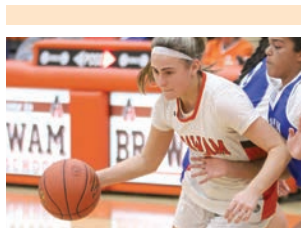


LIBRARY
February activities
PAGE 2



REGION
Rail project site
PAGE 3



SPORTS
Girls basketball
PAGE 7

AGAWAM

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Julia Nicosia is crowned Colleen

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Julia Nicosia was crowned the 2025 Colleen for Agawam at the coronation ceremony on Feb. 8.

She was grateful for this honor and excited to represent her community as the Agawam Colleen.

“I’m very excited because I am 22, so this was my last show at it,” Nicosia said.

Nicosia was excited to be able to act as a role model in the community through her work as a Colleen.

“I love to work with kids, so being a role model has always been the biggest thing for me,” Nicosia said. “I think it is a big thing that they can say, ‘I see myself in that person, maybe I can do that when I am older.’”

Additionally, Abigail Drumm was honored to receive the Fowle award, which was given based on her essay on the importance of her Irish heritage and on her connection with Damian McGinty.

“I tried my hardest to follow in his footsteps, which led me to where I am today,” Drumm said. “It is because of him that I have my two greatest joys: music and theater.”

President of the Parade Committee Abbie Fiore was proud of all of the Colleenes. She was glad to



Teagan Fullam, Samantha Machos, Julia Nicosia and Abigail Drumm were excited to be Agawam’s new Colleen Court.

TURLEY PHOTO BY QUINN SUOMALA

see each of them displaying the key qualities of being a Colleen.

“A Colleen has dedication to their community, involvement to the Irish heritage is important...and their desire to do work in their community,” Fiore said.

She was glad to welcome the Colleenes into the St. Patrick’s Community, which Foire has been dedicated to for many years.

“The community is like a family,” Foire said. “We all really have a strong desire to keep putting our Irish heritage out there and keep building up community involvement in this.”

The Colleenes are a respected tradition throughout Agawam and many other communities in Massachusetts.

They are a way for exemplary young women with Irish heritage to come forward and celebrate their accomplishments and their Irish ancestry.

The application process to be a Colleen begins in September, where each person interested fills out a resume and answers questions around their Irish heritage and their interest in being a Colleen.

Once those applications are sent in, impartial judges are called by the parade committee to decide who is the Colleen Court and the Colleen.

This year Agawam had four applicants for the Colleenes, so all four girls are able to participate as part of the Colleen Court.

In order to select a Colleen, each applicant completed a 10-minute

interview with the judges, completed a walk across the stage and answered a surprise question.

The judges compiled their scores from these different areas and used those to select the Grand Colleen.

Moving forward, the Colleen Court will get to celebrate their Irish heritage as they prepare for the St. Patrick’s Day Parade.

“They learn how to Irish step dance, there is a lot of different Irish foods at a lot of the events,” Fiore said. “It is a great way to celebrate their Irish heritage.”

They also have the opportunity to help build the float for Agawam, the first one the town is building in years.

Warming centers available

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The Agawam Public Library and the senior center are available for people to come by if they need a place to warm-up in colder temperatures.

“The library and the senior center have some evening hours so if it is getting cold and you just need a place to go and warm up, you can always go there,” Mayor Christopher Johnson said.

APL is open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

The senior center is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday through Friday.

Each of these locations have a variety of activities available for those who come by.

“There are all kinds of activities going on in both locations and they are both beautiful facilities that offer people a quiet space to do some reading, interact on computers or participate in activities,” Johnson said.

The senior center has a fitness room and a computer room, as well as a variety of activities that rotate on a daily basis. For further information go to <https://www.agawam.ma.us/237/Programs>.

The library also has a variety of programs, including crafts and book talks. For more information on those programs go to <https://www.agawamlibrary.org/>.

Johnson also encourages people

COLLEEN | page 12

WARMING | page 5

Johnson provides update on AHS project

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Mayor Christopher Johnson provided an update on the high school project at the school committee meeting on Jan. 28.

The project is now moving out of the design development phase and into the construction document phase, where all of the building plans will be finalized with the intent to begin official construction in May or June.

“It is relative to the nuts and bolts of all of the construction documents relative to the entire project,” Johnson said.

As construction begins, there will be some minor disruptions to student and staff’s schedule.

Student pick-up and drop off will be rerouted throughout construction and they currently estimate that about 100 parking spaces on the property will be lost.

For sports, one practice field will be lost so both lacrosse teams will share the turf field for practices.



Mayor Christopher Johnson

Additionally, home softball games may have to be moved to Borgatti field as needed.

During his presentation, Johnson updated the school committee on the building plans for the project.

The total high school building should be 211,575 gsf and the Early Childhood Center is planned to be 21,150 gsf.

There will be a roadway going around the total property of the project, with access points on Mill and Cooper Street, similar to the current building.

Additionally, the project team has planned for there to be a significant amount of lighting distributed throughout the property.

“It will be a much better lit site than the existing high school is,” Johnson said.

There will be electric vehicle parking spaces around the property, with them making up about 57, or 10%, of the total 565 spaces. They will be spread around about three locations on the property.

However, while the groundwork will be laid for them, the full

charging stations will not be set up unless proven to be necessary.

“All we have to do to meet code is have them be ready, which means underground conduit run wire, but we are not going to have the charging stations in place,” Johnson said.

Johnson also mentioned that the new high school building will have as many pitched roofs as possible.

“We are trying to have as much pitched roof as possible from a longevity standpoint and an ease of maintenance standpoint,” Johnson said.

These planned roofs also have the added advantage of making it easier to add solar panels to the school building.

“Solar can be clipped to the seam, you don’t have to make punctures in the roof to do it,” Johnson said.

While solar will help with energy levels, the building will mainly function off of geothermal wells.

The current estimate is that the construction team will drill 165 wells into the high school property to make this system functional.

“The estimation is that we are going to be drilling about 165 wells,

PROJECT | page 5

Scouting the Super Bowl



Most weekends between January and March, you see your local girl scouts staked out at a local grocery store or gas station. But members of Troop 65283 knew the place to be last Sunday. Here, Mia Santos, 10, Sadie Eagen, 8, and Ava Schmaelzle, 9, spent part of their day outside EB’s Restaurant selling their Girl Scout cookies. EB’s, one of the region’s most popular stops for chicken wings, was a hotbed of activity on Super Bowl Sunday, making it an ideal spot to set up shop. TURLEY PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



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Senior center announces upcoming events

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.

Bereavement Group - Conference Room Wednesday, Feb. 19 at 1 p.m.

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.

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.

Behavioral Health Helpline Educational Seminar - Seminar Hall Thursday, Feb. 27 at 1 p.m.

During this seminar we will be discussing the Behavioral Health Helpline, which serves as the new virtual gateway for connecting Massachusetts residents with mental health and substance use assistance. This service is available free of charge and operates 24/7 throughout the year. Our discussion will cover the various uses of the helpline, how to access it, and who is eligible to utilize the ser-

vice. Additionally, we will review the website, the chat feature, and the directory of available services, along with guidance on how to effectively utilize these resources. Melissa, a member of the Community Relations team for the new Massachusetts Behavioral Health Help Line will be offering this seminar. Coffee and Donuts will be served. Please call Kristina at 413-726-2836 if you are interested.

CPR & AED Training Friday, March 14 at 10:30 a.m.

The Agawam Senior Center is extremely excited to offer this potentially “life saving class” to our staff and ANY senior interested in joining us. On Friday, March 14 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the Veterans Hall we will be offering CPR & AED training with Marsha Chappel from Baystate Hospital. Marsha is the certified AED and CPR trainer at Baystate Hospital and has kindly offered her training to the Agawam Senior Center. The cost is a \$20 donation due on the day of the class, all monies collected on that day will be donated to the American Heart Association. If you are interested in joining this class, PLEASE call Kristina at 413.726.2836 to reserve your spot. Spaces will be limited to 25.

APL to host two artists

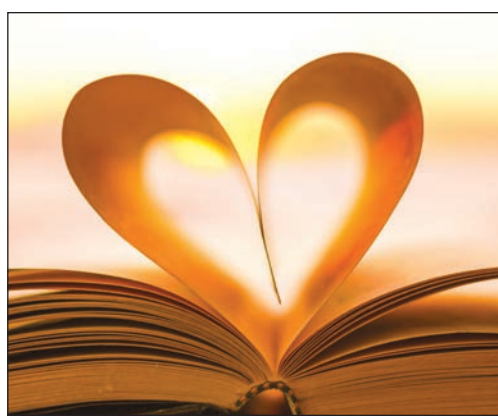
AGAWAM – The Agawam Public Library is pleased to host works from multiple artists during the month of February. On the main floor gallery walls, watercolor pieces by local artist Sandy Hayslett will be exhibited, courtesy of her family. Hayslett was an avid painter and outdoors woman. Her love of the outdoors carried through to her work, and she mostly painted landscapes.

Gourds by Ceil Rossi will also be exhibited in the cases on the main floor. Rossi learned the art form of gourds from her time living in Arizona, and has found gourds to be a way to nurture her artistic creativity. Beyond working on gourd sculptures, Rossi also teaches and exhibits in galleries in Massachusetts and Connecticut, having won awards in several fine art shows. Rossi is president of the Agawam Community Artists and Artisans and a member of the Agawam Cultural Council, and can be found on Facebook at CareFree-GourdGallery.

Visitors are welcomed to explore these art exhibits throughout February during the regular hours of the library. The Agawam Public Library is open 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. The library will be closed Monday, Feb. 17 for Presidents Day. Any questions about the exhibits can be routed to the Information Desk at 413-789-1550 x4. Please contact Adult Services Library Associate, Erica LeFebvre at (413) 789-1550 x8858 or elefebvre@agawamlibrary.org if you are interested in displaying artwork at the library.

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 – There are several more activities still to come at Agawam Public Library in February.

Our Tea & Trivia Tuesday, Feb. 18 at 6:30 p.m. and Wednesday, Feb. 19 at 2:30 p.m.

Get ready to have your wits challenged. 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.

Library Tech Classes - Clini Community Room Wednesday, Feb. 19 at 6:30 p.m. and Tuesday, Feb. 25 at 10 a.m.

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

Library lists February activities

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.

Galentine’s Day Thursday, Feb. 20 at 6:30 p.m.

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.

Adult Winter Reading Challenge Log your reading time and write book re-

views 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.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.

Virtual Author Series with Lee Hawkins Tuesday, Feb. 18 at 2 p.m.

The virtual author series continues this month with three diverse authors. The third appearance is 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 is open. 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.

Schools & Youth

COLLEGE NOTES

Elms College Dean’s List for fall 2024

CHICOPEE – The College of Our Lady of the Elms has named the following students to the dean’s list for the fall 2024 semester. Congratulations to all the students who are named to the list. The following students are from Agawam

and Feeding Hills:

Sabrina McBride, Ciara Lamoureux, Aidan Nofall, Carson Asselin, Katelynn Gordner, Bianca Kerr, Madison Monday, Amy McKinley, Alexis Barna and Nicholle Sousa.

UHart announces Dean’s, President’s Lists

WEST HARTFORD – The University of Hartford is pleased to announce that 2,291 students have been named to the Dean’s List and President’s List for the fall 2024 semester.

Please join us in congratulating:
Amara Agosto of Agawam - Dean’s List and President’s List
Isabella Castro of Agawam - Dean’s List and

President’s List

Samantha Mengwasser of Agawam - Dean’s List and President’s List
Nick Ugolini of Feeding Hills -Dean’s List and President’s List
Lunah Hayward of Agawam - Dean’s List
Kolby Lindell of Agawam - Dean’s List
Quinn Miller of Feeding Hills - Dean’s List

Jewish Foundation encourages students to apply for scholarships

SPRINGFIELD – The Jewish Foundation 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.

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 avail-

able 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://jewish-westernmass.org/grants-scholarships>.

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.

Local students recognized by LPVEC

AGAWAM – Agawam High School Principal James Blain announced the Agawam students named as CTEC Students of the Month for January.

They are - Elijah Ramos and Cordelia McGill, Advanced Manufacturing, Isaiah Vega, Building and Property Maintenance, Joshua Scobie - Carpentry, Arianna Nivar - Cosmetology, Jamila Shehata and Emma Ann Gilbert - Early Education and Care, Madison Rios - Graphic Design, Alivia Turner - Health Assisting. CTEC is a part of the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative, which provides vocational education for Agawam Public Schools.

Horace Smith scholarship and fellowship funds still 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.

Notice of open board position

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 position. 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 Day to be held in FLA

AGAWAM – The 44nd 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.

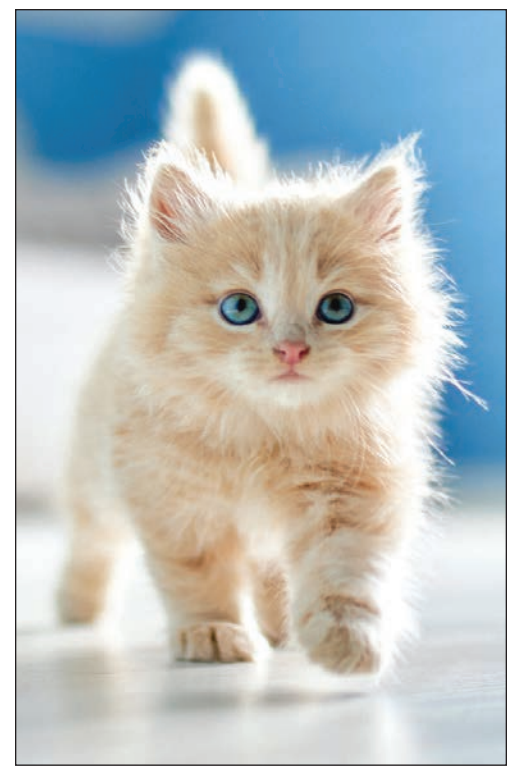
Congratulations to Cheryl and Carl K who won the big screen TV in our November promotion. We appreciate all of the wonderful donations received at the January 4th donation drive including Joanne L & Joan W, Ann H, Carl and Cheryl K, Linda B, Crystal

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 community-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.



Palmer yard selected as site for East/West Compass Rail train stop

By Marcelo Gusmão
mgusmao@turley.com

PALMER – The Department of Transportation has announced its selection for the train stop for the East/West Passenger Rail, selecting the south side of Palmer Yard on South Main Street.

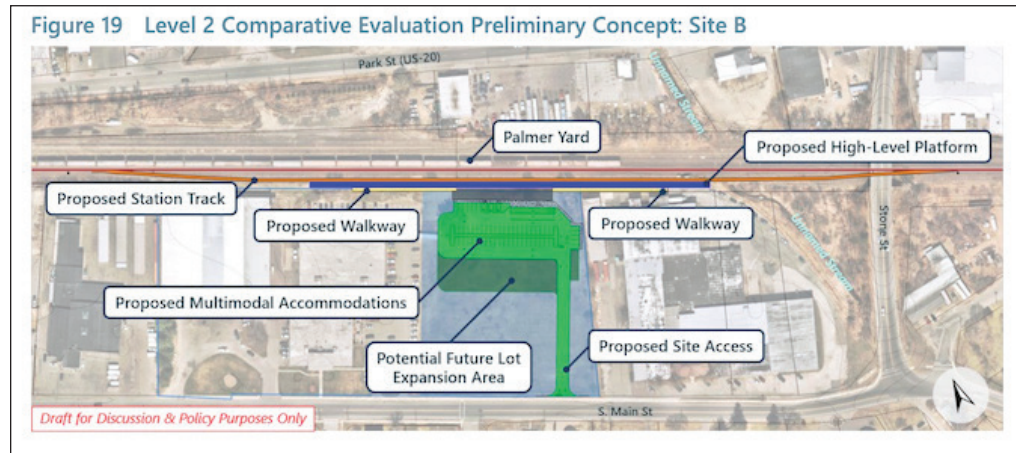
This site was determined to offer the amount of property needed for a platform to accommodate ADA needs and passenger train length, and is expected to have fewer permit requirements, making it the most affordable of the nine alternative sites that were considered. The location is estimated to be about half a mile from downtown, and was chosen after months of review, including feedback from stakeholders and community engagement events.

“We’re thrilled to have reached another milestone for West-East Rail and our efforts to expand rail service across the state with the selection of a preferred site for Palmer Station. This is going to be a major boost for Western Mass and for our state’s economy,” said Governor Maura Healey. “We’re grateful for all of the input we received from community members that helped us choose the best site for the station.”

“Expanding rail capacity and connectivity in Massachusetts is essential if we want to remain economically competitive,” said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. “We applaud the efforts that have culminated in the selection of a Palmer Station location and look forward to seeing this component of West-East Rail advance to completion.”



Palmer Yard, on South Main Street, has been selected as the site for the proposed train stop for the East/West Passenger Rail. TURLEY PHOTO BY MARCELO GUSMÃO



A draft diagram of how the proposed train station will fit into the selected site on South Main Street. SUBMITTED PHOTO

“We are pleased to see that there is forward movement on a station in Palmer. I thank everyone on the steering committee and community members who gave feedback about this process,” said Town Manager Brad Brothers. “We look forward to working with MassDOT on this next phase.”

The next step is for the project team to create a conceptual design and coordinate with railway owner CSX, the site property owner, and the proposed service operator, Amtrak, on the feasibility of the construction.

“We are very pleased to see ongoing progress in the advancement of the Compass Rail program, which will give residents the passenger rail connectivity they need and deserve,” said Transportation Secretary Monica Tibbitts-Nutt. “Throughout the planning and design phase for Palmer Station, we have been committed to

working with the community to make a site selection that reflects their needs in the decades ahead. We appreciate all the feedback and look forward to continuing this dialogue.”

Compass Rail is made up of existing and proposed East/West and North/South services that intersect in Springfield at Union Station. The goal of this expansive vision for the commonwealth is to integrate existing DOT-supported services into a unified system that increases the public’s access to comprehensive transportation.

“The South of Palmer Yard location has great potential as a future stop within the Compass Rail network, and the local stakeholders’ feedback has been invaluable in helping us reach an informed decision,” said Rail and Transit Administrator Meredith Slesinger. “The site’s strategic location within Palmer and its cost-ef-

fective geography are significant benefits for the community both short- and long-term.”

This rail stop will be able to connect to several services supported and managed by DOT, including the following Amtrak-operated routes: the Vermonter that services Washington, D.C. and St. Albans, VT with stops in Springfield, Holyoke, Northampton, and Greenfield; the Valley Flyer between Greenfield and New Haven, CT, with stops in Springfield, Holyoke, Northampton, and Greenfield; the Hartford Line and Northeast Regional between Springfield and New Haven, CT or Washington, D.C.; and the seasonal, pilot service, the Berkshire Flyer, which runs between Pittsfield and New York City.

In addition to these routes, the East/West Rail represents proposed new Compass Rail services that will improve connections between the eastern and western parts of the state, including an Inland Route to operate between Boston and New Haven, CT through Springfield and a Boston and Albany Corridor through Pittsfield.

“After years of advocacy by the residents of Palmer, they are one step closer to realizing their goal of a Palmer train station,” said Congressman Richard Neal. “This announcement follows a fair and thorough review by MassDOT, one that has been transparent throughout the decision-making process. Located just half a mile from the downtown area, this site will play a critical role in unlocking economic growth in the Town of Palmer and surrounding communities, while providing the space needed to accommodate the demand for increased passenger rail.”

“We are fortunate to have two leaders in Governor Healey and Lieutenant Governor Driscoll who have been steadfast in their support of improving and expanding passenger rail service throughout the Commonwealth,” Neal said. “With Massachusetts receiving more than \$9 billion in federal funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we have made substantial progress in advancing key rail projects, enhancing connectivity, and modernizing our transportation network. Today marks yet another significant milestone in making West-East Rail a reality.”

“We are excited to see West-East Rail mark this milestone and move forward with the conceptual design of the project. We look forward to being a partner in helping to create more transportation options for residents here in Palmer and western Massachusetts,” shared Kimberly Robinson, Executive Director of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission.

For more information on the development of Compass Rail, you can visit their website at Mass.gov/Compass-Rail.



Site B is located on an 8-acre parcel at 1199 South Main Street. The parcel is owned and partially occupied by Sanderson Macleod Inc., a local twisted wire brush manufacturer. To avoid impacts to the two existing buildings occupying the western part of the parcel, Site B would utilize the unoccupied eastern portion. The station siding track is proposed to be south of the CSX mainline, requiring that the existing siding track be relocated. Multimodal access to the site would be from South Main Street, and accommodations for parking, passenger pick-up/drop-off, and transit connections would be installed just south of the platform area. There is ample space for future expansion toward the south side of the parcel. Sloped walkways on either side of the platform would provide pedestrian access and egress pathways between the platform and the parking area.

A slide from MassDOT, indicating where in town the train station will land and where the track runs. SUBMITTED PHOTO

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HOUSING REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE

THE TOWN OF AGAWAM

The town of Agawam with the assistance of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) is applying for funding to assist qualified homeowners in making necessary repairs to their homes. In order to be eligible for assistance, total household income shall not exceed current federal income guidelines based on the number of people residing in a household. (See table below).

If you need to make improvements to your roof, windows, siding, plumbing, electrical, lead paint/ asbestos removal, heating system, septic system repair/ replacement and/or other program eligible improvements, please fill out the following form and return to Joe Hagopian at the PVPC (address appears below). **ALL** information received is strictly confidential and will be maintained in the Springfield office of the PVPC. If you have questions, please contact PVPC Senior Planner Joe Hagopian, at (413) 781-6045.

Name: _____

Property Address: _____

Mailing Address/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Single/Multi Family (Please Circle One) _____

Type of improvements needed: _____

For P.V.P.C. use only

Date Received: _____

Staff Initials: _____

My household income is not greater than (circle one according to your household size):

1 Person	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person	5 Person	6 Person	7 Person	8 Person
\$61,350	\$70,100	\$78,850	\$87,600	\$94,650	\$101,650	\$108,650	\$115,650

Opinion

Guest Column



Why was Social Security money moved to the General Treasury?

Dear Rusty:
Why were the Social Security funds moved from the Social Security account to the General Fund with the government?

Is it not then called a tax making it an entitlement? That then gives the government control of our retirement. Most of us feel that someone should be in charge and use the Social Security fund with investments that grow our savings.

I invested my 401,000 and savings and the original amount made me money during the Trump years and I'm now trying to catch up. I make this statement because I draw more from my investments than I receive from Social Security.

Signed: Questioning Senior Citizen

Dear Questioning Senior:

I'm afraid I must inform you that no Social Security funds have ever been moved from the Social Security account to the government's General Fund; this is a pervasive myth which we have refuted many times over the years. For information, here is one of many articles I have published on this topic, which I hope you find interesting: <https://socialsecurityreport.org/ask-rusty-about-repaying-social-security-money-taken-by-politicians/>.

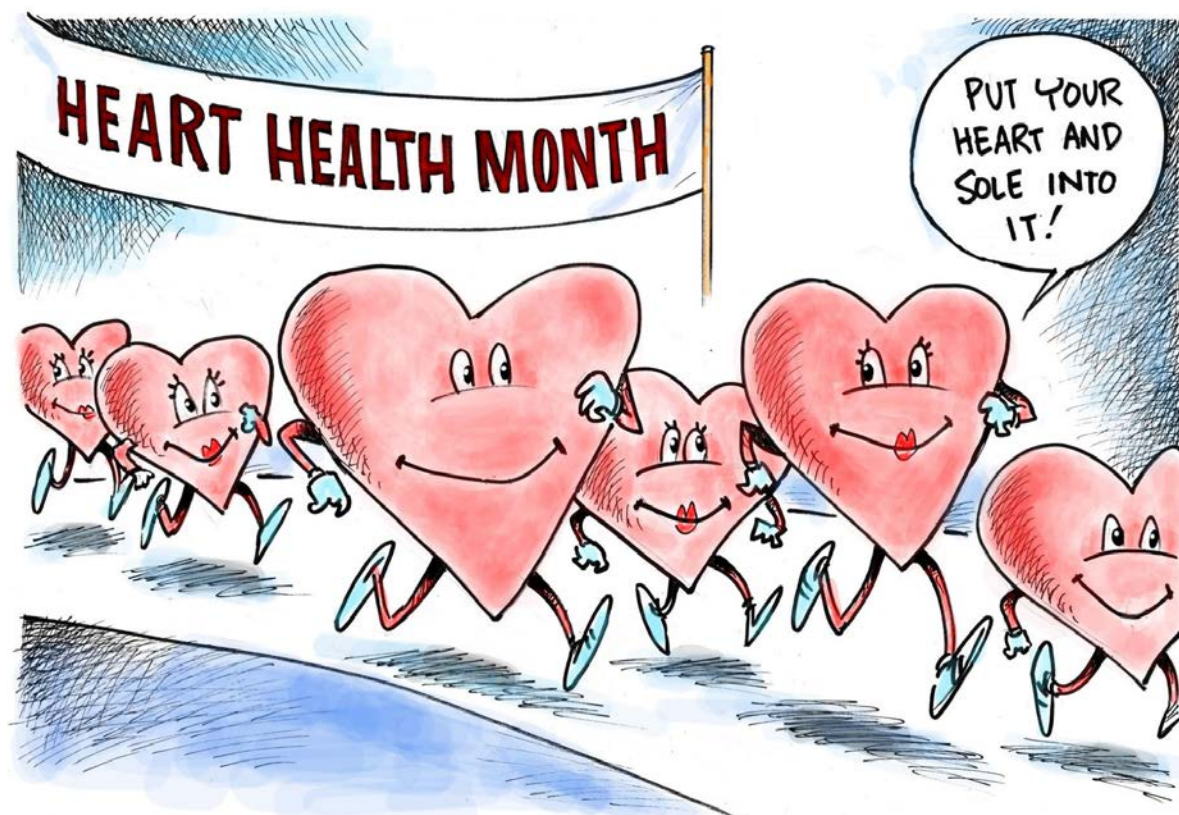
Someone actually is charged with monitoring our Social Security funds, a board of Social Security Trustees consisting of the Secretaries of Treasury, Labor, and Health and Human Services, as well as the Commissioner of Social Security plus two Public Trustees. Each year the Social Security Trustees do a complete analysis of the Social Security program, especially its financial status and outlook for the future. If you have interest in the Trustee's latest annual report, here is a link to the 2024 analysis: <https://socialsecurityreport.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/tr24summary.pdf>.

What you will find in the Trustees' report is that Social Security will run out of reserved funds in about 2033, necessitating an across the board cut of about 21% for everyone, unless Congress acts soon to reform the program and restore it to fiscal solvency. The Trustees have warned Congress about this problem for many years, but Congress has yet to find the bipartisan cooperation needed to fix the problem.

Association of Mature American Citizens has steadfastly offered proposals to Congress, which would restore Social Security to solvency and will continue to do so with the new 119th Congress, which convened on Jan. 3, 2025.

Please know that we appreciate your feedback and commend you for the wise use of your 401k investments, something that many of our members find necessary to supplement their Social Security. Remember, Social Security was never intended to provide all your retirement income, so earlier saving to supplement your retirement financial needs was a very wise move on your part.

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.



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

Guest Column

Roses or carnations, you choose!



With St. Valentine's Day coming up, my thoughts turn to flowers. I am not a "rose girl" so to speak. It is probably because I am frugal and roses cost an arm and a leg this time of year.

Get me a carnation and I am happy. They don't bend at the neck or pick you with thorns. They even smell nice, to me the fragrance is that of cloves.

So this will be a combo column. First, it will give our rose lovers out there the best chance of keeping their admirer's big investment healthy for the longest possible time. Then, I will do the same for the humble carnation.

Perhaps you will be the lucky recipient of roses on Friday. I have a couple tricks up my sleeve to help you increase their vase-life. First, remove the roses from their box and give each one a fresh cut on a forty-five degree angle.

If you can do this under water, all the better to prevent what I call "bent head" or "limp neck" syndrome- an air bubble clogging the stem.

You should also remove any foliage that will be underwater - it will rot and make the water stinky and full of bacteria. Leaves on the top third of the stem can remain as long as they look pretty; unbeknownst to me, these will continue to photosynthesize, making food to help the rose color up to its full potential.

We all have had a few "bent heads" or "limp necks" in our day - a shame, considering how expensive roses are, especially when purchased on a holiday. If you catch this situation early there is a way to remedy it: recut the stem of the rose or roses in question and soak them horizontally, under water for a half-hour or so.

This technique is contrary to what one might think is good for a many-petaled flower. I would argue that water trapped within the petals would breed fungi and shorten vase-life, but I guess if the rose is doomed to the

fate of a bent head, it's worth a shot. Regular folks have tried it in the bathtub and have been successful.

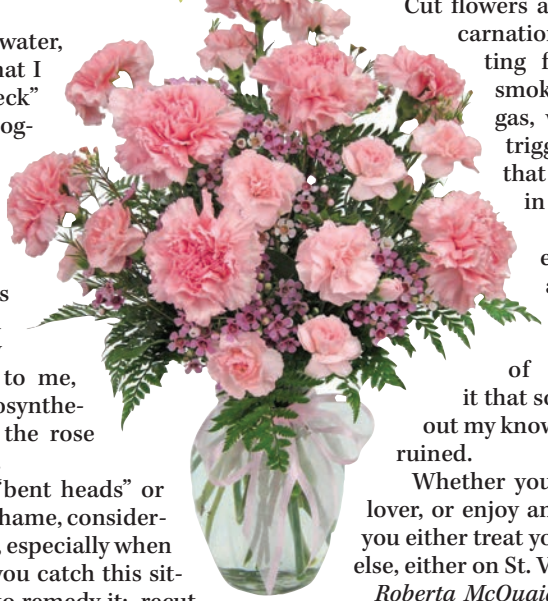
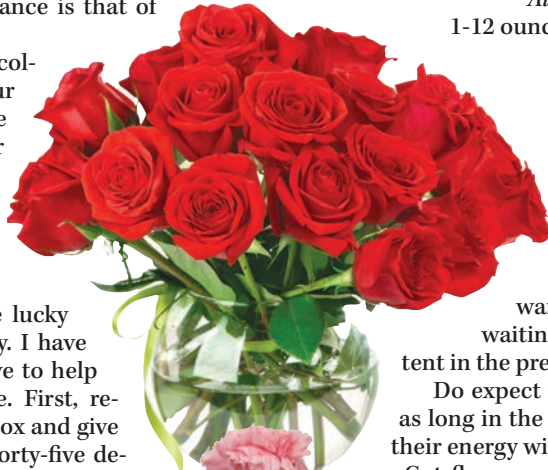
How about those carnations? They aren't as fussy as their more expensive counterparts, but here are a few helpful hints. Recut their stems to just above a node (the bump where leaves come from) and place in floral preservative.

If you don't have floral preservative, you can make your own. Here is a recipe that, just like the professional blends, contain the three necessary components for fresh flower health and longevity: carbohydrates, a biocide and pH adjuster.

- It sugar
- It bleach
- 2t lemon or lime juice (strained)
- 1 quart water

Alternate version:

- 1-12 ounce can decaf lemon/lime soda
- 3 cans water
- IT bleach
- Mix and stir to flatten



Each of these preservatives should be stored in the refrigerator with contents labeled.

Sometimes, carnations come very tightly budded. If you want them to open quickly, without waiting days, you can up the sugar content in the preservative to force bloom.

Do expect that you won't get to enjoy them as long in the vase if you do this, though, since their energy will be spent.

Cut flowers are sensitive to ethylene gas, and carnations are especially sensitive. Rotting foliage, ripening fruit, cigarette smoke and exhaust all release ethylene gas, which acts like a hormone that triggers maturation and death. For that reason we avoid storing flowers in the household fridge.

I had my own firsthand experience. I had arrangements to make at work, but had jury duty the day they were needed. I made them a day early and cleared out one of the coolers. Wouldn't you know it that someone put an apple inside without my knowing. Sure enough everything was ruined.

Whether you are a rose lover or a carnation lover, or enjoy any flower in between, I hope that you either treat yourself, or are treated by someone else, either on St. Valentine's Day or sometime soon!

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 newspa-

per 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.

Opinion

Guest Column



My daughter saw a pair of hooded mergansers on the Ware River on two different occasions.

She said, "They were riding those rapids to the bridge and looked like they were having a blast. Then they just hung out under the bridge."

The hooded merganser is the smallest of the mergansers at 18 inches long. It has a short thin bill and crested head. The male has a black head, white fan shaped patch within the crest, which is only visible when the crest is raised. The flanks are brown and the back black. It also has black vertical lines on its white breast. The female is plain brown with a darker back and red brown crest. The immature female looks like the adult female and the immature male similar to the female, but they some white in the crest.

Hooded mergansers dive underwater and eat small fish, frogs, crustaceans, mollusks and



Male and female hooded merganser

aquatic insects. Courtship begins in mid winter. Females do head bobbing and pumping. Most male displays involve crest raising. The male makes a frog like note and the female makes a hoarse "gak."

The female lays six to eight white eggs in a nest of grasses and down placed in a tree cavity or nest box. Mergansers summer on wooded rivers and lakes and winters on similar locations as well as along the coast.

Ludlow birds

On Saturday, Jan. 25 a Ludlow resident emailed about the birds in her backyard. She said, "The usual visitors are purple finches, white-throated sparrows, juncos, titmice, nut-

hatches, bluejays, mourning doves, cardinals and red bellied woodpeckers. Yesterday Jan. 24, we had a cowbird at the feeder. We haven't had any visit us in the five years we've fed the birds in winter. Just wondering if others in the area have seen a cowbird this early."

Bluebirds and northern flicker

I received an email on Sunday, Jan 26 from a North Brookfield resident, She said, "I live in North Brookfield, down on Lake Lashaway. I had five blue birds and a northern flicker on my feeders this morning along with the usual birds. Early Spring?"



Northern flicker

Brimfield birds

I received an email from a Brimfield resident on Jan. 21. He said, "Today in the yard all the usual birds were about however the junco flock has increased to about 65 birds. Other not so commonly seen birds were a Carolina wren, and a white-throated and a tree sparrows."

In another email he wrote, "Yes the blue jays sure do like the peanuts. The titmice also get their share. And once in awhile a red-bellied woodpecker with show up and take a peanut. When I walk around the yard there are a couple of places under a tree or shrub where the ground is littered with empty peanut shells."

Birds in my yard

I continue to have the usual birds at my

feeders and suet feeder such as black capped chickadees, titmice, white breasted nuthatches, downy woodpeckers, mourning doves and blue jays. Now that it is February, I expect to see male red-winged blackbirds.

I received a state of the art bird feeder equipped with a camera for my birthday. I have not set it up yet. I will take it down once bears come out of hibernation because I would not want it destroyed.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing my-backyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

A day in the life: Never a dull moment



People often ask me what a patient advocate does. Truly, when my phone rings I never know what the day might bring. But if I have done my job, by the time my head hits the pillow, I will have made someone's life better or their hospital stay safer.

Let me walk you through a day in the life of a patient advocate.

Morning

I receive a call from a senior health-care industry professional with a referral for a man who is struggling to care for his wife, who has Alzheimer's. Dementia is hard not only on the person who has it, but on their loved ones who are determined to care for them. It can be a

lonely existence.

This man needs support because he wants to keep his wife safe at home, meaning he will need to find 24-hour care. In addition, he is suffering from caregiver stress and has health challenges of his own. It seems also that a new neurologist is needed to get a fresh set of eyes and a new evaluation of his wife's condition.

One of our nurses will follow up with this couple after I share their story and initial priorities of care.

Then, a community member calls regarding an elderly neighbor who has been in the hospital for several weeks and is having complications that come with prolonged hospitalization. People who are hospitalized for days or weeks at a time may suffer sleep deprivation and disorientation, which can complicate their recovery.

The neighbor is concerned that the man is not receiving the care he should, but I explain that we cannot legally help unless we are formally retained and have the individual's or family's permission to act as their representative.

In addition, the man has a wife at home with dementia and no family around to help out. We plan to have a call this afternoon to discuss having one of our nurse advocates going to assess the patient's situation and make sure his wife is well cared for in his absence.

Afternoon

I prepare for a panel discussion presented by the National Association of Healthcare Advocacy Consultants.

Two sisters contact me about their father, who is experiencing complications following what was supposed to be a straightforward surgical procedure. When they tell me his story, I realize that the proper standard of care is not being met. Because of the trauma he is experiencing, the patient is also displaying disturbing psychological symptoms for which he is being (unnecessarily as it turns out) medicated.

The sisters tell me that they have tried to speak to the medical staff but don't feel they are being heard. Meanwhile, they are terrified of losing their dad.

Patient advocates are often able to dial back the drama and get the situation sorted because we understand patient rights as well as the hospital's perspective and can try to work out a win-win for all concerned. I schedule a visit to the hospital. Later, if this family receives a bill from the hospital, I will work to make sure they don't pay a penny.

Evening

I get a call from a former client whose sister had a massive stroke four years ago, and now the insurance company is saying she no longer qualifies for placement in a skilled nursing

facility. There has been fragmented communication among the physicians, therapists and family.

The family wants me to appeal the insurance company's decision and gather documentation that will allow the sister to be approved for further long-term care, therapy and high-tech care for her needs. While waiting for documents, I speak with the woman's daughter to formulate a plan.

Finally, I update presentations for our Nurse Advocate Entrepreneur training program and speak with two nurses who are eager to sign up and start their own advocacy businesses. From their hospital experiences, they can see that families need a great deal of help these days navigating the health-care landscape.

My days aren't always this busy, but every day reminds me of the significant impact I can have on someone's life, health and well-being. It's worth it, to be sure.

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.

PROJECT ■ from page 1

which is better because we were originally projecting to be over 200 but our soil and groundwater conditions are excellent," Johnson said.

To help with energy efficiency, the project team has worked hard to design the building so that it has as few windows as possible while simultaneously letting in plenty of natural light.

Currently, the plan is for the building to be about 18% windows, with each window being triple glazed to prevent any heat or cool air loss in the winter and summer.

"They worked hard on designing this building to one) get the natural light and two) to not have an excessive amount of window space because meeting the energy codes can be difficult to deal with," Johnson said.

With all of this thought put into the design of the building, Johnson is confident that Agawam should receive the maximum amount of reimbursement from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees.

"We are on track to receive the maximum reimbursement, we are well within all guidelines," Johnson said.

Johnson sends out his gratitude to everyone on the school building committee for all of the work they have put into making the project possible.

He is also grateful to all of the high school staff who have put forward their efforts to plan for this project.

"Many thanks to all the teachers and staff up at the high school, especially Principal Blain who has invested a tremendous amount of time into the project and been a great asset relative to trying to understand the day-to-day operation and what would work best in a new high school," Johnson said.

WARMING ■ from page 1

to reach out to town hall during their hours (8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday) if they are having troubles with heat in their homes.

"They can obviously contact or come down to town hall and we will see what we can do if it is during normal work hours," Johnson said.

Those in town hall will do their best to provide people with the resources they need in order to find a warm place to stay.

If people have difficulty outside of town hall's normal hours, they are encouraged to reach out to the police or fire stations, which are open all day every day.

"You can always stop there and someone can point you in the right direction," Johnson said.

Reaching out to town hall or to the police or fire stations is especially encouraged if people imagine that their lack of heat will be a long-term issue.

Town hall will do their best to try to find a way to help and if not the police or fire stations have contact information for emergency shelter locations.

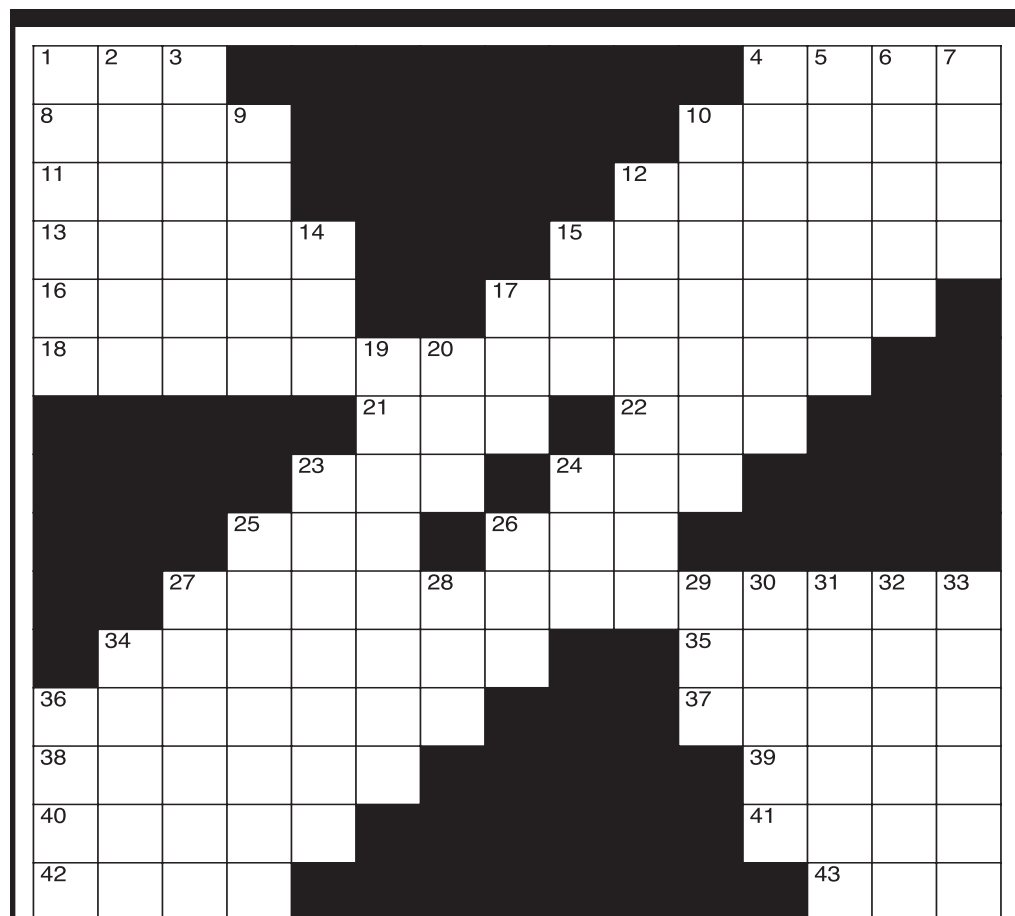
"If it is something that we can help with then we are obviously going to try to do what we can," Johnson said.

If there were to be a spike in cold or in need of additional shelter, Johnson would work with various department heads in order to help get people the support they need.

Additionally, Johnson made it clear that these options are not only available during the winter but also during the summer when many can suffer from the extreme heat.

"A lot of folks don't have air conditioning so when we get extreme heat a lot of people just need to get out and get somewhere where they can cool down," Johnson said.

In either case, extreme cold or extreme heat, people are encouraged to seek out help when they need it and Agawam will do what they can to get them support.



CLUES ACROSS

- Racquet sport group (abbr.)
- Norse god of thunder
- Russian industrial city
- What's good for the ___
- Round-ish shape
- Baltimore MLBer
- French modernist painter
- Burned with water
- Intestinal issue
- Take the lead
- Prove oneself worthy
- None
- Tax collector
- Swiss river
- Gymnast Raisman
- Baby's dining accessory
- Canadian beer distributor
- Iconic American tourist destination
- More expansive
- Alert
- Popular boots
- Doc ___
- Showings
- Conclusion
- Share a common boundary
- Shooting sport
- Popular side dish
- Global energy firm
- Chronicles (abbr.)

CLUES DOWN

- Type of bomb
- Polynesian island country
- Heavenly body
- Hard workers
- Covered
- Johns Hopkins Hospital founder
- Plant of the grass family
- Island person of the Bering Sea
- Storehouse
- Scarlet-flowered desert shrub
- A pituitary hormone
- Female sibling
- Monetary unit of Afghanistan
- Empowering
- Space station
- Disorder
- State of fuss
- Footwear for babies
- Nuclear reactor (abbr.)
- Droves
- Affirmative
- Male parent
- Utter obscenities
- Type of verse
- Unpleasant person
- One who settles down
- Founder of source-based history
- A way to snarl

Library now offers passes to Mark Twain Museum

AGAWAM – The Agawam Public Library has passes to several area museums for its members to use.

Among them, the Mark Twain House and Museum located on Farmington Ave. in Hartford, Conn. To make a reservation to use the passes, call the information desk at 413-789-1550, ext. 4.

Passes are available to CW MARS cardholders eighteen years or older with a valid library card in good standing (no lost items, no fees of \$10 or more).

Passes may be reserved up to four weeks in advance. There is a limit of 1 museum per family per day, and 3 reservations per family per month – 1 reservation for each individual museum per month. Passes are due at the end of the following business day.

Please return passes to the Information

Desk if the library is open. They may be returned in the outdoor book drop when the library is closed. Passes must be returned on time so they will be available for the next person.

Late fees are \$5.00 per day with a maximum fine of \$50. Museum passes will not be renewed. Museum passes cannot be checked out to juvenile accounts.

Passes are picked up and returned at the Information Desk.

You must present your library card. Please make reservations on the card that you will use to pick up the pass. Passes may be returned in the outdoor book drop when the library is closed.

Passes are available to several area museums, including Holyoke Children's, and the Connecticut Trolley Museum.

Hibernians to hold Irish night Feb. 22

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 Hennessy 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. The event was sold out the past 2 years so get tickets early. The Hibernians wish a Happy St. Patrick's Day to all.

Scholarship applications 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 are available through Agawam High School or can be found on the website at agawamgardenclub.com.

Jon and Li Waterman to present historical music retrospective

AGAWAM – On Monday, March 3, Jon and Li Waterman will perform "A Journey through the Roots of American Popular Music" at the Agawam Public Library at 750 Cooper St. in Agawam at 6:30 p.m.

The program consists of original songs and history, and explores some of the fascinating characters and events at the roots of the blues, country, rock and other genres of American popular music.

The show also touches on the darker side of American popular music as well as how music helps shape our identity as a

people.

Songwriter and musician Jon Waterman has performed his music and history programs in venues throughout New England as part of a series called Live Music Making History Live.

The series was designed to encourage the celebration and exploration of history through music.

The program is supported in part by a grant from the Agawam Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

Springfield Anesthesia Service physicians, nurses join Baystate

Organizations align on path forward following decades of partnership

SPRINGFIELD – Following a longstanding partnership, Baystate Health and Springfield Anesthesia Services (SAS) are pleased to announce that as of January 1, 2025, anesthesiologists and certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) who worked for SAS are now members of the Department of Anesthesia of Baystate Medical Practices.

Both organizations aligned on this path forward, determining it the best opportunity to serve the needs of the community.

"This transition reinforces Baystate Health's commitment to delivering high-quality care and enhances the strength of our diverse clinical departments that rely on expert anesthesia services every day," said Dr. Andrew Arterstein, Chief Physician Executive and Chief Academic Officer for Baystate Health; President of Baystate Medical Practices; and Regional Executive Dean and Pro-

fessor of Medicine, for UMass Chan Medical School-Baystate.

All SAS team members were extended employment opportunities with Baystate Health and 93% of the former SAS providers accepted that offer.

"Baystate Health community is thrilled to integrate these talented professionals into our clinically driven, physician-led system," said Dr. Peter Vieira, Chairman of the Department of Anesthesiology. "We have worked alongside them for many years and so the transition has

been met with enthusiasm from members of both the Baystate and SAS teams."

SAS, a trusted institution for 58 years who have been integral to Baystate Health since 1976, was comprised of Cardiac, Pediatric, and Pain Management fellowship-trained and General Anesthesiologists, as well as a team of highly qualified Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists who will be making their transition to BMP.

Baystate Health welcomes these new physicians and CRNAs into the Baystate Health.

Amy H. Carberry Fine Art Gallery celebrates Black History month

SPRINGFIELD – The Amy H. Carberry Fine Arts Gallery at Springfield Technical Community College honors Black History month with an exciting collaborative art workshop and exhibition led by Springfield artist Kahli Hernandez, also known as "The World Famous Artoonist."

STCC students, including members of the Art Club, joined Hernandez in a hands-on workshop Jan. 29. Together, they created a one-of-a-kind art exhibition titled "The World Famous Artoonist's 'Art Heist,'" which will be on display at the Carberry Gallery from Feb. 8 to April 4.

"I thought it would be cool to have aspects of an art gallery and an escape room tied to it," Hernandez said. "There are puzzles and things like that. It hasn't been done before. I like to be a little bit risky when it comes to ideas."

During the workshop in the gallery, students created art that will be a part of the exhibit this spring.

"We all gathered here to make some paintings that will be used in the exhibit as a collaborative piece," said STCC fine arts student Morgan Wright, president of the Art Club. "It's really a community builder and a fun exercise."

Wright described her art as "abstract, bright and colorful."

To celebrate the collaboration, the gallery will host a public reception on Saturday, Feb. 8, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Community members are invited to explore this immersive and imaginative exhibit.

The Art Heist exhibition, a dynamic and interactive experience, blends an escape room with a street-style art gallery. Attendees will encounter puzzles to solve and decipher while navigating through Hernandez's colorful, cartoon-inspired artwork. The goal? To avoid vigilant "security" and successfully "steal" original Artoonist pieces.

Attendees who successfully make it through the escape room can take home an original print

made by Hernandez.

Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., and raised in Springfield, Hernandez is known for his vibrant, playful style, which combines bold black lines, graffiti influences and biblical themes. His artistic journey began with a No. 2 pencil and computer paper and has since expanded to mixed media, acrylics, oil and aerosol paints.

Sondra Peron, STCC professor and art gallery coordinator, said she was thrilled to offer a unique experience for students and the community.

"One of the things our students can get out of this is the opportunity to participate in art making," Peron said. "The artwork is being created in the gallery, and it's going to be put around the space. Usually, an artist creates in a studio and not in a gallery. This is a unique experience."

Interim Dean of Liberal and Professional Studies Steven Nelson expressed his enthusiasm for the upcoming exhibition. "Art has the power to bring people together and spark meaningful conversations. This collaboration between our talented students and Kahli Hernandez is a wonderful way to celebrate Black History Month while showcasing creativity and innovation. The 'Art Heist' exhibition is an exciting example of how the arts can inspire and engage our community by changing the way audiences see and interact with artwork."

The Carberry Gallery and all associated events are free and open to the public. For more information, including gallery hours, visit stcc.io/carberry.

HCC announces upcoming Black History month events

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College is celebrating Black History month in February with a series of events highlighting this year's national theme: "African Americans and Labor."

On-campus events begin Wednesday, Feb. 5, at 11 a.m., in HCC's Learning Collaborative (Frost 265), with a presentation by Erika Slocumb, a Black history scholar and director of interpretation and visitor experience at the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center in Hartford, Conn: Reliquary of Blackness: Reclaiming, Retelling, and Reframing the History of Black folks in Holyoke."

Slocumb, a Springfield resident and PhD student in African-American Studies at the University of Massachusetts, will focus on the history of Black communities in western Massachusetts with an emphasis on labor history.

On Wednesday, Feb. 12, at 11 a.m., in the HCC Campus Center, jazz professor and guitarist Robert Ferrier will lead "Rhythms Through Time: A Celebration of Jazz," a discussion about jazz and performance by the HCC All Stars band.

On Tuesday, Feb. 18, at 12:30 p.m., HCC will host a watch party for a Zoom presentation by UMass graduate student Tiamba M. Wilkerson: "Voices of Solidarity: on Black Union Participation." Wilkerson is a PhD student in sociology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst whose research focuses on the intersections of race and gender in the

labor market, racial capitalism, neoliberal urban redevelopment and gentrification, as well as race and place in the South

Black History Month events at HCC continue on Wednesday, Feb. 26, with a Harambee Celebration at 11 a.m. in the HCC Campus Center. Harambee is a Swahili word that means "pull together" or "unite." It's a celebratory event that honors the contributions and achievements of Black people. HCC's event will feature food, music, and an open mic session.

"At a time when conversations about equity, inclusion, and justice are more important than ever, celebrating Black History Month allows us to uplift voices that have historically been marginalized," HCC's Black Leadership Council and Black History Month Committee, said in a campus-wide email. "Recognizing and honoring these histories is not just about the past, it's about shaping a future that embraces diversity, fosters understanding, and empowers all members of our community."

In addition, HCC's Marieb Adult Learner Success Center will host weekly book readings, accompanied by milk and cookies in the Parent Learning Center (Frost 269) for student parents and their children: Feb. 5, 2 p.m. (When Harriet Met Sojourner by Catherine Clinton); Feb. 12, 2 p.m. (All Because You Matter by Tami Charles); Feb. 20, 12:30 p.m. (Black is a Rainbow Color by Angela Joy); Feb. 26, 2 p.m. (Sulwe by Lupita Nyong'o).

Also, on Friday, Feb. 21, at 12:30 p.m., HCC will host a Black History Month-themed trivia contest in the HCC Campus Center.

To learn more about Black History Month months at HCC or to participate remotely, please go to: hcc.edu/bhm.



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SPORTS

Brownies take down Mustangs

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

AGAWAM – Playing their fifth game in a span of six days, the Monson Lady Mustangs ran out of gas against the Agawam Brownies.

The Brownies, who held a 21-17 halftime advantage, outscored the Lady Mustangs, 31-13, during the second half enroute to a 52-30 non-league home victory, last Tuesday night.

“This was our fifth game during the past six days, so my players are exhausted,” said Monson girls’ varsity basketball coach Alyssa Darling. “We were able to keep the score close during the first half.”

Monson senior Olivia Chrzan became the first boys or girls’ basketball player in the history of Monson High School to score 2,000 career

points in a 40-38 win at Taconic twenty-four hours earlier.

“Everybody was very excited to see Olivia score her 2,000th career point,” Darling said. “I’m very glad that she was able to reach that milestone. She has put in a lot of hard work and really deserves it.”

Despite having a 5-10 overall record, the Lady Mustangs were ranked 12th in the MIAA Division 5 state power rankings. They were also ranked second in the Western Mass. Class D rankings.

“It’s nice to see that we’re still in playoff concentration despite having a below .500 record,” Darling added. “We’re hoping to make a good run in both tournaments. We just want to keep playing for a little bit longer.”

Chrzan, who scored a game-high



Isabella Laprise holds the ball back looking to pass.



Katelyn Cleavall powers around the defense.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

BASKETBALL | page 8



Sophia Laprise passes around the perimeter.



Emma LaCresse passes into the paint.



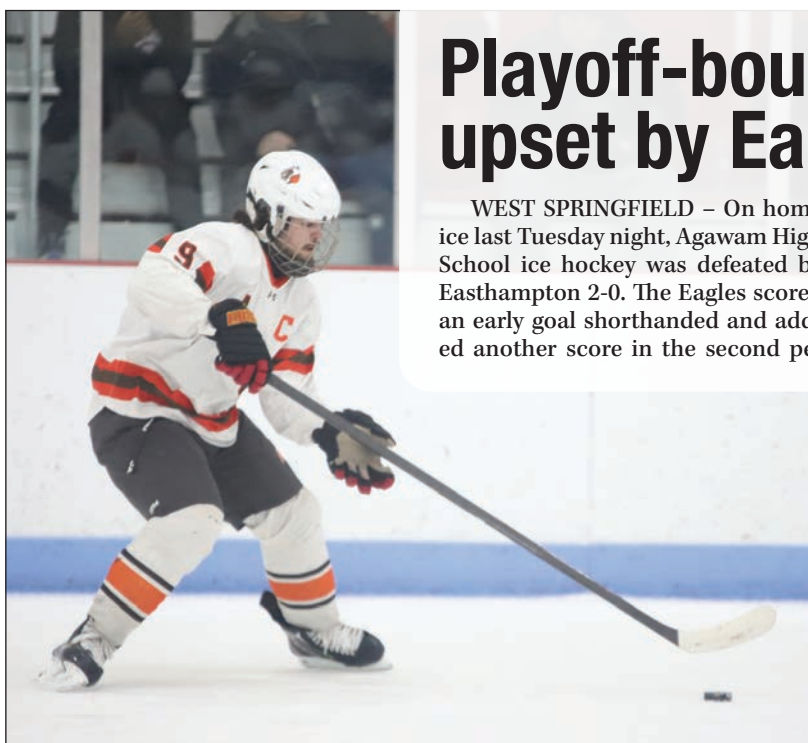
Carlina Calabrese heads around the arc to score.



Mia Canavan heads into the paint.



Aiden Pisano passes away from the wall.

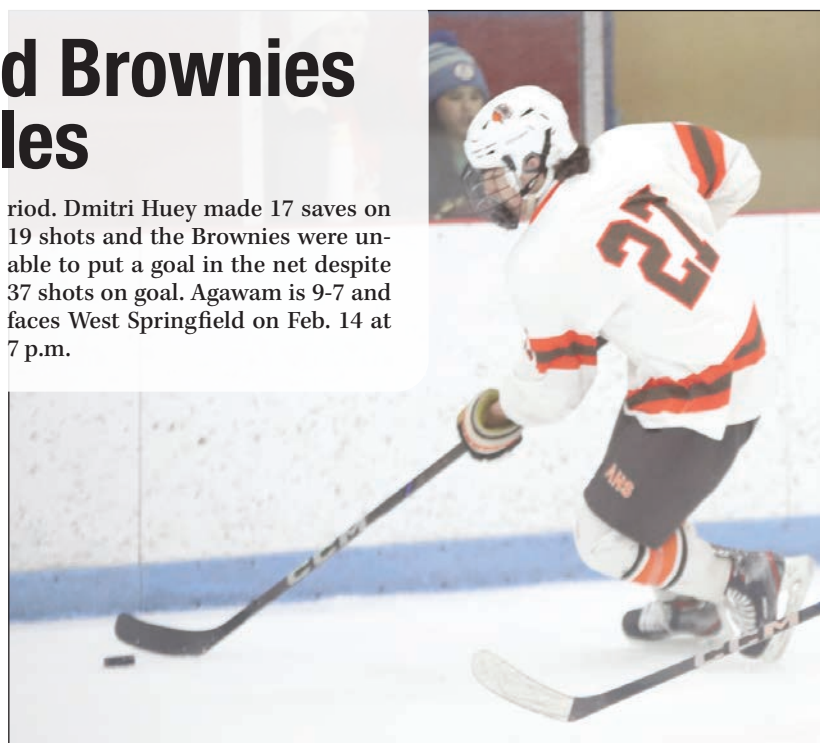


Angelo Robbins looks to pass near center ice.

Playoff-bound Brownies upset by Eagles

WEST SPRINGFIELD – On home ice last Tuesday night, Agawam High School ice hockey was defeated by Easthampton 2-0. The Eagles scored an early goal shorthanded and added another score in the second pe-

riod. Dmitri Huey made 17 saves on 19 shots and the Brownies were unable to put a goal in the net despite 37 shots on goal. Agawam is 9-7 and faces West Springfield on Feb. 14 at 7 p.m.



Trevor Del Barba tries to send the puck out of the defensive end.



Dmitri Huey makes a save.



Landon Ashford and Vinnie Montagna go after the puck.



Camden Saltmarsh starts a play up the ice.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Sports

Brownies rebound with three straight wins

AGAWAM – After a setback against Pittsfield a couple of weeks ago at home, Agawam High School boys basketball, which has won 13 games against just four losses, picked up their last three games, including a Feb. 8 win at East Longmeadow 61-41.

In the win over East Longmeadow, Agawam got 29 points from its 1,000-point scorer Elijah Maldonado. Melih Tomak added 14 points and Brody Sheehan scored 11 points

for the Brownies.

Agawam had one final matchup with Wachusetonah to close out its regular season. The Brownies are likely for the Class A Western Mass. Tournament and have also made the state tournament.

Despite Agawam's high-win total, Agawam is actually below the top 32 in the Division 2 Power Rankings, likely due to strength of schedule.

Springfield 'Ice-O-Topes' score win over Providence Bruins

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Ice-O-Topes, née Thunderbirds, (22-17-2-3) rode a four-goal flourish in the final period to a 5-2 victory on Saturday night over the Providence Bruins (25-15-4-1) before a sellout crowd of 6,793 inside the MassMutual Center. Springfield has still never lost as the Ice-O-Topes, improving to a perfect 5-0 record as their alter ego, while the team also extended its point streak to seven straight games.

It became evident in the early stages that goals would be scarce on this night, as Bruins All-Star netminder Michael DiPietro and Springfield stalwart Colten Ellis showed no signs of blinking in the opening 20 minutes. Matt Luff had two of the better chances for Springfield, but the iron rang on the veteran winger on one attempt, while DiPietro flashed terrific lateral agility to stonewall the Ice-O-Topes forward on another offering.

Not to be outdone, Ellis was timely in his own right, making his brightest save of the frame when he denied a breakaway backhand attempt from Max Jones.

The first three power plays of the night proved unsuccessful, but on their second attempt in the closing minutes of the middle period, the Bruins finally solved Ellis as Jones hit Riley Tufte on a slap feed in the right circle, where the big centerman lifted a shot under the crossbar to make it 1-0 Providence at 18:14 of period two.

In desperate need of a response, the 'Topes got just that in the final seconds of the stanza, as MacKenzie MacEachern and Dalibor Dvorsky combined to work the puck to the

edge of the blue paint on a 3-on-2 rush, with Nikita Alexandrov cashing in with just eight seconds separating the teams from the dressing room.

Alexandrov was far from finished, and at 4:01 of the third, with Leo Loof holding the puck at the left point, Alexandrov dashed to the blue paint, where he deflected Loof's pass in behind DiPietro to hand Springfield the 2-1 lead.

Just 1:41 later, the lead got a boost as Otto Stenberg filled the center lane, receiving a pass from Luff and firing it through DiPietro to make it a 3-1 game at 5:42. The tally snapped Stenberg's eight-game goal drought and also doubled as his first goal on home ice.

The Bruins would not go down easily, and Vinni Lettieri stepped in front from behind the goal line to lift a backhander home before Ellis could get across, shrinking the Topes' lead to 3-2 at 7:45.

Unlike the night before, the T-Birds would not let the Bruins get even this time around, killing off a Providence power play before adding onto their lead once again at 17:48 when Alexandrov fielded a pass out of his feet at the bottom of the right circle before slipping it into the blue paint. Before DiPietro could smother it, Matthew Peca arrived to jam it across the line for his team-leading 17th of the season, giving Springfield a 4-2 advantage.

Dvorsky joined Alexandrov with three-point nights when he threw a puck from center ice into an empty net with 1:29 to polish off a four-goal final period and earn Springfield three of a possible four points on the weekend.

Worcester Railers drop finale to Atlanta Gladiators

WORCESTER – The Worcester Railers HC (20-20-2-4 46pts) lost to the Atlanta Gladiators (20-22-4-2, 46pts), on Saturday night by the final score of 4-2 in front of a crowd of 7,094 at the DCU Center. The Railers are back on the ice next at the Credit Union of Texas Event Center taking on the Allen Americans on Friday, February 14th at 8:10 p.m. EST.

It was Atlanta who scored first tonight as Cody Sylvester (2-0-2) put the Gladiators up 1-0 19:26 into the first period. Just 31 seconds later Andrew Jarvis extended the Atlanta lead to 2-0 heading into the second period. Worcester got their first on the night off the stick of Matias Rajaniemi (1-0-1) 2:34 into the third period. Atlanta scored back-to-back empty-net goals in the third period from Cody Sylvester and Ryan Cranford (1-0-1). The Railers then made it 4-2 with a goal from Matt Ustaski (1-0-1) 18:41 into the third to finish off the night's scoring.

It took nearly the entire first period for either team to score until Atlanta took the 1-0 lead. It was Cody Sylvester (17th) who put the Gladiators up 1-0. With just three seconds re-

maining in the first period Andrew Jarvis (4th) extended the Atlanta lead to 2-0 with a low slap shot to beat Bullion down low. Shots favored Worcester 12-10 in the first period.

Despite power play chances for both sides neither team was able to net one in the second period. The Railers went to the power play twice in the period, first at the 10:02 mark into the second followed by another chance at the 13:38 mark. Atlanta got their power play opportunity 16:17 into second frame, but the Worcester penalty kill held strong keeping Atlanta from jumping out to a three-goal lead. Shots favored Worcester 14-7 in the second.

Worcester made it a 2-1 game early in the third following a goal from Matias Rajaniemi (3rd) 2:34 into the third period. The Railers went to the empty net in an effort to tie the game late, but Atlanta scored twice on the empty net, the first was Cody Sylvester (18th) followed by Ryan Cranford (9th). The Railers then got one back scored by Matt Ustaski (3rd) leading to a 4-2 final. Shots favored Worcester 15-5 in the third and 41-22 in the game.

BASKETBALL from page 7

19 points against Agawam, is the only senior listed on the Lady Mustangs roster. Their other seven players are either eighth graders, freshmen, or sophomores.

Six of the eight points that Chrzan scored in the first half came from the free throw line.

"I thought we did a very good job against Olivia in tonight's game," said Agawam head coach Tim Murphy. "She still made a bunch of free throws."

The Brownies were ranked 31st in the Division 2 power rankings and fifth in the Western Mass. Class A rankings.

"We do play a lot of Division 4 and 5 teams," Murphy said. "Even though a lot of those teams are very good, it really doesn't help our power rankings very much. I really liked how we played in the second half of tonight's game."

A total of eight players scored for the home team led by senior Emma LaCresse with 10 points.

Senior Hannah Solitario scored four of her

six points during the first four minutes of the first quarter.

With 3:30 left in the opening quarter, a fast-break lay-up by junior Isabella Laprise (9 points) gave Agawam a 6-0 advantage.

Monson battled back with a jumper from freshman Cali Zielinski and four foul shots from Chrzan.

Another Monson freshman is Madigan Harrison-Graves. She made a 3-pointer from the right side of the key giving her team an 11-10 lead a minute into the second quarter.

The Brownies retook lead when senior Mia Canavan hit a foul-line jumper.

The Lady Mustangs answered back with a put-back hoop from sophomore Lylia Ellis (6 points) and a Chrzan lay-up.

Agawam then closed out the first half with a 9-2 run.

The Brownies, who outscored the Lady Mustangs, 13-5, during the third quarter, held a 34-22 lead entering the fourth quarter.

The home team continued to pull away during the final eight minutes of the contest.

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Basketball Hall of Fame unveils schedule for 2025 enshrinement

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame has unveiled its Enshrinement Weekend schedule for the Class of 2025. The celebratory weekend will culminate with the Enshrinement Ceremony on Saturday, Sept. 6, in Springfield—the Birthplace of Basketball. Finalists, as well as select award winners, will be announced on Friday, Feb. 14, during NBA All-Star Weekend in San Francisco, and the Class of 2025 will be revealed on Saturday, April 5, at the Final Four in San Antonio.



Enshrinement Weekend will begin at Mohegan Sun on Friday, Sept. 5, with the Tip-Off Celebration and Awards Gala. The Class of 2025 and returning Hall of Famers will then travel to Springfield, Mass., where they will participate in the weekend's traditional events taking place at the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame and Springfield's Symphony Hall.

First-time candidates for the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame Class of 2025 include Carmelo Anthony, Sue Bird, Maya Moore, Dwight Howard, Doc Rivers, Billy Donovan, Sylvia Fowles, Chamique Holdschlaw, Mark Few, Lisa Bluder, Marc Gasol, and Mickey Arison.

A limited number of VIP Packages for the 2025 Enshrinement Ceremony will go on sale on Friday, Feb. 14, at 6 p.m. at hoopshall.com on the Hall of Fame's Enshrinement Ticket page or by calling the Basketball Hall of Fame at (413) 231-5513.

Individual tickets for the events will go on sale tentatively on Saturday, April 5, at 12 noon.

Details of the current schedule of events for Enshrinement 2025 are as follows:



Friday, September 5, at Mohegan Sun (Uncasville, Conn.)

Enshrinement 2025 Autograph Session

An opportunity to meet the Class of 2025 at their first public Enshrinement event. A ticket to this event will give fans the opportunity to receive one autograph per class member.

Enshrinement 2025 Press Conference

The official media availability for the Hall of Fame Class of 2025. This availability is only open to

credentialed members of the media, along with VIP Package ticket holders, and will be held at Mohegan Sun. The media credential application will open on Monday, July 21, at hoopshall.com/media.

Enshrinement Tip-Off Celebration and Awards Gala

The Class of 2025, along with the Hall's prestigious annual award winners, will be celebrated at this televised Enshrinement event at Mohegan Sun. During the event, the Class of 2025 will receive their Hall of Fame rings, courtesy

of Baron Championship Rings, and their official Hall of Fame jackets, provided by Reveal Suits. The program will additionally highlight the presentation of the Hall's annual John Bunn Lifetime Achievement Award and the Curt Gowdy Media Awards.

Saturday, Sept. 6, in Springfield, Mass.

Enshrinement Ceremony

VIP Reception at Springfield Marriott

Toast the incoming Hall of Fame Class of 2025 at the official VIP Reception prior to the sport's ultimate recognition. The party is limited to select ticket holders for the Enshrinement Ceremony. Shuttle service between the host location and Symphony Hall will be provided if needed. This exclusive party will set the stage for a memorable night on the Red Carpet and at the Ceremony.

Enshrinement Ceremony

Red Carpet Show at Symphony Hall

The Class of 2025, legendary Hall of Famers, and some of basketball's biggest icons take center stage on the red carpet in a live TV broadcast outside Symphony Hall.

Enshrinement Ceremony at Symphony Hall

One of the most elite nights on the basketball calendar each year, the Hall of Fame Class of 2025 will be formally enshrined into the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in a nationally televised ceremony.

Advertisement for 90 Meat Outlet featuring various meat products and prices. Includes 'LOWER PRICES TO BOOST YOUR BUDGET!', 'INFLATION', 'PRICE BUSTERS', and 'PRICES IN RED ARE AT OR BELOW LAST YEAR'S PRICES!'. Lists items like Pork Butt Strips, Beef Top Round, Chicken Drumsticks, etc. with prices and dates.

Advertisement for Adventure Tours of Warren. Features a photo of a red barn and text: 'Think Spring!', 'Share the Adventure with us soon!', and 'For further information call Randall at (413) 436-5357 or email adventuretours@att.net or go to www.adventuretoursforwarren.com'. Lists tour dates and prices like 'Some Like it Hot at PPAC \$120', '7-Night Bermuda Cruise from \$1699'.

MassWildlife gives advice on coyotes in winter

Mass Wildlife reminds people late January through early March is coyote mating season.

Coyotes are very active during the winter while courting mates and defending their territory. Coyotes are in every city and town in mainland Massachusetts, meaning the opportunity for human-coyote interaction is high. The mere presence of a coyote is not a cause for concern. MassWildlife officials are reminding the public to take these three simple steps to prevent conflict with coyotes during the mating season:

Protect pets

Pets should always be directly supervised on a leash when outdoors, especially during the coyote mating season. Coyotes can't differentiate between their natural prey and small pets, so they will view unprotected outdoor cats and small dogs as a potential food source.

Coyotes can't distinguish a dog from an intruding coyote, causing the coyote to be more aggressive toward medium and large sized dogs as they will view them as potential competition for mates and territory.

Do not supervise a pet from a distance on

porch or at the backdoor. Most coyote attacks involve dogs that are unsupervised or being supervised from a distance in a backyard.

Remove human-associated food sources

As opportunistic omnivores, coyotes will utilize naturally available food, like small mammals and birds and human-associated foods, like bird seed, garbage, compost, pet food left outdoors and backyard chickens.

Coyotes that find human-associated food sources will spend more time in yards and neighborhoods. It's essential for neighbors to work together to secure or remove all human-associated food sources in a community.

Coyotes that become dependent on human-associated food sources can start to exhibit bold behavior toward people. Never intentionally feed coyotes.

Haze coyotes

While coyotes are naturally wary of people, this fear can lessen over time when they spend a lot of time around people or when they are fed, intentionally or unintentionally, by people.

When you see a coyote in your yard, you

should aggressively haze it. Hazing is a safe technique used to deter an animal from an area or to change its behavior. The intent of hazing is to frighten, not injure, the animal.

You can haze a coyote by creating loud noises by yelling or using a small air horn, waving a jacket overhead to look bigger, spraying a hose or throwing small objects in the coyote's direction, and physically chasing and driving the coyote off. Haze the animal until it has fully left the area.

Hazing will not be effective if it's done from inside a building, from behind a screen door, or from a car. Hazing is most effective when it's done repeatedly, when a variety of techniques are used and when many people participate.

Negative encounters with coyotes are rare and human-coyote attacks are exceptionally rare. If people encounter a coyote that is exhibiting concerning behavior like approaching leashed pets, closely following people, or not running off when effectively hazed they should contact your local Animal Control Officer or local MassWildlife office for assistance. If there is an immediate threat to public safety, they should call local law enforcement.



Habitat for Humanity to host open house

WEST SPRINGFIELD – Join us Feb. 19 for an inspiring and interactive open house hosted by Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity. Whether you're curious about our mission, eager to get involved, or just want to learn more about how we build stronger communities, this is the perfect opportunity.

The fun begins at 5:30 p.m. at East Forest Park Library, 136 Surrey Road, Springfield. Free refreshments will be served as well as a Q&A session. Reserve a spot today: bit.ly/4jwNo0i

"Discover how you can make a difference," said Olga Callirgos, GSHFH Homeowner and Programs coordinator. "Whether you want to swing a hammer, donate, or simply spread the word, there's a place for everyone in our Habitat family."

GSHFH is a housing ministry dedicated to strengthening communities by empowering low-income families to change their lives and the lives of future generations through homeownership and home repair opportunities. This is accomplished by working in partnership with diverse people, from all walks of life, to build and repair simple, decent, affordable housing. Habitat's mission to provide homeownership opportunities to low-income families is unique as we offer a hand up not a hand out, requiring partner families to work alongside the community they will live in. GSHFH has helped roughly 100 local families realize their dream of homeownership over the last 38 years.

For more information, contact Olga Callirgos, Homeowner Programs coordinator, at callirgos@habitatsspringfield.org or (413) 739-5503 x1003.

VOC offering free tax preparation program

CHICOPEE – Valley Opportunity Council, which manages the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program that provides free tax preparation to those of low and moderate-income, began offering tax preparation and filing appointments on Tuesday, Jan. 21.

VITA tax preparation appointments are available through April 30, at three VOC locations: 20 Lathrop St., West Springfield, 516 Chicopee St., Chicopee; and 300 High St., Holyoke.

To schedule an appointment, call (413) 612-0206. Those eligible for the VITA program must live in Massachusetts or Connecticut with an income of up to \$67,000. Appointments are available on weekdays, evenings and weekends.

Certified volunteer tax professionals help qualified individuals prepare and file basic state and federal tax returns and prior year returns. VOC also offers free electronic filing of tax returns, allowing for individuals to receive their refunds much quicker than paper filings and save up to hundreds of dollars in filing fees.

The core mission and goal of VITA is to assist low- to moderate-income taxpayers in satisfying their tax responsibilities and minimize financial hardships, in turn saving taxpayers thousands of dollars in filing fees. The VITA program is sponsored by VOC and the Internal Revenue Service.

In 2024, VOC helped 861 individuals file their state and federal tax returns through the

VITA program. VOC has been providing the VITA program for 25 years in the communities of Chicopee, Holyoke, and as of last year, Westfield.

The Valley Opportunity Council is the largest and most diverse Community Action Agency in Western Massachusetts with an annual budget of \$45 million. With this Federal designation, the VOC has established a powerful network of support and collaborative services intended to encourage community members to actively achieve self-sufficiency for themselves and their families. VOC employs over 250 staff members and has 150 local vendors, providing a significant economic investment in the community.

Fire and ice festival plus luminaria set for Feb. 22

AMHERST – The Amherst Business Improvement District in collaboration with Amherst Recreation is excited to announce the Fifth Annual Fire and Ice Festival plus luminaria, scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 22 from 3-6 p.m. on the Amherst Common. This event marks the culmination of Amherst's week-long WinterFest and has become a highlight of the winter season, attracting over 2,000 attendees each year.

"The Fire and Ice Festival plus luminaria is a cherished tradition that brings the community of local families and residents, students and seniors together to celebrate the beauty and excitement of the winter season," said Sarah Barr of Amherst College, which presents the event. "We invite everyone to join us for an afternoon filled with art, performances, and delicious treats, all while supporting our local businesses."

Attendees can look forward to a variety of en-

gaging activities, including: Hot Cocoa, S'mores and Fire Pits: Warm up with complimentary hot cocoa and roast s'mores over open fire pits. Ice Sculptures: Marvel at ten intricate ice sculptures displayed throughout the Amherst Common, by Joe Almeida

Winter Tie-Dye Crafting: Participate in creative winter-themed tie-dye projects with Amherst Recreation. Fire Arts Performance: Enjoy a captivating fire juggling performance by Matica Arts.

Metal Sculptures Demonstration: Witness live metal sculpting by local artist and Hampshire College alum Kamil Peters. Wood Carving Demonstration: Observe Amherst resident Cody Stosz of Kodiak Carving showcase his wood carving skills. Special Menu Items: Savor delicious food and cocktail specials from the Inn on Boltwood.

Additionally, the Amherst Fire Department

will be present with their fire truck, offering fire safety information and an opportunity to meet Sparky the Fire Pup.

"This festival not only celebrates the winter season but also highlights the vibrant community spirit of Amherst," said John Page, Executive Director of the Amherst BID. "We encourage everyone to explore downtown Amherst's unique shops and restaurants before and after the event."

The Fire and Ice Festival plus Luminaria is organized by Amherst Recreation and the Amherst Business Improvement District made possible by the generosity of many local businesses and community partners including presenting sponsor Amherst College, Summerlin Floors, Encharter Insurance, Amherst Innovative Living and more. For more information and updates, people may visit amherstdowntown.com and follow us on social media @amherstdowntown.

Dept. of Transportation alerts customers of EZDriveMA scam

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation reminds customers to be mindful of text message-based scams, also known as smishing.

The scammers are claiming to represent the tolling agency and requesting payment for unpaid tolls. MassDOT urges customers to be cautious about email, text and phone scams demanding payment of outstanding toll balances. Some attempts have been made to trick

customers into sharing credit card numbers and other sensitive information by directing them to a website to pay their outstanding balances. MassDOT strongly encourages customers not to click the link contained in those messages.

MassDOT is underscoring that EZDriveMA will never request payment by text. All links associated with EZDriveMA will include www.EZDriveMA.com

The EZDrive "smishing" scam is part of a series of smishing scams which the FBI is aware of. Smishing is when unscrupulous actors send deceptive text messages to get someone to reveal confidential or financial information.

The FBI recommends individuals that receive the fraudulent messages to file a complaint with the IC3 by visiting www.ic3.gov and be sure to include: the phone number

from where the text originated and the website listed within the text.

Delete any smishing texts received. If people clicked any link or provided private information, take efforts to secure their personal information and financial accounts. MassDOT encourages all customers to stay alert to these types of scams and to contact EZDriveMA by visiting www.EZDriveMA.com with any questions about notifications.

Massachusetts 'Cat in the Hat' license plates available

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Museums announces Dr. Seuss specialty license plates are now available across Massachusetts.

Featuring the iconic Cat in the Hat, the plates honor Springfield native Theodor Seuss Geisel, whose writings inspired generations of learners worldwide. The museums are home to the world's only museum dedicated to the beloved children's author, with proceeds from the plates supporting their mission to promote literacy and learning.

"We're thrilled with the response to the Dr. Seuss plate and can't wait to see them across the state," said Kay Simpson, President and CEO of the Springfield Museums. "These plates are a great way to attract visitors to our museums, including the Amazing World of Dr. Seuss Museum, which welcomes thousands of people each year."

Dr. Seuss Plates can be purchased online or at an RMV service center. Any Massachusetts resident with a passenger car registered in the state is eligible. Specialty plates cost \$40, plus standard registration fees, with a portion supporting the museums. When re-registered, the full \$40 benefits literacy programs and services the museums.



The museums began a campaign to offer Massachusetts drivers a specialty license plate in 2019. Orders came in quickly at first but then plateaued during the pandemic. More recent efforts to resurrect the campaign got things moving again with the museums exceeding the minimum number of applications required for the Registry of Motor Vehicles to begin production of a specialty plate in March 2024. The Registry reached out to this initial round of supporters in late January 2025 with details on receiving their Cat in the Hat plates.

For questions, people may call the Springfield Museums Development Office at 413-314-6458 or email seussplates@springfieldmuseums.org.

The Amazing World of Dr. Seuss Museum was created with the gracious consent of Mrs. Audrey Geisel, widow of Theodor S. Geisel, and Dr. Seuss Enterprises, L.P.

The Springfield Museums uses art, history, science and Dr. Seuss to explore shared connections and unique perspectives to promote engagement, literacy and learning. The museums, located in the heart of downtown Springfield, Massachusetts, is home to five historic and architecturally significant buildings on a beautiful green known as the Quadrangle.

Westfield Athenaeum featuring Shawn Farley art exhibit

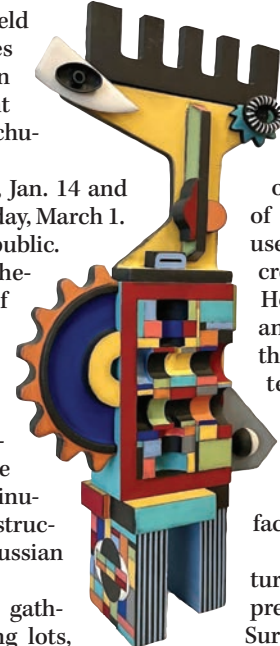
WESTFIELD – The Westfield Athenaeum, 6 Elm St., announces the next exhibit, the art of Shawn Farley, one of the most important artists working in Western Massachusetts today.

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 oth-



er 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 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.

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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.

This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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Public Notices

Legal Notice Town of Agawam

The Agawam Planning Board will hold public hearings on **Thursday, February 20, 2025 at 6:00 pm and 6:10 pm** and the Agawam City Council will hold its public hearings on **Monday, March 3, 2025 at 7:00 pm** at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. The purpose of these hearings will be to hear the petition of Mayor Johnson for proposed zoning amendments for "An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 180 of the Code of the City of Agawam Regarding Zoning Enforcement Powers and Penalties" & "An Ordinance to Amend Chapter 180 of the Code of City of Agawam Regarding Accessory Dwelling Units." City Council's public hearing will be livestreamed on the Town of Agawam's website at www.agawam.ma.us and will also be televised on Cable Access Channel 15 or Channel 1074. Copies of the proposed zoning amendments can be obtained from the Office of Planning and Community Development between the hours of 8:30am and 4:30pm at the Agawam Town Hall, 36 Main Street, Agawam, MA or by emailing the Office of the City Clerk for an electronic copy at vgioscia@agawam.ma.us.

Violet Baldwin, Chairman
Agawam Planning Board

Rosemary Sandlin
City Council President
02/06, 02/13/2025

LEGAL NOTICE PUBLIC HEARING

The Agawam City Council Administrative Sub-Committee will conduct a Public Hearing on **MONDAY, March 3, 2025 at 6:30PM**, at the Agawam Senior Center Hall Seminar Hall, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA, on an Eversource petition for permission to install a joint owned pole on or near 582 South Westfield Street, Feeding Hills, MA and include installation of a new pole(s), manholes, wires, cables and fixtures, including the necessary sustaining and protect fixtures along and across the property. This petition is available by contacting the City Council Office, 36 Main Street, Agawam, MA or by emailing bboard@agawam.ma.us.

Robert E. Rossi, Chair
Administrative Sub-Committee
2/06, 02/13/2025

**Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and
Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No.
HD25P0220EA**

**Estate of:
Brenda J Gallucci
Date of Death: 01/08/2025
CITATION ON PETITION
FOR FORMAL
ADJUDICATION**

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Brianna K Gallucci of Holyoke, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: **Brianna K Gallucci of Holyoke, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond in unsupervised administration.
IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/03/2025. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.**

**UNSUPERVISED
ADMINISTRATION UNDER
THE MASSACHUSETTS
UNIFORM PROBATE CODE
(MUPC)**

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.
Date: February 03, 2025
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
02/13/2025

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given by Langanet Towing pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c.255, Section 39A, that on **February 24, 2025** at 63 Ramah Cir S, Agawam the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy the garagekeeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicle.
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02/06, 02/13, 02/20/2025

**Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and
Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
Docket No. HD24P2278PM**
In the interests of:
Frederick M Hartung, Jr.
Of: Feeding Hills, MA
RESPONDENT
**Incapacitated Person/
Protected Person**
**CITATION GIVING NOTICE
OF PETITION TO EXPAND
THE POWERS OF
A CONSERVATOR**

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by **Jonathan H Hartung of Agawam, MA** in the above captioned matter requesting that the court:

Expand the powers of a Conservator of the Respondent.

The petition asks the court to make a determination that the powers of the Guardian and/or Conservator should be expanded, modified, or limited since the time of the appointment. The original petition is on file with the court.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 a.m. on the return date of

02/27/2025. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M. Hyland, First Justice of this Court.
Date: February 05, 2025
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
02/13/2024

**COMMONWEALTH
OF MASSACHUSETTS
Probate and Family Court
Department
HAMPDEN, Division
Docket No. HD24P2278PM**

To all persons interested in the estate of Frederick Milton Hartung, Jr., otherwise Frederick M. Hartung, Jr., of Agawam, in said County, a person under Conservatorship, single.

A petition has been presented to said Court for license to sell at private sale - certain real estate of said Frederick Milton Hartung, Jr., otherwise Frederick M. Hartung, Jr., for his maintenance.

If you desire to object thereto you or your attorney should file a written appearance in said Court at 50 State Street, Springfield, MA, before 10:00 a.m. on the 7th day of **March 2025**, the return day of this petition.

Witness, BARBARA M. HYLAND, Esquire, First Justice of said Court this sixth day of February 2025.
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register
02/13/2025

**Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate
and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758**

Docket No. HD25P0242EA
Estate of:
Larry L Hoague
Also known as:
**Larry L Hoague, Sr.,
Larry Leo Hoague, Sr.,
Larry Leo Hoague**
Date of Death: 12/14/2024
**CITATION ON PETITION
FOR FORMAL
ADJUDICATION**

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Susan F Hoague of Agawam, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: **Susan F Hoague of Agawam, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in unsupervised administration.
IMPORTANT NOTICE

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Susan F Hoague of Agawam, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/05/2025. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.**

**UNSUPERVISED
ADMINISTRATION UNDER
THE MASSACHUSETTS
UNIFORM PROBATE CODE
(MUPC)**

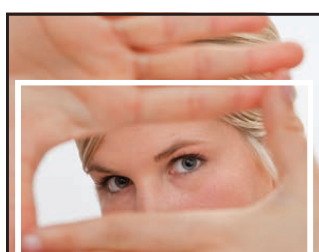
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.
Date: February 05, 2025
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
02/13/2025

**TOWN OF AGAWAM
LEGAL NOTICE
PUBLIC HEARING**

The Agawam City Council Administrative Committee will conduct a Public Hearing on **MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2025 at 6:30PM**, at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA, on a Verizon petition for permission to lay and maintain underground conduits, with the wires and cables to be placed therein, along and across 582 South Westfield Street, Feeding Hills, MA. with permission to lay and maintain underground conduits, manholes, cables, and wires in the above way for the purpose of making connections with such poles and buildings as it may desire for distributing purposes. This petition is available by contacting the City Council Office, 36 Main Street, Agawam, MA or by emailing bboard@agawam.ma.us.

Robert E. Rossi, Chair
Administrative Committee
02/13, 02/20/2025



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Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

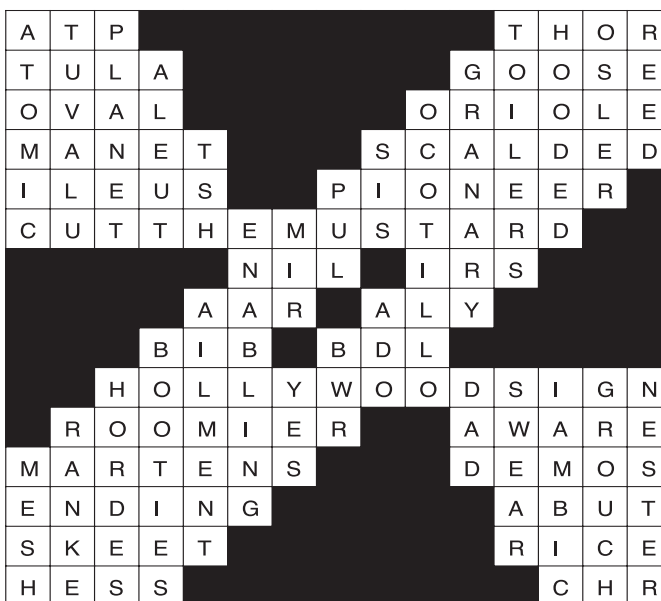
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- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

*Public notice deadlines are Mondays at noon,
Fridays noon for Monday holidays.*

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com





Julia Nicosia was honored and delighted to have been chosen to be the 2025 Agawam Colleen.



The Colleen Court and their escorts prepared for the night ahead.



Samantha Machos was asked about a charity she would like to support as her secret question.



Teagan Fullam was asked how she plans to embrace, celebrate and share her Irish heritage by President of the Parade Committee Abbie Fiore.



President of the Parade Committee Abbie Fiore asked Abigail Drumm the secret question that helped to determine if she would be the Agawam Colleen.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA



President of the Parade Committee Abbie Fiore welcomed everyone to the ceremony.



The Colleen Court waited to hear who would be crowned the 2025 Agawam Colleen.

COLLEEN ■ from page 1

During the Colleen Coronation, several other people were honored with awards.

The ceremony celebrated Todd Arslainian, who is the parade marshal this year, Judy Christian who won the Anne Sullivan award and Dawn DeMatteo who was honored with the Vera Conway Citizenship award.

Foire was proud to be giving out these awards to so many dedicated people in the community.

"I always love giving out the awards," Foire said. "I think getting to recognize those people and their commitment to their community and to the Irish season, it is my favorite part."



Dawn DeMatteo was honored to have received the 2025 Vera Conway Citizenship Award.



Mayor Christopher Johnson gave his congratulations to all awardees of the evening.



2024 Agawam Colleen Rachel Sills shared her memories from her time as Agawam's Colleen.



Abigail Drumm was honored with the Phau award for her essay on a connection with someone with Irish heritage.



2024 Parade Marshal Frank Bensen bestowed the 2025 marshal sash on Todd Arslainian.



Judy Christian was honored with the 2025 Anne Sullivan award.



Judges Elizabeth Gourde, Brianna Viens and Sue Feyer cheered on the new Agawam Colleen Court.



Members of the Colleen Courts from 2024 and 2025 came together to celebrate.