BUY PHOTO REPRINTS ONLINE
CREATIVE SPACE Shower Doors & more 413-256-0567 Click Here!
SUBSCRIBE TO THE GAZETTE ONLINE OR IN PRINT

Annual Goshen meltdown draws interest from afar

By THE DAILY HAMPSHIRE GAZETTE
Staff Writer

Email this page | Printer-friendly version

Thursday, March 19, 2009

GOSHEN - Over the last four years, the homespun Hammond Pond meltdown contest has received more than 4,000 entries submitted from 97 communities in 17 states and two countries - the U.S. and India. Now in its fifth year, submissions have come in again from far and wide, including Goshen, Australia, Thailand and France.

"So, I'm going worldwide," said the event's founder and organizer Bob Labrie. "It's kind of hokey, but that's what the Hilltowns are about - the whole point of this is to shine a small light on Goshen, and we think it's a pretty cool place."

Submissions, in which people guess when a 69-pound concrete block will fall through the ice on Hammond Pond cost $1 each and are being accepted until April 1.

The contest is a benefit that gives half its proceeds to the Northampton Survival Center's Hilltown Pantry and the other half to the person who guesses closest to the actual time when the block collapses through the ice, without going over.

The block sits on a wood pallet on top of the pond's ice, and is tied to a rope that is connected to an electric clock which is plugged into an outlet in the gatehouse on the pond's dam. Once the block falls through, or if the ice floe moves away from the dam, the tension will unplug the clock, displaying the precise time it happened.

So far this year, Labrie says he has sold around 400 tickets.

"I'm fairly optimistic and doing well," he said. He noted that sales tend to jump a week before entries are due. He sold 250 tickets in the final week last year.

Since its inception, the contest has benefited causes of Labrie's choosing with donations of around $500 each year. Labrie said donating the money to the Hilltown Pantry was an easy decision to make this year. "With the economy the way it is, it's just the right choice," he said.

Heidi Nortonsmith, executive director of the Northampton Survival Center, which runs the pantry, said the number of clients served has increased by about 117 percent in fiscal 2008 compared to 2007, and by 20 percent in December alone. The pantry serves around 250 of the center's total 4,000 clients.

"This is extremely helpful for us because there is only so much we can do with our small staff," she said. "When people offer their skills and services like this it is what really keeps us running."

To keep contestants up-to-speed on the block's whereabouts, Labrie updates the Web site, www.goshenmafire.com, and sends out email alerts weekly.

Filed Under: goshen | local | news

Comments

Post new comment

Your name:
intern

Subject:

Popular stories

Comment: *

- Web page addresses and e-mail addresses turn into links automatically.
- Allowed HTML tags: <a> <b> <i>   <code> <cite>   <img>
- Lines and paragraphs break automatically.

More information about formatting options

Preview comment | Post comment

Daily Hampshire Gazette © 2008 All rights reserved