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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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AHS students compete in

Poetry Out Loud

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Students from Agawam High School competed against one another in a Poetry Out Loud competition on Thursday, Jan. 23.

A total of 21 students took to the stage in the AHS auditorium to read their prepared poems for the competition.

“It’s always amazing,” English Teacher Rachel Patterson said. “I don’t have them all as students, but I am proud and grateful that

they all took the risk and the opportunity to do this.”

After each student read a poem, they were judged by a panel on their physical presence, voice and articulation, interpretation of the poem, evidence of understanding, accuracy, and

overall performance.

Based on these scores, 12 students were selected from the 21 to compete in a second round with a new poem.

From those 12 students, two honorable mentions, one runner up and one overall winner were

selected.

The honorable mentions were Hazel Meyer and Maddy Elwell. The runner up was Marissa Leary and the overall winner was Abigail Drumm.

This decision made Drumm the three time winner of the AHS Poetry Out Loud competition.

She was honored to have been selected for this position once more.

“It is kind of unreal, I was not expecting it,” Drumm said.

Drumm will next compete in the district level competition and, if she does well there, could even move onto states and then nationals.



Students from Agawam High School took to the stage for their Poetry Out Loud competition.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA

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Town still has shortage of plow contractors

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Currently Agawam has a shortage of contracted plow contractors.

In recent years, according to Johnson, the number of available plow contractors has been on a decline.

This year, Agawam has 17 plow contractors hired. Last year, there were 25 to 30 and in previous years there had been 40 to 50.

Johnson believes that this decline is due to the lack of plowable events in recent years. Due to this lack of snow, there is a lack of work for the private contractors.

These plow contractors have to carry additional insurance riders on their vehicles, so if they don’t get enough work it is not worth it to pay for the insurance

“It becomes a situation where if I sign up and I have to pay the additional insurance, do I get enough work based on mother nature to justify the expense?” Johnson said.

At the start of this year, Johnson kept this additional cost in mind and offered a bonus to plow contractors who signed on early and who would go out for at least 75% of the plowable events.

This bonus was intended to cover the cost of the additional insurance so that plow contractors would not have to add that cost into their decision.

“To be frank, it didn’t help,” Johnson said.

Even with the additional bonus, the town has not gotten enough plow contractors.

To make up for this, Johnson has had the Department of Public Works plow workers do additional pre-treatments before an anticipated winter storm.

“The hope is that the road will clear quicker and end up being easier to manage,” Johnson said. “So far that has worked well.”

This strategy has been successful, though it has led Johnson to need to pay DPW workers more in overtime than initially anticipated in the budget.

However, he believes that the cost for the overtime will likely be offset by the lack of funds the town has had to spend on hiring plow contractors.

“It becomes almost a trade-off...,” Johnson said. (4:45)

The town has also spent a fair amount on salt and chemical treatment in order to do the pre-treatments, but as there have been only three snow events so far, the cost has yet to

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Future artists learn paper mosaic

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The library hosted a paper mosaic program for kids in fifth and sixth grade to enjoy.

Youth Associate Isabelle Malvezzi organized and ran the program. She wanted to give the kids a fun and relaxing craft that they could get creative with.

“It was something that looked like it would be super fun and very relaxing,” Malvezzi said.

She hoped that this program would give kids a chance to relax and have some fun without any expectations.

“As you get into that middle and high school things become a lot about learning to meet deadlines and learning to do things in a specific way to please people... but with a craft like this it is purely about expression, creativity and how you want it to look,” Malvezzi said.

To prepare for the craft, Mal-

vezzi printed out some different templates for participants to use as a base for their mosaic.

The templates included different flowers, plants and some basic scenery that Malvezzi thought would be fun and simple to decorate.

“I tried to take inspiration from what you see in real mosaic work, like with tiles, so I know vegetation and fruits are super

MOSIAC | page 5



Jesse Poirier traced out the different designs he wanted to add to his paper mosaic.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA



Youth Associate Isabelle Malvezzi added some additional creative touches to her paper mosaic.



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Library announces upcoming news and events

AGAWAM – February starts off strong with two entertaining musical performances at the Agawam Library. Join us during Grammy Awards Week as we welcome two talented musicians to the library. On Monday, Feb. 3 at 6:30 p.m., New England singer/songwriter Matt York returns to the Agawam Library for a unique performance featuring the music of country music legend Willie Nelson. Matt will perform songs and tell stories of Nelson's seven-decade career. To keep the musical celebration going, the library is pleased to present a Journey Through the Roots of American Popular Music with Jon Waterman, on Thursday, February 6 at 6:00 p.m. Waterman's performance will showcase his original songwriting upon the backdrop of the African American Blues experience. He blends history, storytelling and music to bring his research to life in a compelling way. Both programs will be held in the Clini Community Room and registration is required. Both programs are supported, in part by a grant from the Agawam Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Adult Game Night returns on Wednesday, Feb. 5 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room. Celebrate the joys of a good old-fashioned game night with board games and snacks! We'll have games on hand like Settlers of Catan, Ticket to Ride, Munchkin, and more - but feel free to bring your own! This is a drop-in event.

Come out for some Valentine's Day fun on Monday, Feb. 10 at 6:30 p.m. in the

Clini Community Room. Join us for our next rendition of Music Bingo featuring Love Songs and Anti-Love Songs in honor of the holiday. Compete to win one of our low stakes prizes as you enjoy some forgotten love songs. Regardless of your opinion on Valentine's Day, the musical selections will have something for everyone.

Our Tea & Trivia sessions will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 18 at 6:30 p.m. and on Wednesday, Feb. 19 at 2:30 p.m. Join us for tasty tea and a couple rounds of Jeopardy and pub-style trivia! Come by yourself or with a team; prizes will be awarded to the winning players. We will use the same questions for both sessions this month, so choose the time you prefer and join us for some fun! These programs are for patrons ages 18 and older and registration is required. Get ready to have your wits challenged!

Our Library Tech Classes will be held on Wednesday, Feb. 19 at 6:30 p.m. and Tuesday, Feb. 25 at 10 a.m. in the Clini Community Room. If you're interested in finding the items you're looking for or placing holds on the items you want, be sure to sign up for this class. We'll conduct regular research for authors and titles, as well as how to put items on hold and add items to customized lists. We'll look at how to navigate around the online catalog, and how to browse our collections that we've picked out just for you! Feel free to bring along any device you plan on accessing the catalog through to follow along. We'll also provide a brief overview of the CW MARS app. It

will be helpful to know your CW MARS login information in advance. Please register for either session.

Grab your friends and come enjoy a bit of Galentine's Day fun as you discover (or rediscover!) a love for romance books with author Liz Alden. On Thursday, Feb. 20 at 6:30 p.m., we'll talk about everything from bodice rippers to BookTok and give you a crash course on the romance genre. If you're wondering how to pick your next romance read - whether you're a first time romance reader or an expert devourer of "Happily Ever Afters" - or want to connect with other romance readers and a local author, join Liz for a one-hour discussion. We'll also have a short conversation about Liz's publishing career, what self-publishing actually means, and a Q&A. Of course, we'll be sure to leave you with an emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending. If you enjoy romantic fiction with a bit of adventure and steamy romance, this event is for you! Liz will have books for sale at this event, and Valentine's Day mocktails will be served. To learn more about her books, visit <https://www.lizalden.com/>. Please register for this event.

There's still time to sign-up for the Adult Winter Reading Challenge. Log your reading time and write book reviews to earn raffle tickets for cozy, winter prizes. We've also challenged the Agawam community to collectively read 1,000 hours, and every hour you log during this reading challenge will help us reach our goal! We'll be measuring the different milestones we

reach by building a "snowman" inside the library, so be sure to stop by to see our progress. For more information or to get started, please visit Agawamlibrary.beanstack.org to participate online or visit the Agawam Library Information Desk to participate in person. The last day of the Challenge is Saturday, Feb. 22.

The virtual author series continues this month with three diverse authors. First up on Tuesday, Feb. 4 at 2 p.m. there is a discussion of How We Create Pandemics, From Our Bodies to Our Beliefs with Smithsonian Curator Sabrina Sholts. Award winning author Waubgeshig Rice will present Dystopian Tropes from an Indigenous Perspective on Tuesday, Feb. 11 at 7 p.m. And on Tuesday, Feb. 18 at 2 p.m., Pulitzer Prize Finalist Lee Hawkins will discuss I Am Nobody's Slave: How Uncovering My Family's History Set Me Free. Please note that these author talks are held virtually. Please visit <https://library.org/agawamlibrary> for more information and to register.

Registration for adult programs opens on Feb. 1. Please visit our online calendar www.agawamlibrary.org to register or call the Information Desk at (413) 789-1550 X4. The library will be closed on Monday, Feb. 17 in observance of President's Day. During the winter months, any closing, delays or late openings will be reported to local TV stations 22 & 40, as well as their websites. Inclement weather closings or delays will also be posted on our social media platforms. Please visit our website for more information www.agawamlibrary.org.

Garden Club scholarship applications now available

AGAWAM – Applications are now available for the Agawam Garden Club 2025 scholarship. To qualify for the scholarship students must be a graduating senior of Agawam High School or a college student who graduated from Agawam High School and is planning to attend an institution of higher learning in the fall.

Applicants must be majoring in or planning on majoring in one of the following: botany, environmental engineering, environmental science, earths systems, forest management, natural resources, plant soil and insect science, sustainable



agriculture, sustainable horticulture or food and farming, turf grass science and management, landscape design and management technology, clean energy, technology studies: waste water or other environmental related studies. The recipient will be awarded a \$1,000 scholarship at the clubs annual May meeting. Completed applications along with transcripts and references must be submitted to Denise Carmody, 40 Primrose Lane, Agawam, MA 01001 by April 1. Applications available through Agawam High School or can be found on the website at agawamgardenclub.com.

Open position on Zoning Board

AGAWAM – Please be advised that there is an opening on the Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals effective January, 2025.

The opening is for an alternate posi-

tion. Interested parties should contact Barbara Bard in the City Council Office at 413-726-9716 or send in a letter of interest to bbard@agawam.ma.us as soon as possible.

Agawam Senior Center lists events planned for the month of February

AGAWAM – The Agawam Senior center, 954 Main St., has great events planned for the month of February. For more information, please call 413-821-0605

Agawam Senior center hours of operation: The Agawam Senior Center will be closing at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. The Agawam Senior Center will remain open on Tuesday evenings until 7:30 p.m. We hope this will give you a chance to access more of what we have to offer. The Billiards Hall, Computer Room, Fitness Room and more. ZUMBA Gold will offer classes on Tuesday evenings starting at 5:30 p.m.

HEARING CHECKS AVAILABLE
Thursday, Feb. 20

The next New Ears hearing care clinic

will take place on Thursday, Feb. 20. Gary Winn is a licensed Hearing Instrument Specialist, and owner of New Ears Hearing Care, will conduct a free hearing clinic. He will check ears for wax build-up, perform hearing screenings, and counsel people about hearing loss. Hearing aids will be cleaned and adjusted if possible. The Agawam COA invites residents of Agawam and surrounding towns to benefit from this service. Call 413-821-0604 to make an appointment. Hearing checks will take place in the seminar hall.

MANICURES WITH JANE
Monday, Feb. 10 - Seminar Hall

Jane is a licensed nail specialist, who will give your fingernails that extra special attention and love they deserve. She is of-

Jewish Foundation encourages students to apply for scholarships

AGAWAM – 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>.

fering simple manicures that include clipping, filing, soak, MASSAGE of the hands and your choice of color. These appointments are 15 minutes each. The cost is \$15 per person. Call Kristina at 413.726.2836 to book.

TREATS AND TRIVIA

Tuesday, Feb. 11 at 1 p.m. in the Seminar Hall Garden Room of the Senior Center
Call Kristina at 726.2836 to reserve a spot.

COFFEE AND CHATS WITH MAYOR JOHNSON

Wednesday, Feb. 12 at 10 a.m.
Join Mayor Johnson in the FRIENDS Coffee Shop at 10 a.m. for all the latest and up to date information regarding the beau-

tiful Town of Agawam & Feeding Hills.

BEREAVEMENT GROUP
Wednesday, Feb. 19 at 1 p.m.
Conference Room

Grief and Love Are Siblings. We tend to see Love and Grief as polar opposites. Love is "good." Grief is "bad." What if one cannot exist without the other, as necessary to your thriving as breath? In this month of celebrating love in all its forms, we will gather to explore the mysterious intimacy between loving and grieving. First, through shared conversation, we will challenge ourselves to expand our own understandings of the words "love" and "grief" before investigating some forms of grief/love rituals that you can bring into your own home.

Tickets now available 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.

Catholic women’s club meeting Feb. 10

AGAWAM – Members of The Catholic Women’s Club of Agawam will enjoy fun and games at their Feb. 10, meeting. It will be held in the Fr. Joyce Room of St. John the Evangelist Parish Center located at 833 Main St., Agawam. Refreshments will be served at 6:30 p.m. followed by the monthly business meeting at 7 p.m.

Those attending are asked to bring quarters to play Left, Right, Center after the meeting. If any member has one of the game sets, please bring it with you that evening. All local Catholic Women are welcome to join the club members for this fun evening.

Agawam Day to be held in FLA

AGAWAM – The 44th annual “Agawam Day in Florida” will be held on Wednesday, March 5, 2025 from 10 a.m. to p.m.

Former Agawam residents, old friends, classmates and relatives will meet at Fort DeSoto National Park, St. Petersburg, FL. for a reunion, picnic, raffles, hugs and to share old memories.

For more information, contact: Hank Drewnowski call/text at 860-462-7273 or email -hdrew2452@gmail.com.

Feline Friends holding donation drive

AGAWAM – Feline Friends be holding our next two monthly donation drives at Smithland Pet & Garden Center on Saturday, Feb. 1, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. as well as March 1. Volunteers will be collecting food, litter & monetary donations for the kitties. Opened bags/boxes will be accepted.

Smithland, a valued sponsor, is stocked with Friskies Pate or Shreds canned food (single flavor cases are preferred), many Fancy Feast varieties and unscented, clumping cat litter.

We would also appreciate jars of baby food (meat/poultry varieties), paper towels, puppy peepads and gift cards to Smithland or Costco. Checks or cash are always gratefully accepted at Feline Friends, P.O. Box 174, Feeding Hills.

Congratulations to Cheryl and Carl K who won the big screen TV in our November promotion. We appreciate all of the wonderful donations received at the January 4th donation drive including Joanne L. & Joan W, Ann H, Carl and Cheryl K, Linda B, Crystal M, Ken K & Irene F, Joe and Shirl as well as everyone who stopped by to chat & show us pictures.

Just a reminder that we have donation bins at Smithland near the registers and at the Agawam Public Library. Please include contact information with donations



if you would like an acknowledgement. This month Maria B dropped off some cozy blankets at the library and we received cases of cat food, bags of dry food, treats and more at Smithland. Check out our Feline Friends Cat Sanctuary page for photos. We are so grateful for each & every donation.

Feline Friends Inc. is a communi-

ty-based, nonprofit sanctuary that does not discriminate against any cat based on age, gender or disability.

More information about our sanctuary may be found on our website at felinefriendsinc.org or our Facebook page at Feline Friends Cat Sanctuary. Contact us with questions at info@felinefriendsinc.org or by phone at 413-786-5019.

Scholarship and fellowship funds available for graduates

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.

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.



Mayor Christopher Johnson

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.

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

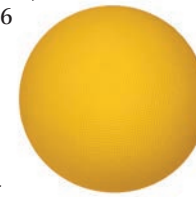
awarded to graduating seniors from both Agawam and West Springfield, the awards are limited to residents of Agawam. A full description and application for each of these scholarships can be found at the Agawam Rotary Club’s webpage at agawamrotary.org. Click on “Scholarships” at the top of the home page. Please note that applications must be received by April 1, 2025.

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 surround-

ing 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.



MiraVista Behavioral Health Center offers advice on children’s mental health

HOLYOKE – The post-holiday season can be a challenging time for children and families. With shorter days, colder weather, and the return to routine, many children may experience the “winter blues.” These seasonal changes can take a toll on emotional health and well-being, leaving families searching for support.

MiraVista Behavioral Health Center recognizes the unique challenges this time of year brings and is here to help. The organization’s 16-bed adolescent unit (for teens 13-17, and up to 18 if attending high school) is staffed with a skilled and compassionate treatment team, providing families with a resource for comprehensive, inpatient mental health care during difficult times.

To make accessing care as seamless as possible, MiraVista offers direct admissions, reducing unnecessary and costly delays in emergency departments. This ensures children receive the care they need when they need it most.

“Adolescence is a critical time for mental health, and we know that seasonal changes can amplify the emotional challenges young people face,” said Dr. Kenneth Richmond, Medical Director for MiraVista. “It’s important for families to know there are resources available, and seeking help early can make a profound difference in a young person’s life.”

While professional support is essential, there are also many ways families can help promote emotional well-being

during the winter months:

Stay Active Together: Encourage regular physical activity to boost mood and energy levels, even with indoor options like family walks, yoga, or dance sessions.

Create Structure: A predictable daily routine helps children feel secure and balanced, particularly after the excitement of the holidays.

Prioritize Connection: Dedicate time to talk, listen, and engage in activities children enjoy. Feeling supported and heard makes a world of difference.

Monitor Screen Time: Reduce excessive screen use and encourage creative or interactive play instead.

Get Outside When Possible: A few minutes of fresh air and sunlight can lift

spirits and improve energy.

Model Self-Care: Demonstrate the importance of mental health by practicing self-care yourself, setting a positive example.

MiraVista is committed to supporting families during these colder months and beyond. If you’d like to learn more about our services or discuss how we can help children and families thrive, we invite you to reach out. Together, we can navigate the winter season and ensure that every child feels supported, valued, and hopeful.

For more information, to make a referral or to schedule a workplace presentation, please contact Kim Lee at 413-264-3042 or Klee@miravistabhccare.com.

Opinion

Guest Column



Reader asks about Social Security benefits for someone with multiple ex-spouses

Dear Rusty

If a financially well-off individual had multiple ex-spouses, could it happen that the multiple ex-spouses could each be collecting Social Security based on their own financial situation as compared to their rich ex-spouses?

Thus, multiple payouts by SS? Just curious, because there are probably many people in this situation as a result of the ever-increasing number of people involved in multiple marriages that each lasted more than ten years.

Signed: Curious Ex-Spouse

Dear Curious Ex-Spouse:

A former spouse can only collect one SS benefit either their own SS retirement amount, or an amount as an ex-spouse if the marriage lasted 10 years or more. And it is possible for multiple ex-spouses of a marriage to the same person to qualify for benefits from those unions, if each marriage lasted at least 10 years. But each ex-spouse can only qualify for one benefit payment either their own earned SS benefit, or their benefit as an ex-spouse.

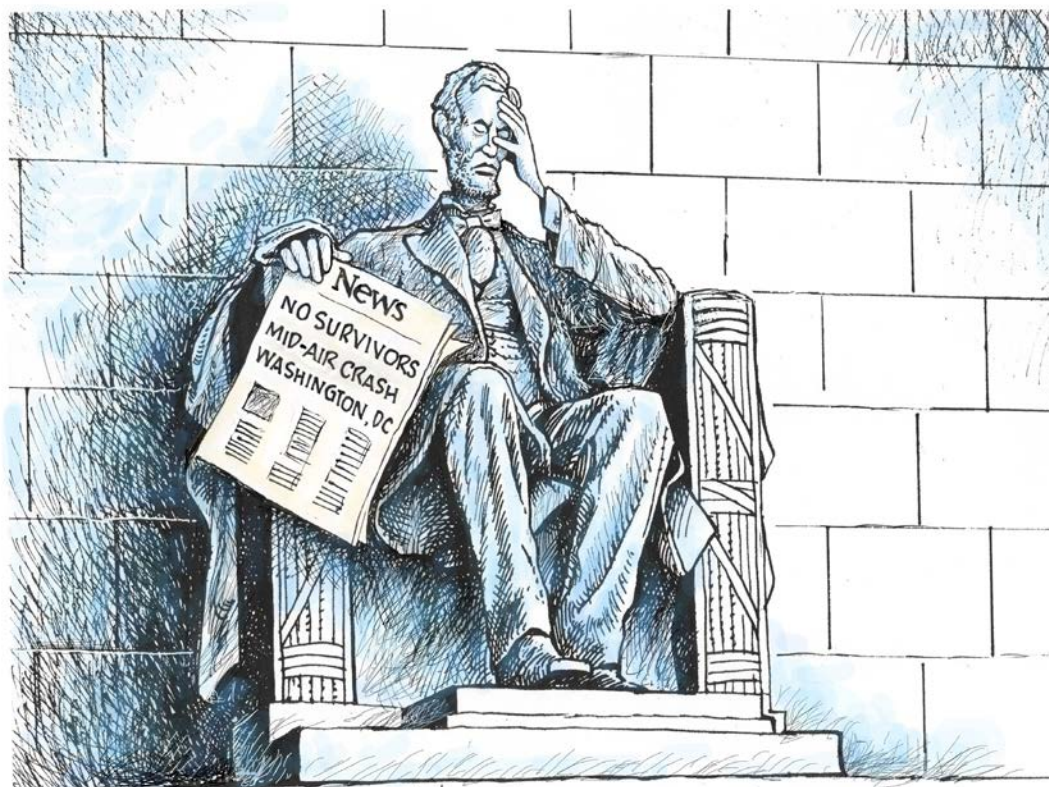
In other words, someone with two or more ex-spouses might have their ex's collecting full benefits on their record, provided that each marriage lasted at least 10 years. But an ex-spouse can only get one benefit—their own SS retirement amount or an ex-spouse amount, whichever is higher.

It's possible, also, that an ex-spouse can collect benefits from a former spouse at the same time as a current spouse is also collecting spouse benefits on the same record. And there is no detriment to either's amount because multiple spouses or ex-spouses are collecting on a one person's SS record (Social Security is, after all, a means for spouses, or ex-spouses, to avoid poverty). However, an ex-spouse's own SS retirement benefit from their personal lifetime work record must be less than any ex-spouse benefit they are entitled to from a former spouse. Essentially, if the "10-years-married" rule is satisfied, ex-spouses are subject to the same benefit rules as a current spouse.

You are correct that we see some cases like this these days, but each eligible ex-spouse can only get one benefit and their ex-spouse benefit is always offset by any personal SS retirement benefit the ex-spouse may also be entitled to on their own lifetime work record.

The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security

SECURITY | page 4



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Guest Column

'Spring' into action with these tasks



The groundhog determined we would have six more weeks of winter. Is that really a surprise to anyone?

I mean, as I write, it is only Feb. 2. But we gardeners are an impatient lot, and we so want to get our hands back into the soft earth.

There are many tasks, albeit those that are behind the scenes, that can be done now, so that when warmer weather does arrive, we can "spring" into action.

Take inventory

Last month I talked a lot about prepping for indoor seed starting, first by taking inventory of our seeds and then gathering the necessary supplies that go along with that task. But what about our outdoor ventures?

I have been busy shopping around for new IRT mulch, greenhouse supplies and amendments. How are you set on lime, grass seed, and fertilizers?

Plan to take advantage of pre-season sales by knowing what you need ahead of time. Also, assess the condition of your tools. Is your rototiller working its best? Mine needs to be serviced.

By taking it to the repairman now, I'll beat the spring rush and avoid having to turn the garden over by hand! The same goes for lawn mower blades. Have these sharpened yearly for the healthiest possible turf.

Practice good garden hygiene

Regularly inspect summer bulbs that have been stored away for the winter. Throw away any that are rotten or moldy.

If you find a lot of these, consider moving what is left to a drier location. On the other hand, dahlia tubers will shrivel when conditions get too dry, mist

them with clean water to rehydrate.

It is also a good idea to take a close look at vegetables in storage. Squash with signs of rot can be cooked and the flesh frozen for later use. Sprouts that appear on potatoes should be rubbed off and used before they soften.

Experiment with onions that have sprouted by planting them outside once the ground thaws. This vegetable is a biennial and will produce seed during its second season.

If the sprouts come from an heirloom or open pollinated variety, save a few seeds come July and start them this time next year! In the seedling stage, onions thrive on ample nitrogen to develop thick tops that will feed what we hope are big bulbs.

Perform appropriate garden chores

I am usually negligent in cutting down asparagus foliage in the fall. Weather permitting I will get out there and cut it back to its base soon, then haul off the branches to prevent any bugs that overwintered there from infesting this year's spears.

It is also time to prune blueberries, apples and grapes. Pruning can vary depending on the age and health of your specimens. If you are not experienced at it, consult any number of good books on the subject before you head outdoors with your pruning shears and loppers.

Do make sure your tools are sharp, and if there is any hint of disease, be sure to disinfect in between cuts or at least in between specimens. If any of your fruit trees have old fruit, called "mummies" hanging from the branches, be sure to get rid of them for fear of overwintering pests.

Hang tight

Winter will be gone soon enough. Come out of hibernation and accomplish pre-season gardening tasks now, before the spring rush but also remember that this is a season of rest and taking care of yourself is a good thing too.

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.



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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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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.

Schools & Youth

COLLEGE NOTES

University of Rhode Island announces fall 2024 Dean's List

KINGSTON, RI – The University of Rhode Island is pleased to announce that several area students have been named to its fall 2024 Dean's List.

Among them are:
Emily Gamelli of Agawam
Marissa Hermans of Agawam
Madison Hill of Feeding Hills

Dean's List at University of Maryland Global Campus

ADELPHI, MD – Kiesha Fairley of Agawam was named to the Dean's List for the fall 2024 term at University of Maryland Global Campus.

VSU Fall Dean's List honors local students

RANDOLPH CENTER, VT – Vermont State University is proud to recognize Rylee

Moreau of Agawam, for earning Dean's List honors for the fall 2024 semester.

Assumption University's Dean's List

WORCESTER – Assumption University has announced that Kailey Butler, of Agawam, Class of 2026, has been named to the University's Dean's List for the fall 2024 semester.

Springfield College fall 2024 Dean's List

SPRINGFIELD – Springfield College recognizes Dean's List students for the 2024 fall semester.

William Balzano from Feeding Hills, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Balzano has a primary major of Physical Education & Hlth/FCS.

Matthew Benard from Agawam, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Benard has a primary major of Sport Management.

Sara Bolton from Agawam, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Bolton has a primary major of Health Science / Pre-OT.

Liliana Cicchetti from Feeding Hills, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Cicchetti has a primary major of English.

Patrick Dahm from Feeding Hills, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Dahm has a primary major of Sport Management.

Julianna Faillace from Feeding Hills, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Faillace has a primary major of Biology.

Christina Grasso from Agawam, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Grasso has a primary major of Health Science / Pre-OT.

Colin La from Agawam, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. La has a primary major of Health Science / Pre-PA.

Isabel Lalancette from Feeding Hills, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Lalancette has a primary major of Health Science / Pre-PT.

Dana Leiper from Feeding Hills, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Leiper has a primary major of Health Science / Pre-PT.

Abigail Moore from Agawam, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Moore has a primary major of Education.

Daniel Mudrenko from Feeding Hills, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for

the 2024 fall semester. Mudrenko has a primary major of Business Management.

Emma Murray from Feeding Hills, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Murray has a primary major of Health Science / Pre-PT.

Jaiden Pacheco from Agawam, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Pacheco has a primary major of Education.

Mackenzie Ritchie from Feeding Hills, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Ritchie has a primary major of Psychology.

Christopher Rondinelli from Feeding Hills, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Rondinelli has a primary major of Health Science / Pre-PA.

Julia Rubin from Feeding Hills, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Rubin has a primary major of Health Science / Pre-PA.

Donovan Salva from Feeding Hills, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Salva has a primary major of Sport Management.

Gabriella Serrano from Feeding Hills, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Serrano has a primary major of English.

Ainsley Stevens from Feeding Hills, to the Dean's List for academic excellence for the 2024 fall semester. Stevens has a primary major of Health Science / Pre-PT.

PLOW ■ from page 1

be significant.

According to Johnson, the real issue could come if there is a major snow event.

"Difficulty will come if we have a major snowstorm event because it is going to take longer to clear," Johnson said.

As there is a lack of total plows in the town, should a major snowstorm come it will take crews much longer than usual to clean off the roads.

While the DPW would still do the pre-treatment work, there is only so much that can be done against a larger snowstorm.

Should this be a concern, Johnson asks for the patience and understanding of community members.

Agawam is not the only community that

has been facing this issue.

"When I speak to my counterparts, everyone is facing the same problem," Johnson said.

Municipalities are working to figure out how to best approach this problem as the general climate continues to produce less snow than in the past.

For now, Agawam is continuing to accept snowplow applications on a rolling basis. While the bonus is no longer available, Johnson promises that Agawam pays competitive rates.

"If you look at all the other municipalities, we are comparable to what they pay and we welcome anyone that wants to sign-up," Johnson said.

If people are interested in applying, they can email bids@agawam.ma.us or call the procurement office at 413-726-9741.

MOSIAC ■ from page 1

popular alongside landscapes and animals," Malvezzi said.

Once the participants had picked out their different templates, Malvezzi also encouraged them to go beyond what the template offered.

"I gave the templates so people could have a base to start from and I wanted to see how they would add to them," Malvezzi said.

Malvezzi loved seeing how creative people got with the craft as the program went on.

"A highlight was seeing how Jesse's came out because Jesse is a super creative kid and always amazes me with how his art projects turn out," Malvezzi said. "I was super pleased with the fact that he really got into it over the course of the program."

Malvezzi also encourages people to try out this craft at home if they want to try a new way of making art.

"All you need is scissors, a glue stick, pencil and some construction paper," Malvezzi said.

In the future Malvezzi definitely hopes to do this craft again and even for a wider age range.

The library has a multitude of fun pro-

grams planned throughout the month of February.

One program is "Will it Chocolate?" which is a fun program for kids in grades three through six.

It is planned for Feb. 19, with the section for grades three and four set for 6 p.m. and the section for grades five and six to begin at 7:30 p.m.

Throughout this program kids will be encouraged to dip a variety of different foods into the library's chocolate fondue.

There is also a minute to win it challenge planned for kids in grades five and six on Feb. 26 at 6 p.m.

The kids will compete in a variety of minute-long challenges, with the top three competitors winning small prizes.

Additionally, the library is beginning a teen book club for people in grades seven through twelve. The first meeting will be on Feb. 26 at 7:30 p.m. and they will be discussing Cinder by Marissa Meyer.

For adults, the library has a Valentine's Day program scheduled for Feb. 10 at 6 p.m. This program will have people competing in a musical bingo challenge with the chance to win some prizes.

To keep updated on all of the library's different programs, go to <https://www.agawamlibrary.org/>.

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 ssadviser@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

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CLUES ACROSS

- "The Las Vegas of the East"
- Cook
- Manning and Wallach are two
- Chameleon
- A way to fill up
- What MLBers hope to play in
- Unhappy
- Indefinite period of time
- Excites
- Males
- Mongol leader Genghis
- Turfs
- Soda comes in them
- Not nice
- Professional organization
- Part of a play
- Sea eagle
- Emily Blunt's character in "Sicario"
- Beige
- Mental sharpness
- Valley
- Alcyone's husband
- A place to gamble
- Flightless Australian birds
- Call out somebody's name over a P.A. system
- US spy group
- Pancakes from buckwheat flour
- Swiss river
- Disfigure
- Have surgery
- Formal withdrawal
- Early English council
- Square measures
- 2,000 lbs.
- Siskel and __, critics
- dictionary (abbr.)
- King of Thebes
- English name meaning "mythical hunter"
- Indicates near
- More herbaceous
- Gas-powered cars need one
- Dishonest individual
- Systems, doctrines, theories
- The woman
- The whole of one's holdings
- Witnesses
- Doctor
- Paul __, Swiss painter
- Kids look for him on December 24
- Single
- Competitions
- Predict the future
- Cage for trained hawks
- Musician Clapton
- Frozen water
- Semiformal men's evening attire
- Most worn
- Common soap ingredient
- Former EU monetary unit
- Provisions
- Book parts
- Republic of Ireland
- Partner to "Pa"
- Sammy __, songwriter
- Dutch colonist
- Clare Booth __, American writer
- Solar disk in Egyptian mythology
- Minute arachnid
- From a distance
- Monthly apartment cost
- Young women's association
- Tourist destination
- "Woman" in Ojibwe language
- Pointed end of a pen

CLUES DOWN

- Mouths
- Buffalo
- You plug it in
- Each
- Largest English

SECURITY ■ from page 4

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

Cyran to headline next meeting of Artists and Artisans

AGAWAM – Dr. Laura Cyran, from Chichester, will be the artist demonstrator at the Feb. 12 meeting of the Agawam Community Artists and Artisans. The meeting will be held at the Agawam Library starting at 6pm. Public is welcome.

Dr. Cyran is a 2016 graduate of Oklahoma State University of College of Veterinary Medicine. She earned her undergraduate degree from UMass Amherst. She has a love for feline medicine, wellness and geriatric pets. She is passionate about educating pet owners about their pets' care and working as a team with pet parents to make the best decisions for the health and happiness of their pets.

Dr. Cyran is also a watercolor artist who

specializes in pet portraits. She began to paint watercolor in 2021 as a way to relax and was quickly drawn to painting.

Her work as a veterinarian in the West Springfield community gives her a special perspective on the bond people share with their pets. Creating portrait and memorial art for beloved animals is another way to honor that bond. Her portraits strive to capture the pet's unique expression and personality with painterly details that are unique to watercolor.

Dr. Cyran enjoys spending



her free time with her two children and her husband Justin.

The meeting will take place on Wednesday, Feb. 12 beginning at 6 p.m. at the Agawam Public Library 750 Cooper Street Agawam, MA. Light refreshments will be served.

Everyone is welcome to this free and open demonstration. For further information please contact Ceil Rossi (413) 207-1247 or email tocarefree2@hotmail.com

Baystate Health Board of Trustees welcomes new trustees

SPRINGFIELD – Baystate Health has been caring for Western Massachusetts communities for more than 141 years. In partnership with its 13,000 caregivers, the Board of Trustees and subsequent committees are entrusted to lead the organization through the lens of its Mission - to improve the health of the people in our communities, with quality and compassion. The 19 elected Trustees are hyper-focused on the community impact of the organizations' actions and decisions and bring diversity of skill, expertise, knowledge and community representation to our collective voice.

"The time, talent and treasure invested by our Board of Trustees in Baystate Health is so important in our journey to become a clinically driven and physician-led health system," said Peter D. Banko, president & CEO. "They represent the unique perspectives and voices of our community, and their perspectives are critical to ensuring we are the economic and health pillar in New England, preferred destination to work and practice, and establish long-term financial resilience for our organization."

Baystate Health is announcing the following transitions of its Board of Trustees in 2025:

Harriet DeVerry, retired Senior Vice President and Group Financial Officer at Webster, just concluded her two-year term as Chair of the Board on December 31, 2024 and will continue to serve as Trustee on Baystate Health's Board. Bob Bacon, President of Elm Electrical, Inc., who served on

the Board for the past 10 years, since 2015, and as Chair of the Board from 2021-22, will be stepping down as a Trustee. DeVerry and Bacon were members of the Board of Trustees at Noble Hospital when that hospital became part of Baystate Health in 2015 and they joined the Baystate Health Board of Trustees at that time.

"I extend my deepest gratitude to Harriet, as former Chair of the Board, for her leadership and support, especially the last seven months of 2024 as Baystate Health welcomed me to Western Massachusetts in June," said Banko. "I also am extremely grateful for Bob's 10-year commitment to serve as Trustee, including his two years as Chair. Their dedication to the organization, our Mission, our community and to healthcare in Western Massachusetts goes above and beyond."

Colleen Holmes has transitioned to the role of Board of Trustee Chair from her role of Vice Chair. Holmes is the President and CEO of Springfield-based Viability, Inc., an organization which partners with employers to meet their business needs by including the workforce of individuals with disabilities. In this role, she builds on her 30-year career in human services, holding leadership roles in human resources, sales, and marketing. Holmes joined the Baystate Health Board of Trustees after serving on the Quality Committee and currently serves on the Executive, Human Resources, and Governance Committees. She holds a bachelor's degree from Princeton University and

a master of business administration degree from American International College.

Dr. Akinyele Lovelace, a partner at Family Medicine Associates in Westfield, has been named Vice Chair. Dr. Lovelace is affiliated with Baystate Noble Hospital, Baystate Medical Center, and Holyoke Medical Center, and has served as a Baystate Health Board of Trustee for five years. He most recently served as the Honorary Baystate Noble Ball Chair with his wife, Christina Lovelace, at the 58th Annual Baystate Noble Ball in November 2024. Dr. Lovelace spent several years in Texas, practicing internal medicine at Hereford Health Clinic. During his time there, he was Hereford Brand Reader's Winner for Best Physician in 2012 and 2014. In addition to this medical degree from Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Dr. Lovelace holds a master of business administration degree from Texas Tech University and a bachelor's degree from Xavier University of Louisiana.

The Baystate Health Board of Trustees welcomes its newest member, Keith J. Nesbitt, Senior Vice President and Business Banking Team Leader at Berkshire Bank. Nesbitt has nearly 20 years of experience in commercial lending, portfolio management and credit administration in regional and community banking institutions. Presently he manages a team of commercial relationship managers for the Pioneer Valley (metro Springfield) and Connecticut (metro Hartford & New Haven) for Berkshire Bank. He earned his bachelor's degree from the Uni-

versity of Georgia, master of science from Georgia State University and master of business administration from the Keller Graduate School of Management. Nesbitt will fill the Board of Trustee seat vacated by Bacon.

"I am thrilled to welcome Keith to the Board of Trustees and to support Colleen and Dr. Lovelace in their new leadership roles," said Banko. "As we build a clinically driven and physician-led system and focus on our transformation, their respective backgrounds and diverse skillsets will provide strong voices and deeper community perspectives."

Hibernians to hold Irish night

HOLYOKE – The Hibernians of Hampden/Hampshire Counties invite the public to attend the Traditional Irish night in Holyoke, at the Log Cabin on Saturday Feb. 22. There will be valet parking. Tickets are only \$50 per person. Call Joe O'Connor at 413-627-7148 or Fran Hennessey at 413-785-5687 by Feb. 18 or go online to Eventbrite.com. The event will feature the Keohane and Kenneally Irish American Band and a Corned Beef and Cabbage dinner with Ribs by Mick Corduff executive chef at the Log Cabin.

BIG GAME SIZE SAVINGS!

<p>USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS CENTER CUT PORK LOIN \$1.99 lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. FRESH COUNTRY STYLE PORK RIBS..... \$1.94 lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. FRESH PORK SHOULDER PICNIC..... \$1.49 lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. FRESH STORE MADE ITALIAN SAUSAGE ALL VARIETIES \$2.77 lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS KAYEM BUDDABALL PIT HAM SMOKED \$3.69 lb</p>	<p>USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF TENDERLOINS CUT FREE \$9.99 lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF RIB EYE STEAKS \$8.99 lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS WHOLE OR HALF BEEF STRIP LOIN CUT FREE \$6.44 lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. STORE MADE FROZEN 80% LEAN GROUND HAMBURG PATTIES 20 COUNT BOX 3 OZ 4 OZ \$15.69 \$19.99 lb</p>	<p>USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS & SKINLESS CHICKEN BREAST 10 LB BAG \$1.91 lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. FROZEN TURKEY BREAST \$1.61 lb</p> <p>USDA INSP. MEATBALLS FULLY COOKED 5 LB BAG ... \$12.99 ea</p> <p>USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN PARTY CUT CHICKEN WINGS 3 LB BAG. \$5.99 ea</p> <p>USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN COOKED SHRIMP 16/20 COUNT 2 LB BAG \$18.99 ea</p> <p>USDA INSP. CHICOPEE PROVISIONS BLUE SEAL KIELBASA \$5.55 ea</p>
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SUPER GAME SAVINGS

BIG CITY SHOWDOWN!

USDA GOVT INSP FROZEN **KANSAS CITY PORK SPARERIBS TWIN PACK** (FREE SWEET BABY RAY'S BBQ SAUCE WITH PURCHASE) **\$2.25** lb

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SPORTS

Brownies upset by Generals at home

AGAWAM – Despite having a few leads and a win already against Pittsfield, Agawam was not able to keep it last Tuesday and fell 65-60 to Pittsfield at home in the second league meeting of the season between the two teams.

The lead changed several times

late in the game, with the Generals outlasting the Brownies. Elijah Maldonado had another great game for the Brownies with 24 points.

Caeden Roeder had 10 points. The Brownies are 10-4 and are qualified for the tournament.



Elijah Maldonado crosses the court for the Brownies.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Aiden Lavelle plants and takes a mid-range jump shot.



Melih Tomak gets the put-back after making an offensive rebound.



Caeden Roeder fakes and heads for the paint.



Gavin Cruz inbound the ball.



Dylan Jorgensen gets around the guard and goes to the hoop.

Gardner bests Agawam in independent matchup

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WEST SPRINGFIELD – The non-conference high school hockey game between Gardner and Agawam had as many twists and turns in it as one of the roller coasters at the Six Flags Amusement Park.

Agawam, who trailed by two goals twice, managed to take the lead in the middle of the third period, but the Brownies didn't keep the lead for very long.

After tying the score for the third time, the visitors from Northern Worcester County netted the go-ahead goal on a power-play with 47 seconds left in reg-

ulation, giving them a 6-5 victory at the Olympia Ice Center in West Springfield, Saturday, Jan. 25.

"We didn't play our best game of the season tonight, but we still had a chance to win it in the third period," said Agawam head coach Todd Rowley. "We took the lead before losing our top three scorers."

The Brownies played the final 1:46 of the third period without seniors Landon Ashford, Cole Buffum, and Aiden Pisano. The trio were sent to the locker room after receiving game misconduct penalties from the referees. They were involved in a fight that took

HOCKEY | page 8

Brownies pick up third straight

AGAWAM – Since a tough loss against Belchertown in league action, Agawam has grabbed three straight wins and is now 12-2 this season.

Coach Tim Murphy said Easthampton was a tough

challenge last Friday night, but the Brownies defense continued to perform well in a 45-23 win.

Mia Canavan had the hot hand with 18 points scored. Isabella Laprise grabbed nine

points and Katelyn Cleavall had eight points.

The Brownies are nearing the end of the regular season. Agawam will next face East Longmeadow on Saturday, Feb. 8 at 5 p.m.



Casey Thomas nears center ice with the puck.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Trevor Del Barba sets to clear the puck away.



Aiden Pisano is pursued by the opposing defense.



Camden Saltmarsh heads for the goal.



Vincent Montagna looks for his next pass.



Teammates surround goalie Frankie DiSanti following a save.

Sports

Thunderbirds get huge weekend sweep

DES MOINES, IA – The Springfield Thunderbirds (21-17-2-2) got points from 14 of their 18 skaters in a 7-2 drubbing of the Iowa Wild (14-26-2-1) on Saturday night inside Wells Fargo Arena.

The T-Birds wasted little time jumping in front for a second straight night, as Simon Robertsson and Hugh McGing capped a 2-on-0 with McGing cashing in on a one-timer past Jesper Wallstedt just 1:22 into action. Otto Stenberg also picked up an assist as all three players on the line broke point droughts of three or four games.

Sam Bitten, playing in the building his brother Will called home for three seasons, joined the fun at 5:47 with a perfect bar-down wrist from the right circle to push the lead to 2-0 off setups from Samuel Johannesson and Leo Loof. Johannesson has now registered a point in five of his last six games.

Vadim Zherenko drew the starting assignment in net and held his own with 16 stops in the opening period. Johannesson provided a helping hand after Zherenko made a mini-breakaway save on Hunter Haight, and the young blueliner successfully kept Mikey Milne from cashing in on a rebound to keep the score

deadlocked.

Iowa finally would break through on its 16th shot of the period as Travis Boyd crashed the far post to tap home a 2-on-1 pass from Matthew Sop to get the Wild deficit down to 2-1 heading into the first intermission.

There were more parallels from Friday's game early in the second period, as McGing unleashed a perfect shot under the crossbar at 2:23, beating Wallstedt for his second of the evening and restoring the two-goal lead, 3-1.

Iowa put together their best push of the night over the next five minutes, culminating in a tally by Luke Toporowski to cut the margin back to a single goal, 3-2, at 7:26.

Just as it appeared the Wild would change the tide of the game, the T-Birds had other plans as Nikita Alexandrov drove the net front from the right circle and beat Wallstedt to the near post to make it 4-2 just 17 seconds after the

Toporowski goal.

The Springfield attack poured it on from there. Michael Buchinger announced his presence at 8:49, jumping into a play as a trailer before snapping a wrist past Wallstedt to make it 5-2 off a cross-ice setup from Matthew Peca.

Another potential momentum shift came at 13:39 of the second when Dylan Peterson barreled in on net, taking a shot on Wallstedt before colliding with the Iowa netminder. Peterson

was given a five-minute charging major, setting the stage for the Wild power play to try to climb back into the game. Wallstedt was forced to leave the game as Samuel Hlavaj came on in relief.

Instead of the moment sparking the home team, the T-Birds only further added to their lead when Peca intercepted a pass in the neutral zone, skated into the zone on the right wing, and snapped another perfect shot upstairs past Hlavaj

for his team-leading 16th goal, making it a 6-2 game heading into the third.

The Wild had no answers for Zherenko in the third, despite Iowa throwing 16 pucks on the T-Birds net and 50 total by the night's conclusion. The third-year goalie finished with a season-high 48 stops to earn the win, and Alek Kaskimaki capped off the offensive onslaught with his second goal in two nights at 17:12 of the third to round out the scoring.

Dalibor Dvorsky will be in action on Sunday and Monday at the AHL All-Star Classic presented by Spotlight 29 Casino in Palm Springs, California. The rookie star will first participate in the AHL All-Star Skills Competition presented by Silvercrest on Sunday, Feb. 2 (9:00 p.m. ET). Then, on Monday, Feb. 3, Dvorsky and the Atlantic Division will look to take home the 3-on-3 crown in the 2025 AHL All-Star Challenge presented by Spotlight 29 Casino at 9:00 p.m. ET. Both events can be seen on NHL Network and AHLTV powered by FloHockey.

Springfield next takes to the ice on Friday, Feb. 7 to begin a home-and-home set against the Providence Bruins at Amica Mutual Pavilion.



Worcester Railers score win over Mariners

PORTLAND, ME – The Worcester Railers HC (18-19-2-4 42pts) took down the Maine Mariners (16-23-3-0, 35pts), on Sunday afternoon by the final score of 5-2 in front of a crowd of 4,421 at Cross Insurance Arena. The Railers are back on the ice next at the DCU Center taking on the Atlanta Gladiators on Wednesday, February 5th at 7:05 p.m. EST.

Worcester scored first Sunday afternoon when Matt Ustaski (1-0-1) scored 5:23 into the first. Maine answered back with a goal of their own from Wyllum Deveaux (1-1-2) to tie the score at 1-1 heading into the second. Connor Welsh (1-0-1) was the second period's lone scorer giving the Railers the 2-1 lead. Maine tied it early in the second period with a goal from Lynden McCallum (1-0-1), but shortly after the Railers grabbed the lead right back when Cole Donhauser (1-1-2) scored a shorthanded goal to give the Railers the 3-2 lead. The Railers finished the third period by scoring two more goals, the first scored by Mark Cheremeta (1-0-1) 15:52 into the third, and the second an empty net goal from Matias Rajaniemi (1-0-1) giving the Railers the 5-2 victory.

The scoring got started by the Railers 5:23 into the first when Matt Ustaski (2nd) found the back of the net off a pass from Jordan Kaplan. Maine tied the score at 1-1 just under ten minutes later off the stick

of Wyllum Deveaux (8th). Shots favored Worcester 20-10 in the first period.

It took nearly 17 minutes of second period action for either team to score. It was Connor Welsh (5th) who scored giving the Railers the 2-1 lead. His shot from the left point deflected off of a Maine Mariner and beat Bischel high. Shortly after the Railers goal, they went on the penalty kill following a five-minute major for boarding called on Griffin Loughran. The Railers successfully killed the first 2:32 of the Maine power play to wrap up the second period. Worcester outshot Maine 31-17 in the second period.

The Railers started the third period by killing the remainder of the Maine power play, but shortly after the penalty expired Maine was able to net one. It was Lynden McCallum (15th) who scored for the Mariners. The Railers did not wait long to regain the lead, as Cole Donhauser (5th) forced a turnover at center ice and took it all the way home and scored the shorthanded goal giving the Railers the 3-2 lead. Mark Cheremeta extended the Worcester lead to 4-2 with his breakaway goal 15:52 into the third period. Matias Rajaniemi (2nd) capped off the Railers five goal night with his empty net goal 17:27 into the third, securing the 5-2 win for Worcester. Shots favored Worcester 8-7 in the third and 40-25 in regulation.

Baldwin adds schedule for tri-track series

Ryan Preece Racing announced today that Luke Baldwin will compete in the full Monaco Modified Tri-Track Series schedule during the 2025 season. Baldwin will drive the No. 40 for Preece in eight of the 10 events and will pilot the No. 7NY for Tommy Baldwin Racing in the other two races, allowing him to compete for the championship.

The Monaco Modified Tri-Track Series 10-race schedule includes events at seven different tracks in four different states in the New England region. The schedule is the largest in the history of the series, founded in 2014.

"The competition level on the Monaco Modified Tri-Track Series continues to grow," Ryan Preece, NASCAR Cup Series driver for RFK Racing, said. "The series has a great payout for asphalt modified racing and with the jump to 10 races, they have established a strong schedule that we want to support. Luke has continuously shown his ability to win races and we're all excited to be behind him in this effort in 2025."

Luke is ready for the challenge.

"Being able to head up north a few extra times this year, it's going to be awesome," Luke Baldwin said. "Tri-Track is rapidly growing and it has some of the strongest competition in modified racing, so it will be tough. Working with the whole Preece

family will be special - our relationship has been strong for years."

The season-opener will take place at Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park on Saturday, March 29 as part of their Icebreaker weekend. The series will continue with a second event at Thompson on May 14, followed by Thunder Road (May 24), White Mountain (June 7), Seekonk Speedway (June 25), Stafford Speedway (July 16), Star Speedway (August 2), New London Waterford Speedbowl (August 23), Stafford (September 27) and Seekonk (October 25).

Jeff Preece, Ryan's father, will crew chief the car.

"I worked with Luke a few years ago at New Smyrna and he's a great kid," Jeff Preece said. "He has a hard-work ethic. I expect good things from us."

"The opportunity to work with Ryan came up and we couldn't pass it up. We are excited to see Luke race at some new tracks in New England against a competitive field of cars," Tommy Baldwin Jr. said. "The Tri-Track Series has some great drivers and a diverse schedule this year with more races than ever before."

"Our entire team is excited to get to work at Thompson for the first time in March," Preece said. "Our goals every time we go to the race track are to win and we feel Luke is ready for the challenge."

HOCKEY | from page 7

place in front of the Gardner goalie.

"The three players, who received the game misconduct penalties, would've been on the ice during the Gardner power-play late in the third period," Rowley said. "I thought we held the momentum before the fight."

The Brownies, who are a Division 2 team, have a 8-5 overall record. They're currently sitting in second place behind Amherst in the Fay-Wright Conference standings with a 7-2 record. After having a week off, the Brownies are scheduled to host McCann Tech in a conference game at 6:30 on Saturday night.

"We need to win two more games to guarantee a spot in the state tournament," Rowley said. "This was a non-league game, so it doesn't affect our standings in the Western Mass. tournament."

The top four teams in the Fay-Wright Conference standings will play in the Western Mass. Class B tournament.

It was the second-ever meeting between the two hockey teams.

Two years ago, Gardner posted a 3-0 victory over Agawam in the championship game of the Chicopee Holiday Tournament.

In last Saturday's match, the Brownies were trailing, 4-2, with eight minutes left in the third period when Buffum and Pisano scored a pair of goals in a span of ten seconds tying the score at 4-4.

A little more than a minute later, Agawam took a 5-4 lead following a goal by senior A.J. Robbins, which was assisted by Ashford.

With 4:54 left in regulation, Gardner senior Gavin Richard scored a power-play goal tying the score at 5-5.

Following the fight, Richard's scored another power-play goal, which was unassist-

ed, with 47 seconds left on the scoreboard giving his team a 6-5 lead.

The Brownies had a chance to tie the score, but they couldn't put the puck into the net past Gardner senior goalie Cohen Veilleux (15 saves) before the final buzzer sounded.

Gardner took a 2-0 lead in the middle of the opening period following goals by senior's Josh Crotty and Michael Lucas.

The Brownies cut the deficit in half when Ashford fired a shot into the net with 6:16 left in the opening period. Junior Anthony Barbarini was credited with the assist.

Seven minutes into the second period, a shot attempt by Agawam sophomore Camden Saltmarsh fell out of the Wildcats goalie's glove and the puck bounced into the net which tied the score for the first time.

Gardner retook the lead at 3-2 with 2:40 remaining in the second period following a goal by sophomore Matt Whaley.

Less than four minutes into the third period, a goal by junior Aiden LaPointe gave the visiting team a two goal lead for the second time.

LaPointe is also one of the three Gardner players who attend Quabbin Regional High School in Barre.

The other two Quabbin players listed on the Gardner hockey roster are senior Cullan White, who's a captain, and senior Kevin Thompson, who's the back-up goalie.

Agawam starting goalie Frankie DiSanti, who's a senior, made a total of 26 saves.

The Brownies battled back during the third period, and they took the lead, but it quickly slipped away from them.

"This loss hurts right now, but we'll be fine," Rowley said. "At the end of the day, it's only one game out of 20."

The Brownies will be looking to get back into the win column against McCann Tech on Saturday night.

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Region

Red Cross lifeguard training now available

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Parks and Recreation Department is offering a lifeguard Red Cross certification training course at the Holyoke Boys and Girls Club, 70 Nick Cosmos Way. Session 1 will take place Feb. 15, Feb. 16 and Feb. 23 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Session 2 will take place May 10, May 11 and May 18, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Participants only need to attend one full session, (one Saturday and two Sunday's). Applicants must be 16 years of age. Strong swimmers are encouraged to apply. Participants must pass a pre-skills test at the start of class. \$175.00 for Holyoke residents and \$275.00 for non-residents.

Lifeguard Re-Certification Classes will also be offered on Feb. 23 and May 18. Participants only need to attend one class. Classes will run from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Holyoke Boys and Girls Club, 70 Nick Cosmos Wa. Update skills while also extending certification for another two year. \$125 for Holyoke residents and \$225 for non-residents.

Please register at the Holyoke Parks and Recreation Department, 413-322-5620.

Participants must register and be paid in full before attending the class. Limited space available.

Former Steaming Tender discussed as potential site for passenger rail stop

By Marcelo Gusmão
Staff Writer

PALMER – On Monday, a presentation was hosted at Steaming Tender Restaurant to discuss the location of the train stop for the East/West passenger rail.

The presentation was held by Blake and Scarlet Lamothe and John McElduff, who discussed the benefits to using the restaurant as a train stop. An animated slideshow of photos, data, and potential designs was projected for the attendees to see, and as the presenters spoke, cargo trains passed behind them on the existing rails.

Blake Lamothe, owner of Steaming Tender, expressed his opinion that the Department of Transportation is "operating out of their jurisdiction on this line."

"It's called compass rail for a reason; north, south, east, west," said Scarlet Lamothe. "However, MassDOT is ignoring the compass. They are ignoring the central corridor rail line that connects Brattleboro, VT, out to New London, CT."

At the previous meeting with the public, representatives from DOT expressed that Steaming Tender could not accommodate the high-level platforms required by current project designs. However, Lamothe proposed accommodations for a low-level platform that would more easily fit into the current site.

"We could have low-level platforms with a handicapped lift, those are the requirements on this line as it exists," Blake Lam-

othe said. "Or we could do a gauntlet track, which has been done on many railroads, which supersedes the freight. Those are tracks that lay in a little bit, so that when the freight passes, it keeps it so the freight doesn't hit the abutment."

Lamothe was dismissive of concerns over the South Main Street bridge as an obstacle to construction, which he called a "false narrative."

Blake's daughter, Scarlet, mentioned during her presentation that there's ample space for five tracks beneath the bridge, and that the FRA had previously approved it.

The big concern of the community has been the distance from downtown. Scarlet Lamothe showed pictures of the stop installed in Windsor Locks, CT, which she compared to a bus stop.

"You can hop on and off," Lamothe said. "Engineering wise, it looks great on paper. Economic wise, not a smart move, and Connecticut is paying the price for it. They were not receiving any additional revenue from the train stop."

Lamothe emphasized that a small stop outside of town will not bring revenue to the town the way a train stop in a downtown location would. Attendees brought up the Department of Public Works site as one of the other proposed sites for the stop, and Lamothe mentioned a proposal to create a recreational facility there, in addition to using the historic site for the train stop.

Blake Lamothe said that the previous

initiatives had factored in these concerns when dealing with the Federal Rail Association. During McElduff's presentation, he talked about the ways that are being pursued to convince DOT to reconsider, including political action, legal action, and local engagement.

"This would be a possible non-binding vote on where we should put the station," McElduff said. "Should we put it here, in the central business district, or out on the edge of town?"

By a show of hands, McElduff confirmed that the majority of the attendees preferred the station being placed downtown.

"We have a letter that's been sent to the new administration's Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy, and we're looking forward to an appointment in Washington," Lamothe said.

In addition to these methods, McElduff said there will also be collaborations with state legislators and the governor's office.

"We can't settle for the short end of the stick here, and they're not making it any better for Palmer," Blake Lamothe said. "North/South is as important as East/West. Let's get back to common sense here; let's build a robust town again with hotels, trade schools, shops and restaurants, and create commerce here."

"Let Palmer take advantage of the railroads as it once did before," Lamothe said.

If you'd like to get involved with the Citizens for a Palmer Rail Stop group, you can check out their Facebook page.

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Poetry Out Loud



Students Andrew Bagley, Sydney Frasier and Dawood Atanane were the emcees for the Poetry Out Loud competition.



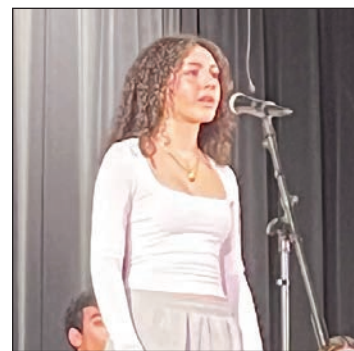
Aiden Wykes was one of the top 12 students in the Agawam High School Poetry Out Loud competition.



Hazel Meyer tied for third place with her performance of "No, I wasn't meant to love and be loved" by Mirza Asadullah Khan Ghalib.



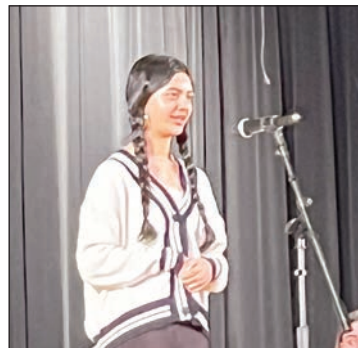
Nazo Sahibzay placed in the top 12 for the Agawam High School Poetry Out Loud competition.



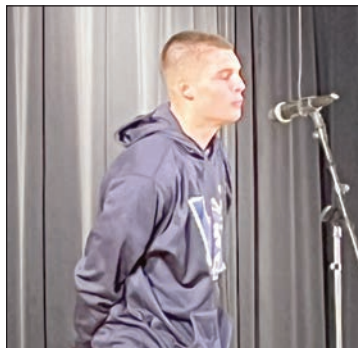
With her performance of "History Lesson" by Natasha Trethewey, Violet Pryce Agawam High School Poetry Out Loud competition.



Abigail Drumm won the Agawam High School Poetry Out Loud competition with her performances of "We Play Charades" by Uma Menon and "Sonnet 15" by William Shakespeare.



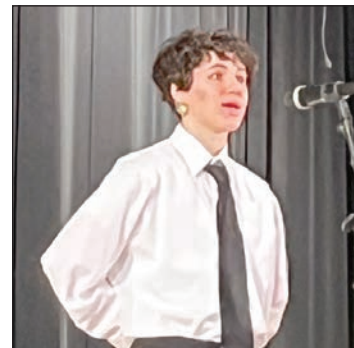
With her performance of "The World is About to End and My Grandparents Are in Love" by Kara Jackson, Iraj Ahmed placed in the top 12 for the Agawam High School Poetry Out Loud competition.



With his performance of "1st Vote" by Kamilah Aisha Moon, Domenic Costa got into the top 12 Agawam High School Poetry Out Loud competition.



Marissa Leary won second place at the Agawam High School Poetry Out Loud competition with a performance of "How Dark the Beginning" by Maggie Smith.



With a performance of "The Road Not Taken" by Robert Frost, Maddy Elwell tied for third in the Agawam High School Poetry Out Loud competition.



Devin Soucy placed in the top 12 of the Agawam High School Poetry Out Loud competition.



All the students who competed in the Agawam High School Poetry Out Loud competition were given a certificate to acknowledge their participation.



Jace Mansur made it to the top 12 of the Agawam High School Poetry Out Loud competition.



Aubrey Maynard placed in the top 12 of Agawam High School Poetry Out Loud competition.

POETRY ■ from page 1

Drumm has competed in this contest each year as she has a great appreciation for both poetry and performance.

"I like the preparation and I love performing, so it really is just a perfect mix up of both," Drumm said.

Poetry is a special part of literature for Drumm and she enjoys having the opportunity to analyze and perform different poems for this contest each year.

"I really like literary analysis, so that is one part of it, but also I feel like it really expresses my feelings," Drumm said. "There is so much that can be said with words and I think poetry does a really good job at that."

When trying to decide what poems to present for the contest, Drumm looks for works that have contrast and speak to her, while still fitting within the Poetry Out Loud guidelines.

After she has picked a few poems, she begins to prepare for her performance.

"I start by dissecting the poem and trying to understand what it is actually saying," Drumm said. "Then I break it up into how I want to say it in order to convey the meaning. Then from there I start to memorize."

Now Drumm is looking forward to preparing for and competing in the next levels of competition.

She also has some advice for any future students interested in competing in Poetry

Out Loud.

"Poetry isn't what you think it is at first glance," Drumm said. "The more you try to dissect it and try to understand what the poet is trying to get across in between the words, the better off you are."

Additionally, she encourages everyone to give poetry a try. She recommends they go onto the Poetry Foundation or some similar website and just begin reading and dissecting poems.

"Expose yourself to more poetry...the more you try and the more you experience, the easier it becomes," Drumm said.

Patterson was impressed by and proud of all of her students who competed in front of the school.

"It is really challenging to memorize a

poem and to recite it in front of your peers in a big auditorium," Patterson said. "I am so proud of everybody."

She has enjoyed watching different students grow throughout this year's competition as well as over the course of the several years that some of them have been competing.

"You definitely see them develop confidence and demonstrate their understanding of poetry," Patterson said. "They begin to really try to communicate the poem to the crowd and it becomes the celebration of these words."

Patterson looks forward to watching Drumm continue onto districts and to seeing students continue to compete in Poetry Out Loud in the years ahead.

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