movie.

Against the minimalism of the room, the machines in their electric extravagance shine like mating tropical birds. Each game, with its flashy, luminescent backglass, like a peacock's plumage, beckons players to insert a quarter into its slot. (Perhaps it is no coincidence that many of the backglasses feature nearly naked women.)

As pinball has tried to compete with video-based games, designers have added more of a narrative element to the gameplay. The story is moved forward by accomplishing certain goals, like hitting a target.

"Modern games have ridiculously complicated rule sets," explains

Hankowski. "To accomplish the entire rule set you have to be an incredibly good player." 1988's *Secret Service* is about a KGB plot to take over the Reagan White House. "It's also pertinent to modern times," says Hankowski.

Many of the most popular pinball machines are licensed. The first licensed pinball game was Bally's 1975 *Wizard*, which was tied to the movie *Tommy*. Mystic has several licensed machines including *Star Wars*, *Indiana Jones*, and *AC/DC*. The gameplay of *AC/DC* involves unlocking various *AC/DC* songs that then play through speakers built into the machine. "There's a trend in pinball where they're tying them to bands," Hankowski says.

In the *Star Wars* machine, one progresses through events from the original trilogy, until finally a tiny door opens in the Death Star and the player wins by shooting the ball inside.

The Focus is the Games

Hankowski grew up in Shutesbury, and graduated from Amherst High. After receiving an MBA at Columbia, he wound up in San Francisco, where he joined a Silicon Valley startup called Potter Drilling. The company, founded by Manhattan Project researcher Bob Potter and his son, was doing research in alternative geothermal power, and was primarily funded by Google.

"When Google had their IPO, they used 1% of the money to create an organization called Google.org," Hankinson says. "One of their mandates was renewable energy - specifically, funding renewable energy projects that had a low probability of success, but if successful would change everything."

When Potter Drilling failed to secure another round of funding, Hankowski returned to western Mass. in 2013. He now has his own startup doing research in materials science, but declined to elaborate on the nature of the project. "It's a very specific type of material that has very unique properties," he says. "It's fundamental research."

Publicly accessible pinball has

certainly enjoyed a resurgence of interest since the opening of Barcade in Brooklyn in 2004. Barcade is now a chain, with seven establishments in four northeastern states. The model, combining pinball and arcade games with drinking alcohol, has been reproduced nationwide. Quarters, which opened in Hadley in 2014, is western Mass.'s incarnation of this formula. Quarters originally had pinball machines, but removed them.

According to Hankowski, Mystic Pinball will feature "the most machines you can play in the Valley." The venue will not have a bar. "That's not what the focus of the space is. The focus is the games," Hankowski explains. He is, however, looking into the possibility of a club license that would allow for the limited sale of alcohol.

Mystic Pinball has in its collection the 1978 *Playboy* machine (the first and most collectible of *Playboy* machines). It has *Stars*, one of the first solid-state pinball machines which debuted in the late 1970s. *Pinball Magic* has a unique magnetic magic wand that lifts the ball from the playfield. *Black Hole* includes a second, sunken playing field, ostensibly inside the Black Hole.

Collectibility is possibly being designed into new machines. *AC/DC*, Hankowski's newest machine, was produced in 2010 in a run of only 100 machines. *AC/DC* machines have already appreciated in value to around \$10,000.

While pinball is an individual sport, it does not need to be a lonely one. It is best enjoyed as a shared experience, as that is the only way one can display mastery. This performance is one that Hankowski hopes will bring people to Turners Falls. "I'm happy to share a hobby," he says. "I'm hoping to positively impact traffic coming into this town."

Hankowski wants Mystic Pinball to be a space for people to be together, to mutually enjoy his great collection of games.

"The point of pinball is social. I have all these great machines," he says. "The point is to share them."



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