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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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Maldonado hits 1,000 points

AGAWAM - During a recent matchup at Pittsfield, Elijah Maldonado scored his 1,000th career point for Agawam High School boys basketball. Maldonado is a senior at AHS. According to Athletic Director Karen Gomez,

Maldonado "sets the standard with his work ethic and determination. Off the court, Elijah's impact is equally inspiring. As a role model in the classroom, he demonstrates the values of discipline and hard work. His contri-

butions extend beyond the basketball program—he served as official for the Unified Basketball Team this season, showcasing his commitment to fostering inclusivity and teamwork in our community."



Elijah Maldonado is honored for achieving 1,000 career points. He is shown with coach Tim Sheehan.



Elijah Maldonado drives to the hoop during a recent home game.

TURLEY PHOTO BY DAWOOD ATANANE



School committee addresses graduation

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM - The Agawam school committee discussed the relocation of the class of 2025's graduation due to the high school project.

The graduation had to be relocated due to the ongoing high school project, which will need to begin construction prior to the graduation date.

As a result, the stadium where the high school has been hosting graduation will be unavailable this year, so the Superintendent Sheila Hoffman researched alternative

GRADUATION | page 9

AHS competes in Poetry Out Loud competition

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM - Students from Agawam High School are competing in Poetry Out Loud, a national poetry recitation competition.

About 200 students throughout the school competed in their classroom competitions and now 20 finalists are competing to be the schoolwide winner.

The school winner will then go to the state competition in Boston and, should they win there, they will go to the national competition in Washington D.C. in May.

Throughout these contests, the students are judged on a variety of skills.

"Accuracy is one, making sure they know the poem word for

word," English Teacher Rachel Patterson said. "There are also things like physical presence, voice and articulation...showing that you are understanding the poem and interpreting it and showing the audience that you are trying to communicate its meaning."

They are judged on a scale of one through six for each of these qualities besides accuracy, which is scored on an eight point scale.

The students began preparing for this contest a couple months ago by going onto the Poetry Out Loud website to find a poem they were interested in reciting.

"Students selected a poem that interests them, studied the poem

POETRY | page 9

Senior center to offer day trips for residents

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM - The senior center is going to be offering day trips once more.

Joanne Locke and Debbie Sorcinelli from Insider's Travel are working with the senior center to offer seniors and other community members day trips filled with fun and adventure.

On Jan. 28 and Feb. 2 there will be reveal parties to discuss what these trips will entail.

The Jan. 28 party will take place at the senior center at 12:45 p.m. and will be for seniors only.

The Feb. 2 party will be at the 141 Main Street Restaurant at 2 p.m. and is open to the public.

Locke and Sorcinelli are both looking forward to these parties where they can finally tell the community about the trips.

"I love this...it's creating an excitement and people want to be one of the first ones to know what the trips are," Sorcinelli said.

As people arrive at the parties they will be welcomed in and given information on the policies and procedures for the trips. Then, the reveals will begin.

"We're going to have flyers for each trip and then we are going to have covers so we can reveal it," Sorcinelli said.

The senior center is beyond excited to have these trips back for their seniors.

During COVID, the center had to discontinue their trips and they have been greatly missed by the community ever since.

"People have been asking for them, they want things to do and recreation is a really valuable tool for seniors," Senior Center Executive Director Cindy Sullivan said.

"So I think it is important to fill their days and their time."

Sorcinelli and Locke have been working with Sullivan and Deputy Director Kristina Lynch to flesh out their ideas for the different trips they can take the seniors on.

They are also open to suggestions and feedback from the seniors and other people who attend the trips, as they want to ensure they truly are a great experience for community members.

"We've talked to a lot of people about different things that they've gone on in the past and what they would like to see in the future and they have given us some wonderful ideas that we have taken to heart," Locke said.

Through these trips, Locke and Sorcinelli hope to build a fun

TRIPS | page 9



City in need of more plow operators

AGAWAM – The Town of Agawam, Chief Procurement Officer in consultation with the Department of Public Works Department hereby requests written applications and bids from qualified contractors and/or individuals that wish to be considered for hire for snow plowing services.

Bids can still be made to the Town of Agawam to serve as a contract plow operator for the winter season, which has already begun.

The Town will make one or more awards for contracts sufficient to cover the Town's requirements. The Town of Agawam also reserves the right: (1) to reject any or all bids, or any part thereof; (2) to waive any informality in the bids; and (3) to accept the bid that is in the best interest of the Town (4) to negotiate a price on Item 1, and (5) to add additional vendors after the deadline if necessary. Consideration will first be given to the contractor/individual who has successfully and responsibly provided snow removal services to the Town in the past, and whose primary place of residence or business is in the Town of Agawam.

Item 1: The contract will be awarded to the responsible, responsive and qualified bidder who offers the low price for each



location meeting minimum equipment specification cited in Section II, with consideration given to the contractor/individual who has successfully and responsibly provided snow removal service to the Town in the past and whose primary place of residence or business is in the Town of Agawam

Item 2: The contract shall be awarded within the categories specified in Section II, with consideration given to the contrac-

tor/individual who has successfully and responsibly provided snow removal service to the Town in the past and whose primary place of residence or business is in the Town of Agawam.

The snow and ice season shall commence on November 15, 2024 and expire on April 30, 2025. All successful contractors/individuals are expected to have their equipment ready at the beginning of each season.

Tickets now available to for Colleen Coronation

AGAWAM – The Agawam St. Patrick's Committee is excited to begin its Irish Season at St. Anne Country Club. This year's event will crown the 2025 Agawam Colleen and court. They will participate in the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade as well as many other activities throughout the year.

This year's coronation will be held on Saturday, Feb. 8 beginning at 5:30 p.m. The ceremony will begin at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$55 for adults and \$30 for children under 12. To reserve tickets, please email Abbie at agawamstpatricks317@gmail.com.

Mayoral breakfast set for March 6

AGAWAM – The West of the River Chamber of Commerce is hosting the VIP Mayor Breakfast on Thursday, March 6 from 7:30 to 9 a.m. The event will be held at Partners/Tansey's Catered Table on Springfield St. in Agawam.

Agawam Mayor Christopher Johnson and West Springfield Mayor Will Reichelt will be on hand to discuss happenings in each town and as well as collaborative efforts going on. The mayors will also take questions from those in attendance. You can also submit questions to robin@westoftheriverchamber.com. The cost is \$40 for chamber members and \$50 for non-members. To register, go to the West of the River website.

Agawam Rotary Club to award scholarships

AGAWAM – The Agawam Rotary Club is now accepting applications for 4 scholarships the club offers annually. The awards cover a diverse range of interests and include vocational/technical training, cultural arts, the legal profession, and assistance

with attending college.

With the exception of the Ray and Reita McCarroll Memorial scholarship which is awarded to graduating seniors from both Agawam and West Springfield, the awards are limited to residents of Agawam. A full

description and application for each of these scholarships can be found at the Agawam Rotary Club's webpage at agawamrotary.org. Click on "Scholarships" at the top of the home page. Please note that applications must be received by April 1, 2025.

Big Y and Red Cross assisting California wildfire victims

SPRINGFIELD – Big Y is partnering with the American Red Cross to raise donations for those affected by the California Wildfires. Now through Friday, January 31st, Big Y customers and employees will have the opportunity to donate to American Red Cross Disaster Relief at all Big Y supermarket locations throughout Massachusetts and Connecticut. Donation containers for cash donations will be available at all Big Y registers, with the ability to donate with credit or debit at the register, via the myExpress Checkout app or <https://bit.ly/BigYCaliforniaWildfiresSupport>.

"The American Red Cross is focused on making sure everyone has a safe place to stay, and no one faces this heartbreaking crisis alone," said Holly Grant, Chief Executive Officer, American Red Cross Massachusetts Region. "The Red Cross is working closely with our partners to provide safe shelter, food, emotional support and other critical services to those in need."

According to President and CEO Michael P. D'Amour, "For years, our Big Y customers and employees have come together to support those in need through

the Red Cross. Currently, their kindness and ongoing contributions are making a meaningful difference in the lives of families affected by these wildfires. We are deeply thankful for everyone's generosity and commitment to helping those facing this devastation."

The funds raised through this campaign will support people in the communities affected by these tragic fires.

Big Y Foods, Inc. is one of the largest independently owned supermarket chains in New England. Big Y operates locations throughout Massachusetts and Connecticut including supermarkets, Table & Vine Fine Wines and Liquors and Big Y Express gas and convenience locations with over 10,000 employees. Big Y has been recognized by Forbes as a Best-in-State Employer in Massachusetts and Connecticut, and in 2023 for both Newsweek's America's Greatest Workplaces for Diversity and for Women. Founded in 1936 by brothers Paul and Gerald D'Amour, the store was named after an intersection in Chicopee, Massachusetts where two roads converge to form a "Y".



Harmony House seeks volunteers

CHICOPEE – For anyone looking for a volunteer opportunity, Harmony House of Western Massachusetts has openings for many functions. A Volunteer Recruitment Event is scheduled for Jan. 29 from 6 to 7:15 p.m. at the Chicopee Public Library, 449 Front Street in Chicopee. Current volunteers and staff will be on hand to discuss their experiences at the home and answer questions. Harmony House is a social model home for hospice care located in Chicopee. The house is currently operated by both volunteers and staff – people who are looking to make a difference for individuals who are facing the end of their lives. Harmony House is not a place of sadness; it's a home of joy and peace. The organization is currently in need of caregivers and people who

would enjoy the opportunity to support our residents in other ways; for example, companionship, cleaning, outdoor work, helping to stage and promote fundraising events, and so many more purposes. Whether it's a few hours a week or a few hours a month, Harmony House is a welcoming place for people looking to help people.

Harmony House is a local, non-profit organization whose mission is to provide a loving home offering compassionate care for people who are on hospice and are in need of care. If interested in learning more or becoming a volunteer, please complete the online volunteer application form at www.harmonyhousewma.org/volunteer-1 or email us at harmonyhousewma@gmail.com.

Eversource warns of scams, threats to disconnect power in 2025

SPRINGFIELD – With the holiday season in the rearview mirror and a new year underway, scammers are still hard at work focusing on new victims. Imposters often take advantage of this busy time of year, posing as Eversource representatives and threatening to disconnect customers' power unless they make an immediate payment on the spot. The energy company is reminding residents and businesses to be on the lookout for common signs of scams, whether it's in person, over the phone, or online.

"Many scammers are successful because they use scare tactics and threats, demanding customers act quickly or face serious consequences if they don't give money or personal information," said Eversource Senior Vice President for Customer Operations and Digital Strategy Jared Lawrence. "These imposters take advantage of the panic someone might

feel after hearing, with little warning, that their power will be shut off in the middle of winter. We want customers to remember that we will never demand instant payment over the phone, require gift cards or other non-standard methods of payment, or request personal information in an unsolicited call, text message, or email. If you ever question that the person you're speaking with isn't who they say they are, hang up right away, and give us a call at 877-659-6326."

"Police departments around the state regularly receive reports of imposter scams," according to Springfield Police Superintendent Lawrence E. Akers. "Our residents and members of our business community far too often fall victim to scams. Scammers utilize different methods to try to get your money and information including under the guise of utility companies, like Eversource. If you receive

a call like this, just hang up the phone and remember that no reputable company will ever ask for or accept payment in the form of gift cards or bitcoin. Please share this information with your friends and family especially those that are older, as senior citizens are regularly targeted by scammers."

Eversource and Springfield police department also offer these additional tips to help avoid becoming a victim:

- Eversource representatives do not require the use of prepaid debit cards, such as Green Dot MoneyPak, Vanilla, or Reloadit. They will also never ask customers to pay using a Bitcoin ATM or a gift card.
- Eversource representatives never request customers meet at a department or grocery store to make a payment.
- Customers should never provide personal, financial, or account information to any unsolicited person on the phone, at

the door, or online, even if they seem legitimate.

- Eversource does not solicit door-to-door or on the phone on behalf of third-party energy suppliers.
- All Eversource employees carry photo identification; field workers wear clothing with the company logo and drive company vehicles.
- Customers who are scheduled for disconnection due to nonpayment receive written notice that includes information on how to maintain their service.
- Customers who doubt a call, in-person interaction, text, or email is legitimate should call Eversource directly to confirm the authenticity of the contact.
- Customers should not search for Eversource's phone number or website through a search engine. You can find contact information, including the website, on your Eversource bill.

Scholarship and fellowship funds available

AGAWAM – The Horace Smith Fund, located in Westfield, Massachusetts has scholarship and fellowship money available for graduates of Hampden County public and private high schools. Graduating high school seniors and students already in college may apply for Scholarships of up to \$12,000. Those in their final year of college and previous college graduates pursuing advanced degrees may apply for Fellowships of \$15,000. Applicants must maintain at least a B average in college and be enrolled as full-time students.

Awards are made based on both academic achievement and merit. Of great

importance is a personal written account of why the student feels deserving of financial assistance and their goals in pursuing higher education.

Last year, \$297,000 was awarded to 24 individuals. Scholarships were given to 16 graduating seniors from 13 Hampden County high schools. Five scholarships were also awarded to current college students to assist them in completing their undergraduate degrees. Three fellowships were given to college graduates pursuing advanced degrees, who had graduated from Hampden County high schools.

The Horace Smith Fund was established in 1899 by the successful and

generous philanthropist named Horace Smith, co-founder of Smith & Wesson, established in Springfield. The scholarships and fellowships are named for Walter S. Barr, a West Springfield businessman, whose widow left the bulk of the family estate to The Horace Smith Fund in 1950.

Completed applications must be received either electronically or by mail to The Horace Smith Fund at 16 Union Avenue, Suite 2K, Westfield, MA 01085 no later than March 15. Applications are available at local high school guidance offices, college financial aid offices, online at www.HoraceSmithFund.org or by phoning (413) 739-4222.

Jewish Foundation encourages high school and college students to apply for scholarships

SPRINGFIELD – The Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts's Jewish Endowment Foundation is inviting undergraduate and college-bound students to apply to its annual Common Fund and Springfield Council of Jewish Women (SCJW) scholarships through March 28, 2025. Qualified students regardless of race, religion, and gender are encouraged to apply. Scholarships are awarded based on a combination of academic, financial need and community involvement.

"The value of education is strongly embedded in our Jewish culture, which is why we are proud to award Common Fund and Springfield Council of Jewish Women scholarships to support students on their educational journey," said Nora Gorenstein, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts. "These scholarships are an example of one of the

many ways Federation supports families in Western Massachusetts, and we look forward to receiving scholarship applications from our future leaders and professionals."

Federation's Jewish Endowment Foundation Common Fund grants college scholarships to all qualified high school students who are residents of Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin counties. Since 2015, Federation's Jewish Endowment Foundation Common Fund has awarded more than \$260,000 in scholarships to more than 240 college bound students. Approximately thirty students are selected each year to receive this scholarship.

Federation's SCJW Scholarships are available to qualified high school students and undergraduate students residing in Chicopee, Springfield, East Longmeadow, Longmeadow, Wilbraham, Hampden,

Agawam, or West Springfield. The SCJW established its first scholarship fund in 1943. Since then, the scholarship fund has grown substantially. In 1992, the SCJW transferred their funds to Federation's Jewish Endowment Foundation. Since 1992, it has awarded more than \$2.5 million dollars to financially assist thousands of local students in their pursuit of higher education.

Recipients for both scholarship types are chosen based on academic performance, financial need, and community involvement. Once chosen, undergraduate students are eligible to renew their awards for their full four years of college. The application deadline for Federation's Jewish Endowment Foundation Common Fund scholarships and SCJW scholarships is March 28, 2025. To apply, visit <https://jewishwesternmass.org/grants-scholarships>.

Dad-daughter dance to have two dates

AGAWAM – Due to the popularity of this event, we are offering two dances. Couples must choose either Feb. 25 or 27. Dances will take place at Oak Ridge Golf Club from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Maximum 60 couples per dance. Contact your friends and choose either the Tuesday or the Thursday dance. Registration begins online and in person on Jan. 7 and will continue through Feb. 4. No Registrations will be taken after Feb. 4. For more information, please visit the Parks & Recreation page at www.agawam.ma.us or call 821-0514.

Youth lacrosse registration underway

AGAWAM – Boys and girls will be divided into teams grades 1-2 (Mites), grades 3-4 (Bantam), grades 5-6 (Junior), and grades 7-8 (Senior). Youth lacrosse is designed to teach the basic fundamentals of Lacrosse and introduce players to competitive games against surrounding communities. Practices will begin in April. Registration for Boys and Girls Lacrosse begins online and in person on Jan. 7 and will continue through Feb. 9. For more information, please visit the Parks & Recreation page at www.agawam.ma.us or call 821-0514.

Parks dept. hosting mother and son dance

AGAWAM – Moms and their sons will create memories that will last a lifetime. Boys in grades Kindergarten and up and their "date" will enjoy an evening of fun, games, and dancing on Thursday, March 6 at Oak Ridge Golf Club from 6 to 8:30 p.m. There are 30 couples are needed for this dance to take place. If 30 couples are not registered by Feb. 4, a full refund will be given. Registration begins online and in person on Jan. 7 and will continue through Feb. 4. No registrations will be taken after Feb. 4. For more information, please visit the Parks & Recreation page at www.agawam.ma.us or call 821-0514.



Westfield Athenaeum hosts Shawn Farley art exhibit

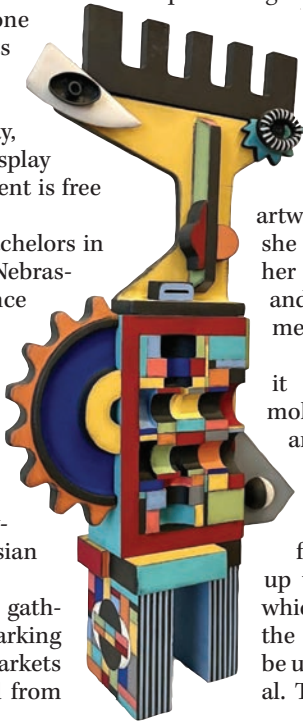
WESTFIELD – The Westfield Athenaeum, 6 Elm St., announces the next exhibit, the art of Shawn Farley, one of the most important artists working in Western Massachusetts today.

The show opened on Tuesday, Jan. 14 and will remain on display until Saturday, March 1. The event is free and open to the public.

Shawn Farley earned her Bachelors in Fine Arts at the University of Nebraska with a double major in dance and sculpture. Farley went on to obtain her Masters in Arts Administration from the University of Iowa. After moving to Massachusetts in 1984, she became active in artmaking while continuing to study the Surrealists, Constructivists, Suprematists and the Russian Avant-garde.

Her artmaking has involved gathering found objects from parking lots, streets, nature, flea markets and tag sales, and has evolved from

assemblage work with little painting to figurative sculptures fully painted.



As an older artist, with the freedom to work full-time on her artwork, she feels she has come into her "creative time" and finds age means nothing.

In this current exhibit Farley employs foundry molds, discarded hardware and other found objects as the building blocks for sculptures. Foundry molds are wooden forms, carved out or built up to create negative space, which in turn is used to make the inverse form or shape to be used for the casting of metal. The molds were primarily



Shawn Farley

used during the last two centuries to create everything from parts for the Hoover Dam to sewing machines and automotive parts. Sometimes these works come together by intention, but more often than not, by chance placement of objects. I find these objects in the streets, but also from people who rescue them from the trash or abandoned factory buildings.

Influenced by the early 20th century art movements known as Suprematism, Constructivism, and Surrealism, her process employs automatism, allowing her to be guided by subconscious associations between fundamental forms and colors. The composition comes first, but with constant editing, a theme emerges. It might be women's rights, climate change, or more personal themes such as aging, spirituality, or dreams. By embracing chance, welcoming play, and trusting her instincts, these compositions inevitably take on human qualities.

Holyoke Community College accepting scholarship applications

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Community College Foundation has begun accepting scholarship applications for the 2025-2026 academic year.

The application deadline is Friday, March 14.

Last year, the HCC Foundation awarded 388 scholarships worth about \$350,000 to 323 incoming, current, and transferring HCC students. Some students received multiple scholarship awards. The average scholarship award is typically around \$900.

"Awarding scholarships to deserving students has been a cornerstone of the work of the HCC Foundation since its founding," said Amanda Sbriscia, vice president of Institutional Advancement and executive director of the HCC Founda-

tion. "Scholarships established by donors celebrate academic achievement, community service, and civic engagement, and, most importantly, these funds ensure hundreds of students have the resources they need to complete their college degrees."

Students must be currently enrolled at HCC or have been accepted for the upcoming academic year to be eligible for scholarships.

"While the recent launch of MassEducate, the state's free-community-college-for-all program, has made HCC accessible to more individuals, that only means we have a greater responsibility to ensure students make it to the finish line," Sbriscia said. "Tuition and fees represent only a portion of the cost of being a college student today, and, oftentimes, a donor

scholarship can truly change a student's life."

Applicants need only to fill out a single online form to be automatically matched with the scholarships they are most qualified to receive. There are scholarships for new students, current students and students transferring to other institutions, scholarships based on financial need, scholarships for students in specific majors, scholarships for residents of certain communities, and scholarships that recognize academic achievement.

To view scholarship opportunities and begin the application process, please go to: www.hcc.edu/scholarships.

Last January, HCC opened a dedicated Scholarship Resource Center to help current and incoming students navigate the

process of applying for scholarships and filling out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). The office, located on the first floor of the Donahue Building (Room 158) is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The HCC Foundation is a 501(c)(3) that works to advance the college's mission, vision, and values. Founded in 1968 as the Friends of Holyoke Community College, in response to a devastating fire that forced the college to rebuild on a new campus, the Foundation now manages assets of more than \$20 million, the largest community college foundation endowment in Massachusetts.

Questions should be directed to the HCC Foundation office at 413-552-2182, or by email to scholarships@hcc.edu.

Opinion

Guest Column



When to claim Social Security and taxation of benefits

Dear Rusty:

I am 65 and currently working full-time.

Can I apply for and start receiving my Social Security benefit? I'd expect to have to pay income tax on it if/when I do.

Signed: Curious Worker

Dear Curious Worker:

If you are working full time, you should likely delay claiming Social Security at this time. At age 65, you haven't yet reached your SS Full Retirement Age, so you will be subject to Social Security's "annual earnings test" which limits how much you can earn from work while collecting early benefits. The earnings limit for 2025 is \$23,400 and if you earn more than the annual limit, SS will take away \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit.

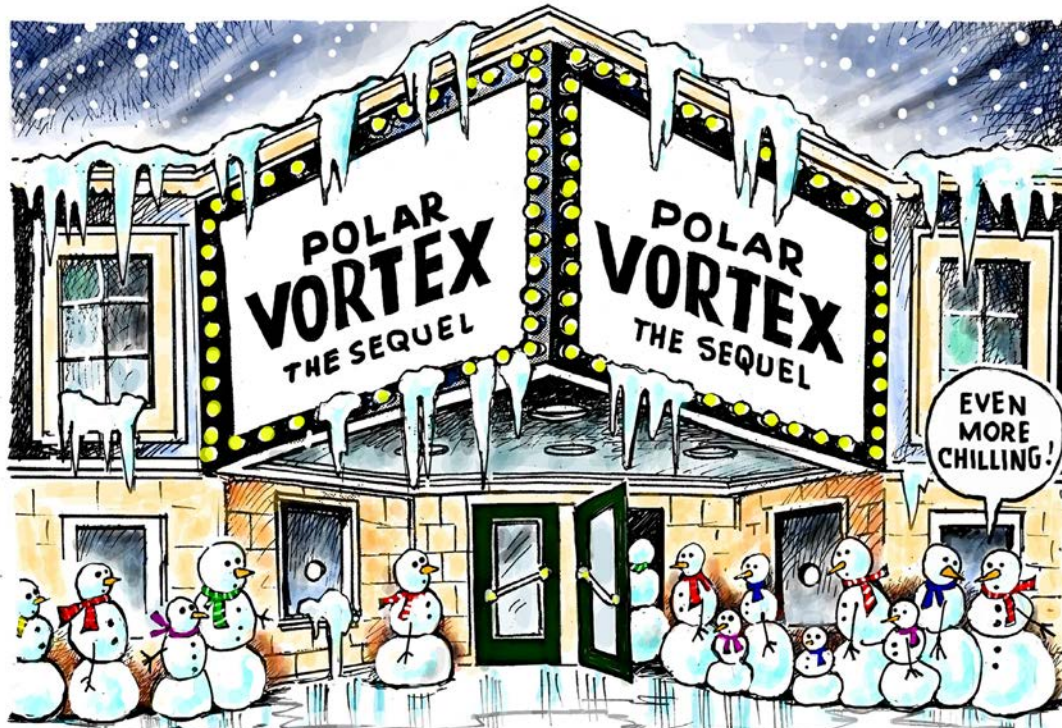
If you earn significantly over the limit, you may even be temporarily ineligible to collect SS benefits. FYI, the annual earnings limit goes away when you reach your full retirement age, which for you is 66 years and 10 months, or March 2026.

As you obviously already know, a portion of your Social Security may be subject to income tax after you start collecting. The threshold for taxation of SS benefits depends on your IRS filing status - if you file your taxes as a single and your combined income from all sources (including half of the SS benefit you received during the tax year) exceeds \$25,000 then 50% of your received SS benefits are taxable.

But if you file taxes as "married/jointly" and your combined income is over \$32,000, then up to 85% of your received SS benefits are taxable. Thus, whenever you claim SS, you may wish to consider having income tax withheld from your SS benefit. This is optional, and you can do this by submitting IRS Form W-4V to your local Social Security office, or you could choose to increase your income tax withholding at work or, alternatively, pay estimated income taxes quarterly.

So, whether you can claim Social Security now depends entirely on how much you will earn from working full time prior to your FRA. If you exceed the annual earnings limit before your FRA, SS will take away some of your benefits or, if you greatly exceed the earnings limit, you may even be temporarily ineligible to get benefits until you either reach your FRA or earn less. But note, if you decide to claim early and any SS benefits are withheld because you exceeded the earnings limit, you will get credit for that in the form of a slightly increased benefit after you reach your full retirement age.

SECURITY | page 5



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

Guest Column

A starlit hike in the White Mountains

By Julie Midura
Correspondent



This was our final hike of 2024. It was 5:15am, and we were lying on our backs staring up at the stars, cocooned in our bright green two-person down sleeping bag atop several feet of snow on the wide open summit of Mt. Jackson in NH. The sun was still 2 hours from cresting the distant horizon. It was dead calm, but bitterly cold.

In spite of donning every layer in my winter arsenal, I shivered and snuggled closer to Tom as I gathered the excess fabric of the bag as close to my body as I could.

We had arrived at the trailhead parking lot al-

most 3 hours before. It was 0 degrees when we stepped out of our SUV and opened the back hatch to retrieve our backpacks. In a split second of hesitation, I questioned our sanity. "Who in their right mind climbs a mountain in the pitch black of night in these ungodly temperatures just to see the sun rise?" Then I immediately thought, "Too late now. We dropped the motel key in the drop box a half hour ago in the dead of night, so we'll be climbing this mountain whether I want to or not."

As we moved upward along the snaking path, the beams of light from our headlamps danced between the snow cov-

HIKING | page 12

Catching up on questions for the Garden Lady



This column will be used to play catch-up. I received a couple of questions a few weeks back on Christmas plants and then another looking forward to the new gardening season.

Read on as I do my best to answer them!

Connie is the keeper of her mother's poinsettia and it's become tree-like! "We read your article about poinsettias in the Country Journal. I have been caring for my mother's poinsettia she purchased three Christmases ago. She is hoping you can help us as I never cut it back because I didn't know to do that. Now it is a small tree. There is

bark on it. I had one red bract last Christmas but no yellow center. I did try to put it in a dark room but as you can see, it is too big now to do that. Any suggestions?"

Many years ago when I joined my brother on a trip to St. Thomas, I became fully aware of the poinsettia and its true, tree-like form. It looks like you are well on your way to replicating that in your house!

First, congratulations, from the picture you provided you are clearly growing a healthy specimen. The leaves are a beautiful shade of green. I would recommend that, if you want to make it more manageable in size, you do try to cut it back.

It looks as if there is a lower "tier" of leaves. If you can cut it back to those stems, I think that is a good place to start. Do that in April when it will be in active growth.

At that time, I would also transplant it into a container one size bigger. So, if it's in a six inch pot now, try one that is seven or eight inches, but not any bigger.

GARDEN | page 5

Election letters to the editor welcome

The Agawam Advertiser News welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to The Agawam Advertiser News, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to aan@turley.com. Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered

for that Friday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election. For more information, call 413-283-8393.

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the news-

paper plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor's Council during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers.

Candidates who wish to further publicize their candidacy, beliefs and events may contact advertising, 413-283-8393 about paid advertising in The Agawam Advertiser News.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

must include a name, address, and daytime telephone number for author verification purposes. We do not publish anonymous letters. All letters are subject to editing for content and length. The deadline is Monday at noon. Please send letters to Agawam Advertiser News, care of Turley Publications Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, or e-mail aan@turley.com.

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Opinion

Guest Column



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

When a loved one is recovering from a heart attack

Few things are as frightening as a heart attack, not just for the person experiencing it but for family members. With prompt and proper treatment between 90 percent and 95 percent of heart attack patients (let's not call them victims) survive and return home.

A heart attack, technically a myocardial infarction, occurs when a blockage keeps oxygen-rich blood from getting to the heart. (Cardiac arrest, when the heart stops beating entirely, is a completely different animal – and perhaps a topic for another day.)

Heart attack patients typically spend between two and five days in the hospital. For those who receive angioplasty or stents to keep the arteries open, the stay is usually shorter. If coronary bypass surgery is required, expect your loved one to be in the hospital for five to seven days. Hopefully, there are no complications (like blood

clots) that keep them there longer.

When your loved one is ready to continue their recovery at home, you may wonder what will change, how to best support their recovery, and how you should behave around them. Based on my years of experience as a critical care nurse and patient advocate, here are five things to do – and not do.

1. Just listen. Heart attack patients often experience something known as the “cardiac blues,” which can encompass a range of emotions, including sadness, anger, anxiety, confusion and loneliness. While distressing, these feelings usually abate with time.

It's important for you to hear what your loved one is saying and feeling without passing judgment or giving advice, such as, “You'd feel better if you'd just take a walk.”

2. But don't walk on eggshells. On the other hand, you shouldn't make your loved one feel fragile, which can only make them feel more anxious than they already do. Do some of the things you've always done, such as watching a favorite TV show or movie. While you don't want them going up and down stairs to help with the laundry as they've always done, you can sit together and fold clothes while you chat.

3. Get their OK to come with you to follow-up visits. As a spouse, partner or family member, you have a role to play on your loved one's care team. Part of this role is accompanying them to doctor visits so

you can listen, take notes and ask questions.

Ensure that their doctors know that they have permission to discuss medical information with you so you can be fully informed about what's going on or what needs to happen next.

Spouses are generally assumed to be the patient's representative in hospital settings, but if you are not married, it's wise to ask your loved one to complete a HIPAA authorization so your status as the patient representative is crystal clear. This also comes in handy if a situation arises where you have to advocate for them.

4. Know the right questions to ask. The cardiologist will likely answer all of these questions, but it's important to understand and jot down the responses, particularly if the doctor seems rushed.

In addition to instructions about dietary changes and cardiac rehabilitation, ask the following:

- What exercise is OK to do and what should not be done during recovery from a heart attack?
- How will their heart condition be monitored on an ongoing basis (echocardiograms, stress tests, etc.)?
- What are the chances of another heart attack after having one?
- What symptoms should we watch for to indicate another heart attack?
- How long before your loved one can return to their job?

5. Help them follow doctor's orders. Your loved one will likely come home with some new medications, dietary modifications and an appointment for cardiac rehabilitation. Cardiac rehab is a critical component of their recovery. Typically, a heart attack patient can't drive for a few weeks following their hospital stay, so make yourself available as a chauffeur.

A heart attack is sometimes a bucket of cold water telling the patient that they have to make some lifestyle changes to ensure their heart gets healthy and stays healthy. Encourage your loved one to follow the doctor's recommendations, and maybe try some new recipes.

But don't nag them. Instead, tell them you need for them to comply with the doctor's recommendations because you love them and you want them to stick around as long as possible. Otherwise, your heart may break.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of Northshore Patient Advocates LLC (NShore). She is also founder and CEO of Nurse Advocate Entrepreneur, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. Teri offers a free phone consultation to newspaper readers as well as to nurses interested in becoming advocates. Reach her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com.

GARDEN ■ from page 4

Fertilize with an all purpose houseplant fertilizer once a month. New growth should appear by the end of May.

After the danger of frost has passed, move the plant outdoors. Continue to water but increase fertilization to every two weeks. Pinch plants in late June or early July to promote bushy growth. Bring the plant indoors as temperatures fall in September.

The poinsettia is photoperiodic, and long nights of uninterrupted darkness encourage it to bloom. Bracts will turn red and the small yellow flowers in the center will form. Most people get on a 5 p.m.-8 a.m. schedule beginning on Oct. 1 and continue it for eight-10 weeks until color shows on the bracts.

Placing the plant in a closet or basement with no light interruption will work fine. It is a commitment, that's for sure. Night temperatures should be no higher than 70 degrees or flowering may be delayed.

Good luck; I bet you will be successful this year!

Beverly has me stumped!! She wrote in with this question: “After my Christmas cactus has bloomed, I get very tiny buds (like pimples) all over the plant. However, they quickly fall off so no more blooms. Can you explain what to do about this?”

This is a tricky one, Beverly! I am wondering if this is a newer breed of Christmas Cactus that is expected to bloom over a longer period of time than the old-fashioned types.

Usually buds fall off if there is a change somehow. Overwatering, underwatering? Perhaps a change in location whereby the plant is now near a heater when it wasn't before. Or maybe a change in fertilization practices?

That's about all I can come up with. I do hope that once blooming is over your plant remains healthy and provides many flowers for years to come!

This came to the Garden Lady from Gary: “I enjoy reading your articles.

Is there value or harm mixing old coffee grounds into your flower or vegetable gardens? Thanks!”

Thank you for your compliments on the column! My dad used to sprinkle coffee grounds around our blueberry bushes when I was a kid.

It was his theory that the acidic grounds would be good for blueberry bushes which by nature are acid-loving. Well, it turns out that most of the acid from the coffee grounds is leached into the water when the coffee is brewed, leaving a near neutral product that aligns with pH of most common vegetables and flowers!

Coffee grounds are high in nitrogen and have lesser, but still respectable amounts of the other two major nutrients, phosphorus and potassium, as well as many of the micronutrients. The nitrogen is “tied up,” however, and not readily available to plants.

It must be composted first to make it available. So, I would recommend you either add it to a compost pile or mix it in with other mulches you may be using on top of the soil.

It can be combined with wood chips, grass clippings or chopped leaves to make a great and fertile mulch, that, as it breaks down, will add organic matter to the soil and be a nutritious food for your plants and the earthworms. In fact, folks who vermicompost (keep a worm bin) notice just how much the worms love coffee grounds mixed in with other food waste.

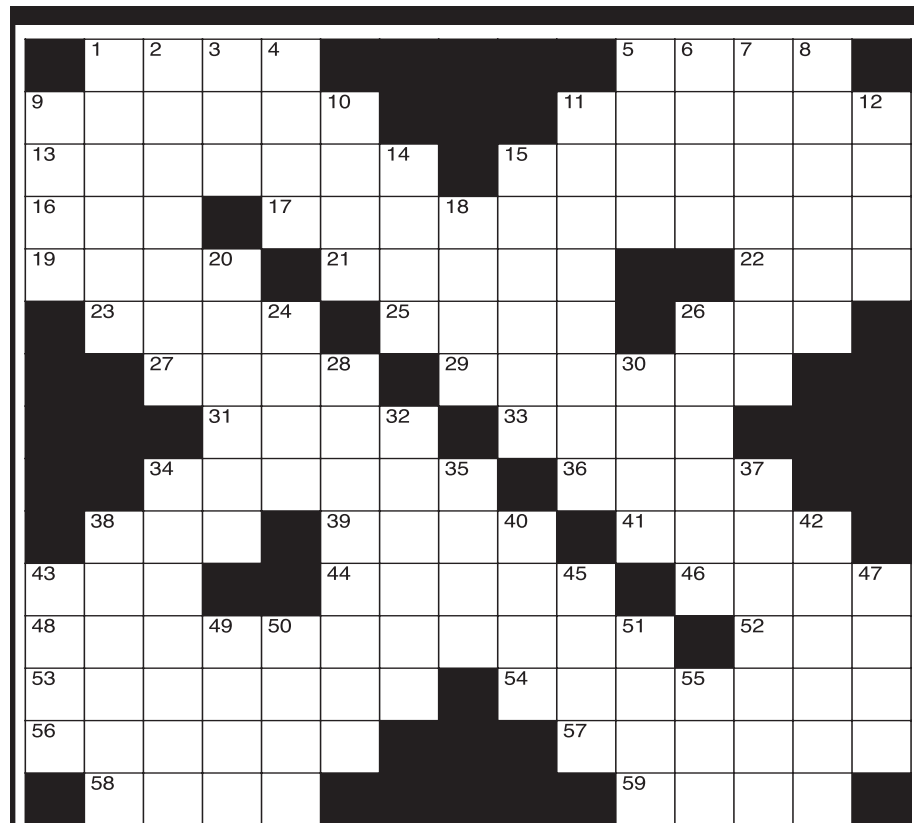
You've encouraged me to get a bit more serious about putting our household coffee grounds to good use!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.

SECURITY ■ from page 4

The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It

presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisior@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.



CLUES ACROSS

- “Loser” rocker
- Partner to relaxation
- Mixing
- Winged nut
- Expression of blame
- Vast ocean
- Comedienne
- Comedian
- Meat from a pig (French)
- Related
- Rocker
- Surprise completely
- Loon
- Canister
- Large, deep-bodied fish
- Takes forcefully
- Oil cartel
- Palmer and

- Hepburn are two
- More than one purposefully
- Pitching staccato
- Type of sword
- Witnesses
- Body part
- Mixes slowly
- Satisfy
- Strong belief
- One's physique (slang)
- More frightening
- Soup cracker
- Teaches
- One who carries something
- Actor Sean
- Changes

- Type of gene
- Door handle
- Competition
- Muslim ruler title
- Hunting expeditions
- Large mollusk
- Bind securely
- Former U.S. presidential candidate
- 2-point plays in football
- Breezed through
- Type setting
- Felt for
- Codified rules
- Small dome
- Chevrotain
- Male reproductive gland
- Controversial beliefs
- Z Z Z

- One who confines another
- Bishop
- Garlands
- Bird that flies by the coast
- Optical device
- Greek goddess of discord
- Some are “Rolling”
- Formerly (archaic)
- Thrust a knife into
- German river
- Atomic #26
- Make a grotesque face
- Primordial matter of the universe
- Chinese philosophical principle

New business Saucy Mama holds grand opening

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – A new grab and go Italian restaurant opened on Cooper Street, called the Saucy Mama.

The restaurant is owned by wife and husband Dawn and Michael McBride.

The McBrides have both been in the food for over 25 years now, and are excited to have their own building for their work.

Prior to opening the restaurant, the McBrides ran the Saucy Mama out of a food truck in Southwick. They will continue using this food truck while also operating out of their restaurant.

“I took our savings and bought a little trailer,” Dawn said. “We fixed it up and we opened the Saucy Mama food trailer in July of 2021...then it took off and it’s been really successful.”

As the trailer continued to do well, the McBrides knew that they wanted to continue to expand their business. That is when they decided to try a grab and go restaurant.

“We wanted to do a grab and go because...this way we can still have family time and we can do things at our own speed,” Dawn said.

Once they had enough to take this step they looked for a location near Agawam, Westfield or West Springfield to open their shop.

They did a soft launch of their restaurant back in December and are grateful for the community support thus far.

“Valenti’s Pizza shop was here so pretty much every customer walks in and says they used to work at Valenti’s or they were there every day,” Dawn said. “So I think people are just really glad to have Italian food back.”

Moving forward, Dawn and Michael hope to continue to encourage the community to come to the business.

One way Dawn plans to do this is by holding cooking lessons for kids within the restaurant.



Mayor Christopher Johnson as well as other community and state leaders gathered at the Saucy Mama for their grand opening.



Italian grab and go restaurant Saucy Mama is open for business.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA

“I really want to start with children’s cooking classes,” Dawn said. “I want to do basic stuff and then if it takes off, we’ll do grown-up cooking classes as well.”

Dawn also encourages any local artisans to reach out to her or her husband if they would like to sell their items at their restaurant.

“I want to load up the merchandising shelf here with things from other small businesses,” Dawn said.

One thing the McBrides feel makes their restaurant stand out is that they offer vegan, vegetarian and gluten free options at their restaurant so people of a variety of dietary needs can enjoy their food.

“We are always going to have vegetarian, vegan or gluten free options,” Dawn said. (6:45)

The McBrides are grateful for the support from their families and friends as they have gone through this process.

They also send their thanks to CommonCapital, which is a nonprofit community loan fund and SBA microlender.

This nonprofit helped to give them the loan and advice they needed in order to open their restaurant.

“They loan you the money and then they help you succeed,” Dawn said. (5:45)

CommonCapital focuses on helping businesses that can’t get loans from the bank to reach their goals. They not only give them the money to get them started, but also the support they need.

“We hire accountants, marketing folks, operations, human resources consultants to help the business,” Director of Outreach and Communications Roberto Nieves said. “We help them get all these added resources so they can be better businesses.”

It is thanks to their help that the McBrides were able to get their business to where it is today.

Now, as they work on continuing to spread the word about their restaurant and to get things up and running, they welcome anyone in the community to stop by and grab a bite of some delicious Italian food.



The McBride family and friends were delighted to cut the ribbon to open their business, the Saucy Mama.



Senator John Velis presented the McBride family with a proclamation welcoming them to town.

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Agawam Advertiser

SPORTS

Orioles upset girls

By **Tim Peterson**
Sports Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – Five of the previous six girls' basketball games played between Central Division rivals Agawam and Belchertown were decided by ten or fewer points.

After losing the first meeting of the 2024-25 regular season against the Brownies by three points in overtime, the Lady Orioles evened the season series with a 46-39 home win, last Thursday night.

"We played very poorly at Pope Francis the other night, so we really needed a victory in tonight's game," said Belchertown head coach Jason Woodcock. "We did get off to a slow start, but we were able to battle back."

Prior to the opening tip-off, the members of the Jabish Brook Middle School chorus did an outstanding job of singing the National Anthem.

Belchertown, who lost at Pope Francis, 44-37, three nights earlier, had a 7-3 overall record and a 6-3 league record. While they still have a slim chance of tying Agawam for the league title, the Lady Orioles' main ob-

jective is to qualify for both the Western Mass. Class B and the Division 3 state tournaments.

BASKETBALL | page 8



Katelyn Cleavall makes her way down the court.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Brownies wrestling team squeeze by Falcons

AGAWAM – It was a playoff atmosphere at Agawam High School as the Brownies wrestling team hosted league rival Minnechaug for a dual meet last Wednesday night.

It came down to the last couple of matches, but Agawam eeked out a 36-32 win.

The Brownies dominated the early part of the meet, win-

ning the first three matches and going up 21-0.

But Minnechaug made its way back in the meet with some wins in the middle weights.

The meet got very contentious at times, even resulting in the ejection of a Minnechaug coach due to excessive arguing with the referee.

Agawam falls short against Taconic

AGAWAM – Last Tuesday evening, the Agawam High School boys basketball team suffered a rare setback against Taconic High School 69-62. It was only Agawam's third loss of the season. Ironically, all three of Agawam's losses this season have been at home.

Agawam is 10-3 overall this

season and has already qualified for the state tournament. Following the Taconic match-up, Agawam rebounded with wins over Sci-Tech and Chicopee later in the week.

The Brownies were scheduled for a long time off and are not back in action until Jan. 28 against Pittsfield at 7 p.m.



Elijah Maldonado shoots between defenders.



Brody Sheehan holds the ball away from a Taconic guard.



Dylan Jorgensen extends for layup.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



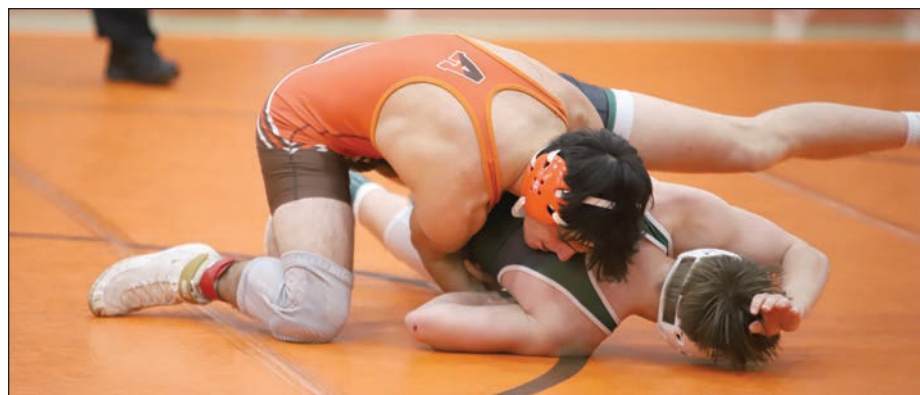
Owen Lavelle rushes around a guard and heads into the arc.



Gavin Cruz shoots around the perimeter.



Andrew Amato goes for the pinfall.



Joe Breault takes the leverage after a takedown.



Lincoln Despard prevents his opponent from getting the takedown.



Kaleb Progulskis locks up in the opening match between Agawam and Minnechaug.



Jordin Agosto locks up with an opponent.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Sports

Thompson Speedway to feature 10 events in 2025

THOMPSON, Conn. – After weeks of careful planning, the American-Canadian Tour (ACT) and Pro All Star Series (PASS) have finalized and released the 2025 schedule for Thompson Speedway. Beginning in late March through Columbus Day weekend in October, rolling thunder returns to the ‘Quiet Corner of Connecticut’ for ten individual dates in 2025 including the annual Icebreaker and Sunoco World Series weekends along with a return to monthly Wednesday night racing.

Everything begins on Saturday, March 29 with the first of two days celebrating the 51st Icebreaker weekend to kick off the 2025 New England racing season! Saturday is headlined by the return of the Monaco Modified Tri-Track Series for the first of two spectacular showings on the Thompson highbanks in 2025 plus the PASS Super Late Models, Evolve Bank Pro Truck Challenge and R&R Race Parts NH Open Street Stock Series! Saturday’s showcase also kicks off the 2025 track championship season for

the Sunoco Modifieds and Mini Stocks plus the introduction of Thompson Speedway’s newest division, the Thunderstock Crown Vic Division!

Sunday, March 30 is headlined by the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour Icebreaker 150 plus the second Sunoco Modified event of Icebreaker weekend along with the Thompson Late Models, Street Stocks and SK Light Modifieds for a spectacular closer to the season’s rip-roaring start!

The Monaco Modifieds return to headline the first Wednesday night action on May 14, complete with all six Thompson track championship divisions before the fan-favorite Dash for Cash Series returns for the first of three Wednesday Night programs on June 18, complete with the Evolve Bank Pro Truck Challenge and six Thompson divisions. The Dash for Cash 50 lap sprints will also return with the NEMA Lite special on July 9, the Wednesday, September 17 showdown and the Friday of Sunoco World Series weekend.

The NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour is back for their traditional midweek show-down on August 6 headlined alongside the New England Supermodified Series and six Thompson Speedway divisions for a thrilling midweek special that cannot be missed!

The 63rd Sunoco World Series of Speedway Racing begins on Friday, October 10 headlined by the Dash for Cash \$5,000 to win sprint plus the R&R Open Street Stocks and Senior Tour Auto Racers (STAR) alongside track championship finales for the Late Models and Mini Stocks. The Thunderstock Crown Vics will also run on both Friday and Saturday of World Series weekend.

Saturday afternoon is headlined by the incredible 75th annual Race of Champions 150 held for the first time at Thompson Speedway with a \$12,500 prize head for the winner of the iconic Al Gerber Memorial trophy! Saturday also features the championship finale for the New England Supermodified Series, along with the Evolve Bank Pro Truck Challenge and Harry

Kourafas Memorial 22 for the New England Pro-4 Modifieds. The Sunoco Modifieds will compete in their first of two days during the Sunoco World Series and the SK Light Modifieds will crown their 2025 track champion.

Sunday, October 12 will feature the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour Sunoco World Series 150 with the Sunoco Modifieds and Street Stocks crowning their track champions with the NEMA Lites rounding out the season-closing program.

“We’ve built up a schedule we think works for everyone,” said PASS President Tom Mayberry. “There’s a little bit of everything for each event that we believe works for both fans and racers alike.”

“Both Tom and I have had quite a few conversations with competitors and 2025 looks promising,” said ACT managing partner Cris Michaud. “The return of the Dash for Cash races and expanding the Crown Vic races are something we’re looking forward to seeing grow at Thompson next season.”

Thunderbirds win offensive slugfest over Bridgeport Islanders

BRIDGEPORT, Conn. – The Springfield Thunderbirds (17-15-2-1) had six players record multiple points in a 6-4 triumph over the Bridgeport Islanders (8-25-2-2) on Saturday night at Total Mortgage Arena.

The T-Birds and Islanders’ netminders had all the answers in the opening 20 minutes, as Colten Ellis picked up where he left off from his shutout performance on Wednesday with 10 more stops in the opening frame. In the Bridgeport net, Hunter Miska made his first AHL start in nearly three years and was up to every Springfield challenge with 11 first-period stops.

The night marked the much-anticipated debut of Blues’ 2023 first-round pick Otto Stenberg, and the 19-year-old wasted little

time in period two making his mark on the game, taking a drop feed from Hugh McGing in the left circle and roofing a wrister short-side on Miska for his first AHL goal on his first shot at 2:43.

Unfortunately, the excitement of Stenberg’s opening tally was quickly tempered when Chris Terry evened the slate with a power play goal at 3:29 for Bridgeport, snapping Ellis’s shutout streak of over 83 minutes.

The T-Birds returned fire at 8:56 when Hunter Skinner leaned into a one-time slapper off a Matthew Peca drop pass, beating Miska over the stick hand to give Springfield a 2-1 advantage.

Once again, however, the Islander power play had a rebuttal. This time, a Samuel

Bolduc point wrister eluded Ellis and got the game back even, 2-2, at 13:50.

Springfield continued to be just a tick faster than the Islanders in the see-saw second frame as Stenberg let a wrister fly from the left side at 15:45, creating a rebound for McGing to bury behind Miska and restore the T-Birds’ lead.

Finally, the Islanders could not get the game back to a stalemate, and Alek Kaskimaki lifted a backhand under the crossbar on a net-crashing play up the left side at 19:20 to send Springfield to the second intermission dressing room ahead 4-2.

Bridgeport still did not keel over, and with the teams skating 4-on-4 in the opening minute of the third, Liam Foudy capitalized

on a rebound outside the paint to make it a 4-3 contest.

MacKenzie MacEachern further bolstered the Springfield advantage when he picked the puck off from Bolduc and cruised in on Miska before beating the netminder glove side on a breakaway to make it a 5-3 game at 7:33.

McGing capped off his best night of the season with his second goal of the evening in the dying seconds of a power play at 11:13 of the third to up the lead to 6-3.

Eetu Liukas would get one back for the Islanders with 1:03 to play, but it was too late for the home team as Springfield cashed in its fourth straight win and second in four nights over Bridgeport.

BASKETBALL ■ from page 7

If Agawam (9-2, 7-1) had won the game, they would’ve locked up sole possession of the league title and qualified for the Division 2 state tournament.

“I thought it was a very evenly played game tonight, but they just made a couple more shots than we did down the stretch,” said Agawam head coach Tim Murphy. “We now need to win one of our last two league games to clinch the league title outright. We also should qualify for both the Western Mass. Class A tournament and the Division 2 state tournament.”

The Brownies, who defeated the Lady Orioles 50-47 in overtime at the end of December, shared the league title with Pope Francis last year. Their final two league games will be at Monument Mountain on January 30 and at home against Mount Greylock on February 10, which is the Brownies final game of the regular season.

Both Agawam and Belchertown were missing key players in last Thursday’s contest.

Senior guard Marlee Montagna, who was the Brownies leading scorer this season, suffered a season ending ACL injury to her right knee in a 46-36 win at Drury on January 10. Montagna also had a team leading 18 3-pointers.

“This was the first game that we played without Marlee and it’s a very big loss for us,” Murphy said. “She was averaging 13 points per game, so everyone else will need to step up offensively.”

Junior guard Isabella Laprise scored seven of her season-high 18 points during the first quarter, which helped the Brownies take a 12-5 lead. Laprise scored a career-high 22 points in a road win against Mount Greylock as a sophomore.

Senior center Mia Canavan chipped in with eight points, while junior forward Sophia Laprise scored all seven of her points before halftime. Rounding out the scoring column for the visiting team were senior

guard Kate Cleavall (4 points) and senior forward Hannah Solitario (2 points).

Belchertown freshman guard Kina Roy, who started the first six games of the regular season, missed her fourth game against Agawam due to an injury.

“Kina was playing very well before suffering an injury at practice two weeks ago,” Woodcock said. “She was a spark-plug, and it has been a little bit difficult not for us having her on the court.”

The Lady Orioles’ two double digit scorers were senior forward Chloe LaRoche with 15 points and freshman forward Aubrey Klingensmith with 12 points.

LaRoche, who has scored more than 800 career points, made her team’s only field goal of the opening quarter. She also made two of the Lady Orioles’ five 3-pointers in the second quarter. Klingensmith, who scored a game-high 22 points in the first meeting against Agawam, also made a pair of 3-pointers during that quarter.

Sophomore point guard Morghan Litz (6 points) hit the other one, which closed the gap to 23-20 at halftime.

Less than three minutes into the third quarter, LaRoche made a rare four point play. She was fouled while making a 3-pointer and made the bonus free throw giving her team a 28-25 lead.

Senior guard Logan Moses scored five of her eight points at the end of the third quarter, which helped the Lady Orioles build a 33-29 lead entering the final quarter.

“Logan is the unsung hero of our team this season,” Woodcock said. “She does everything that we need her to do on the court. We’re a much different team without her.”

At the start of the fourth quarter, Litz hit a 3-pointer from the left side pushing the lead to seven points.

The Brownies, who only made three field goals during the third quarter,

scored the game’s next six points in less than two minutes.

Canavan began the run with a lay-up. Then Isabella Laprise also made back-to-back lay-ups closing the gap to 36-35 with 4:30 remaining in regulation.

Agawam was only trailing, 40-39 with 2:50 left before Klingensmith knocked down a 3-pointer from the right corner. A little more than a minute later, Klingensmith made a base-line lay-up before making a free throw.

“My 3-pointer late in the fourth quarter gave us a little bit of a cushion,” Klingensmith said. “I really enjoy being a member of this basketball team. Everyone has been very supportive.”

The last time that the Belchertown girls’ basketball team celebrated a victory against Agawam was on January 6, 2023. The final score of that contest, which took place at Agawam’s Cliff Kibbe Gymnasium, was 40-37.



Isabella Laprise gets the open shot.



Sophia Laprise takes the one-hander from the side.



Carlina Calabrese attempts a three-pointer.



Mia Canavan looks to shoot around a defender.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY

Sports

Worcester Railers grab point, but suffer loss to Wheeling in OT

WORCESTER – The Worcester Railers beat the Wheeling Nailers, 3-4 in overtime, Sunday afternoon at the DCU Center.

Not a typo, no. It is just that all things considered, the point Worcester earned was one of the best points a Railers team will ever get out of a hockey game.

They trailed the best team in the league, 3-1, with less than five minutes to go in the third period. Then, at 15:23, Jordan Kaplan converted a shorthanded breakaway to make it a one-goal game.

With goaltender Hugo Ollas on the bench, Worcester took it down to the limit and Anthony Repaci scored with four seconds to go in regulation. He converted a pass from Griffin Loughran and beat Taylor Gauthier from the bottom of the right circle with a low shot.

It was the latest game-tying goal in franchise history.

“I actually thought we had a lot more time than we did,” Repaci said, “maybe something like 20 seconds. That was cutting it close but it was an exciting finish.”

Yes, you might say that.

That Matt Koopman scored for Wheeling to win it just 49 seconds into overtime was a downer, but it did not ruin the day, all things considered.

Even before the opening puck drop the Railers were in a hole.

It was their third game in less than 72 hours, and it was against the team with the best winning percentage in the ECHL. Two of their defensemen, Matias Rajaniemi and Cam McDonald, were called up by Bridgeport before the game. Worcester replaced them with one defenseman, Anthony Hora up from the SPHL and making his ECHL debut. So the Railers dressed only 17 skaters.

With McDonald and Rajaniemi in the

American Hockey League, there were no Bridgeport contract players in uniform. The only NHL contract player was goalie Hugo Ollas. He is assigned here by the Rangers.

Worcester responded with a great effort from the start although it took a while for everything to fall into place.

“For us playing a three in three, with the effort they put out, I just wanted them to play to the wire,” coach Nick Tuzzolino said. “If the score had stayed 3-1 I probably would have been just as happy. I thought they played well. That’s a pretty gutsy effort against a really good team.”

Over the last two weekends Worcester took six of a possible eight points versus Wheeling. The Railers extended their overall points streak to eight games. They are 5-0-3 in those games. It is their longest points streak since they won nine in a row

to open the 2022-23 season.

It was 0-0 after 20 minutes. David Jankowski scored for Wheeling at 8:55 of the second period. Cole Donhauser answered for Worcester at 14:26, snapping a 12-game goals drought. Manny De St. Phalie’s goal at 15:48 allowed the Nailers to take a 2-1 lead into the third period.

When Chris Ortiz made it 3-1 at 6:21, it seemed unlikely that the Railers would have enough petroleum in the tank to come back. Kaplan changed that perspective, then Repaci wound up rescuing the point.

It allowed Worcester to earn five of a possible six points on the weekend with all three games ending in 4-3 scores.

The All-Star break is here. It will give the Railers time to rest up from their dramatic weekend, but Tuzzolino isn’t going anywhere.

Schools & Youth

Emily Ball named to Dean’s List

FRANKLIN – Dean College is pleased to announce that Emily Ball of Feeding Hills has earned a place on the Dean’s List for the Fall 2024 semester. Students named to the Dean’s List have demonstrated a serious commitment to their studies while at Dean College.

Jacob Barber earns Dean’s List honors

BRISTOL, RI – Jacob Barber, of Feeding Hills, has been named to the Fall 2024 Dean’s List at Roger Williams University, in Bristol, R.I. Full-time students who complete 12 or more credits per semester and earn a grade point average of 3.4 or higher are placed on the Dean’s List that semester.

Eastern student Morgan Anjos makes Dean’s List

WILLIMANTIC, Conn. – Eastern Connecticut State University recently released its Dean’s List for the fall 2024 semester, in which more than 1,300 students were recognized for maintaining high GPAs.

Among them is Morgan Anjos of Feeding Hills, a senior who majors in Accounting.

To qualify for Dean’s List, full-time students must complete a minimum of 12 credits in letter-graded courses with an average GPA of 3.5 or higher in the semester. Part-time students are eligible if they’ve accumulated 15 or more credits of letter-graded coursework with an average GPA of 3.5 or higher.

SNHU announces Fall President’s List

MANCHESTER, NH – It is with great pleasure that Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) congratulates the following students on being named to the Fall 2024 President’s List. The fall terms run from September to December.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.700 and above for the reporting term are named to the President’s List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer.

Nicholas Crescentini of Feeding Hills, Timothy Goudreau of Feeding Hills, Lydia Velazquez of Agawam, Dylan Drake of Agawam and Lita Roy of Agawam.

SNHU announces Fall 2024 Dean’s List

MANCHESTER, NH – It is with great pleasure that Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) congratulates the following students on being named to the Fall 2024 Dean’s List. The fall terms run from September to December.

Full-time undergraduate students who have earned a minimum grade-point average of 3.500 to 3.699 for the reporting term are named to the Dean’s List. Full-time status is achieved by earning 12 credits over each 16-week term or paired 8-week terms grouped in fall, winter/spring, and summer.

Joe Jendrysik of Agawam, Serena Croteau of Agawam and Erin Mikuszewski of Agawam.

TRIPS ■ from page 1

community out of everyone who goes on the trips. Both Locke and Sorcinelli will be going to each one to help those attending, and they are excited to get to know everyone.

“We’re hoping to get repeat people and build a nice community where they know people, they feel safe and that we can look

out for them,” Sorcinelli said.

In total, Locke and Sorcinelli have seven day trips planned and they are entertaining the idea of adding an overnight trip.

After the reveal parties, people are welcome to put down a \$20 deposit on any of the trips they are interested in going on.

To help with the total cost for the different trips, Locke and Sorcinelli are offering a variety of payment plans.

People can pay for all the trips at once, make two separate payments or make four payments.

“We want to be conscious that things are not cheap anymore and...we want to give them some options,” Locke said.

People need to RSVP in order to attend the reveal parties. To do so, they can either email Locke and Sorcinelli at InsidersTravel2025@gmail.com.

Or they can call Locke at 413-478-4608 or Sorcinelli at 413-478-2834.

They can also contact Sorcinelli and Locke if they are interested in attending the trips but are unable to make any of the reveal parties.

Locke and Sorcinelli send out weekly emails, and anyone interested in the trips are welcome to sign up for those so they can remain informed.

GRADUATION ■ from page 1

locations along with high school principal Jim Blain.

“Alternative sites were researched, we had two venues presented to parents and their families for input,” Hoffman said. “One was School Street Park here in Agawam and the other was Symphony Hall in Springfield.”

Following this research, Hoffman and Blain ultimately decided to have graduation at Symphony Hall. This was due to a variety of factors.

“My recommendation for this year is based on the following factors,” Hoffman said. “Having an indoor venue takes away the variable of weather. Grass at School Street Park has more concern with rain than the turf field in the stadium.”

On top of this factor, Hoffman also sent out surveys to high school seniors and their families.

“Parents were pretty much 50/50 for School Street and Symphony Hall and 68% of students surveyed picked Symphony Hall over School Street Park,” Hoffman said.

Given this data, and the fact that the district wants the ceremony to ultimately be for the students and families of the class of 2025, Hoffman and Blain decided that Symphony Hall was the best option.

Hoffman is aware that this may disappoint some families, but she feels that overall the district did the best they could given

the situation.

While she is aware that many families would want the ceremony to stay in Agawam, given the above factors she and Blain think Symphony Hall is ultimately what is best for the community.

The high school project construction could not be delayed for graduation as the project itself is on a very tight time schedule.

According to Mayor Christopher Johnson, even a slight delay in the construction could set the overall project back by several months.

This is because the project timeline is dependent on the students being able to move into the newly constructed part of the building in January of 2027 following their winter break. Therefore, if they are unable to move in at that time, the project would be delayed by several months until the end of the spring semester. With all of this in mind, the school committee voted unanimously in favor of this new venue.

“I think it is a good choice, Symphony Hall is a beautiful place and we used to have our graduations there,” School Committee Member Shelly Reed said. “It is professional, we don’t have to worry about weather and there is a lot of room there.”

The graduation is scheduled for Saturday, June 14 at 1 p.m. Families will be able to park in the MGM parking garage or at the various parking spots available along the street.

POETRY ■ from page 1

and analyzed it and then memorized it,” Patterson said.

During this time the teachers at AHS worked to help prepare their students for the contest.

“It can be a whole class instruction where you attempt to memorize a poem as a class before memorizing one separately,” Patterson said. “It also can be giving tips on how to motorize, how to stand and deliver a poem effectively...and on how to interpret a poem.”

Patterson feels that this competition is a great opportunity for students to practice both literacy and public speaking skills.

“Students are looking at poetry, which is a form of literature that doesn’t always get as much attention,” Patterson said. “They are also being asked to stand and practice recitation, which is a public speaking skill.”

Throughout her time doing this competition, Patterson has seen many students do it multiple times and grow through each year.

“We have students who do the competition every year...and you see them develop confidence as speakers and you see them develop a greater understanding and love of poetry,” Patterson said.

She also is glad that this can provide students with an opportunity to gain an appreciation of poetry.

“It is nice to take a moment to look at

a piece of literature that is thoughtful and maybe takes more time to understand it, and it is worth the effort when they finally unlock the meaning and mystery of the poem,” Patterson said. “It helps us pay attention more, which I think in our busy lives is something we can all use and appreciate.”

In a world where so many things are fast paced, Patterson sees poetry as a great way to slow down and enjoy literature.

The school has been doing this competition for 10 years, since Patterson came to the school and suggested it as a good activity for the students.

Prior to coming to Agawam she had done the competition in Springfield and thought it could be great to bring to town.

She has enjoyed doing it each year and seeing the students grow.

She is also grateful for the support from her colleagues as they all work together to make this event possible for the students.

“It is a huge team effort,” Patterson said. “We have a group of English teachers who have brought the contest to their classroom every year. We have a group of teachers that help out at the event behind the stage...it’s just a nice moment for a lot of teachers, staff and administration who support this to come together.”

If people are interested in learning more about Poetry Out Loud, they can go to the website at <https://www.poetryoutloud.org/>.

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Obituary

Albin Emmons Bulson, 86

While filled with gratitude for his full life, the family of Albin Emmons Bulson of Dunnellon, FL, is saddened to announce his passing on December 23, 2024, at the age of 86, after a long illness.



He is survived by his beloved wife of 59 years, Antoinette (Fedor), daughters, Diana (Mark) Degon and Suzanne Bulson, granddaughters, Emily and Haley Degon, sister, Christine Bulson, and cousins, Bruce Milavec and Cynthia Seward.

Born in Cooperstown, NY, on September 5, 1938, to Edith and Emmons Bulson, Al grew up in Worcester, NY, graduating from Worcester Central School in 1956. He earned a degree in accounting in 1960 from Clarkson University and was licensed as a CPA shortly after. His career took him first to Coopers & Lybrand, then to The Milton Bradley Company in East Longmeadow, MA, and finally to Hasbro Inc. in Pawtucket, RI. Upon retirement, Al and Toni settled in Dunnellon, FL.

Al was an avid golfer and skier. He made lifetime friends wherever he lived, and he will be missed by college friends, members of "The Group," and many close friends in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Florida.

Al and Toni traveled extensively, visiting many locations in Europe, China, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, including many visits with their families in New York, New England, and California. One travel highlight was a 50th wedding anniversary cruise of the Hawaiian Islands.

Friends and family are invited to a celebration of life service on Monday, January 27, 2025 at 11 a.m. at the Christ the King Anglican Church in Ocala, FL. A spring interment will be held at the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Agawam, MA. In lieu of flowers, Al can be remembered with donations to Clarkson University, Hospice of Marion County (FL), and Hurricane Relief - Samaritan's Purse.

Sylvia Louise Rafferty Deliso, 95

Sylvia Louise Rafferty Deliso, 95, of Agawam, Mass., died on January 14, 2025. Born in Holyoke, Sylvia graduated UMASS and resided in Agawam since 1955. Sylvia was lovingly cared for by her son, Thomas, in her later years, at her home in Agawam. Predeceased by her husband, Benjamin Deliso, Sylvia was the mother of Elizabeth Deliso (James), Andrew (deceased), Thomas, Katherine Richter (Scott). Sylvia was active in: Springfield Weavers Guild, Springfield Symphony

Women's League, Agawam Library Board of Trustees. Sylvia was a librarian at the Agawam Middle School for many years. Sylvia leaves her grandchildren: Samuel B. Clement, Olivia L. Clement and Lily G. Richter. A private life celebration will be held at a later date. New England Funeral & Cremation Center, 25 Mill Street, Springfield, MA has been entrusted with the arrangements. Please visit Sylvia's memorial page at www.nefcc.net for a full tribute.

Public Notices

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Division Docket No. HD24P2682EA Estate of:

ROBERT E. SACHEN
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To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of

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 Petitioner **ANGELIQUE C. EARLY of HOLYOKE, MA**

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ested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.
 01/23/2025

Robert "Bob" William Kadis, 86

Robert "Bob" William Kadis died on January 10, 2025 at the age of 86. Bob was a beloved son, grandson, husband, life partner, brother, father, uncle, brother-in-law, father-in-law, grandfather, great grandfather, philanthropist, and friend. He was a Software Developer, WSSI business owner, and a proud Penn State alumnus. He was Chairman of the Agawam Cultural Council, and served on the Board of the Agawam Council on Aging and Friends of the Agawam Public Library. Bob and his wife Betty were Co-Creators of the "Applause Series" which he continued to run with his Life Partner, Donna.



He worked hard to produce multiple Art and Photography shows. He took pride in his significant collection of local artists' works. Bob was known as a good man and friend to everyone that had the pleasure of his company.

His family and friends are invited to attend Bob's memorial gathering on Sunday, January 26, 2025 from 1 to 3:30 p.m. at Tansey's Catered Table, 485 Springfield St., Agawam. Memorial donations may be made to the Friends of the Agawam Senior Center. You may contact Bob's family at: kadisfamily38@gmail.com

DEATH NOTICE

Bulson, Albin Emmons
 Died Dec. 23
 Celebration of life Jan. 27

Deliso, Sylvia Louise Rafferty
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Kadis, Robert "Bob" William
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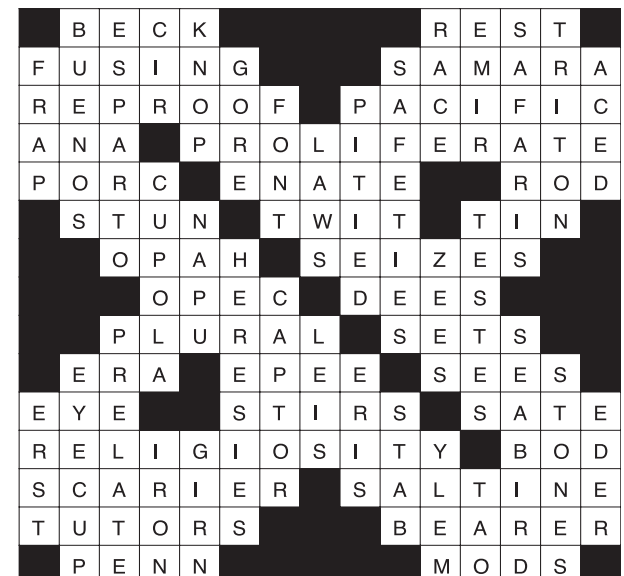
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CODE: E1514638



Watching the sunrise from the summit of Mt. Jackson, NH.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

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ered trees, creating an aura of mystery as the long shadows stretched deep into the blackened forest. Our headlamps ignited the untouched snow on the sides of the trail, giving the illusion of walking on a smooth white carpet of infinite shimmering diamonds.

When we finally broke tree line, the crescent moon and twinkling stars welcomed us to a dark and windless summit. I stood, unmoving, serenaded by the whisper of starlight in the heavens above me.

Eight years of hiking in every season. Numerous hiking lists. Thousands of miles. Climbing the second tallest mountain in the continental United States. Section hiking the Appalachian Trail.

Every hike. Every backpacking trip. Every footprint left on every mountain.

Each one propelling us forward to the next... eventually leading us to this singular unforgettable moment.

A moment of being suspended in time, somewhere between our very first hike and what will someday be our very last. Suspended between the valley below and the heavens above while basking under the brilliance of a million twinkling stars against the backdrop of a black velvet sky, while waiting for the sun to awaken the earth in a blaze of fiery brilliance.

And although we hope that we'll have the opportunity to experience a moment like this again, we've learned the hard way that there are no guarantees in this life.

So we settle in for however long it takes. We inhale the clean mountain air. We feel the cold kiss our cheeks and the silence fill our ears. We wait for the sun to silence the

stars and breathe life onto the earth.

We remain snuggled in our lofty bright green sleeping bag on a snowy perch atop a 4,000-foot mountain for over four hours, unwilling to leave lest we miss one single minute of the magic that is unfolding in front of us.

And as we watch the black of night turn into the blazing red of dawn, we know that for the rest of our lives, for as long as there is breath in our lungs and blood running through our veins...

WE. WILL. NEVER. FORGET. THIS. MOMENT. See you in the wild places, my friends!

To read more about our hiking adventures, follow us on Instagram @morethan-themountain.



A visit from the infamous Grey Jays, with Mt Washington in the distance.



Snuggled in our sleeping bags on our snowy perch.