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AGAWAM

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Johnson presents FY25 budget

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Mayor Christopher Johnson presented the fiscal year 2025 annual town operating budget to the city council on May 20.

“The proposed annual operating budget reflects our best effort at preparing a fiscally conservative budget that meets the needs of our community while creating no new fees and trying to keep the tax increase to as minimal as possible,” Johnson said.

The proposed operating budget is \$114,512,058, which is a 3.6% increase from last year’s budget. Last year the budget was \$110,497,261, which was a 5.8% increase in the budget from the previous year.

The total of the budget when you include the self-sustaining departments (the Agawam Municipal Golf Course, the water department and the wastewater department) is \$132,464,493

Johnson had emphasized keeping a tight budget this year, as he wants to put more money into the capital stabilization fund to help lessen the impact of the bond payments of the high school project should it be approved.

“If we hope to build a new high school, we have to start to tighten our belts as much as we can to bring down the increases,” Johnson said.

Within this budget is the proposed tax levy. This year it is \$75,379,627, with a levy limit of \$91,220,917 and a levy ceiling of \$105,436,971. This is an increase of 2.5% from FY2024’s tax levy.

One of the largest components of the budget was the school system budget, which came out at \$51,924,442, which was a 3.78% increase from last year’s budget, which was \$49,960,427.

“The budget highlights include a priority focus on academic needs of our students, a continuation of integrating effectively our technology skills into the curriculum...an increase of engagement with families, maintaining appropriate

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☆☆ Town celebrates ☆☆☆ MEMORIAL DAY



Lily Sliech, 4, bangs the drum of Melha Highlander Pamela Gates prior to Monday’s Memorial Day Ceremony held at Agawam Junior High School. See story and more photos on page 12.

TURLEY PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Debt exclusion for AHS project set for June 11 ballot vote

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The voting day for the high school project is scheduled for June 11. The last day to register to vote is May 31.

A yes vote on the ballot question will be to approve the building of a new high school. A no vote will say no to the high school project.

There will be no ballot summary on the question as the state department said that they could only put the basics of what a yes or no vote would mean.

“We asked whether we could do a more detailed summary and put it up in the polling places, and they said no,” Mayor Christopher Johnson said

Johnson would like to remind people that a no vote does not mean that taxes will not increase, as the town will still have to invest in the current high school.

“No matter which way you vote it is going to cost money,” Johnson said. “If we choose not to build a new high school we’re going to have to make an investment

in our existing building to keep it going for another 20 years.”

Another 20 years is the amount of estimated time it would be until the town would be able to get back where they are in the Massachusetts School Building Authority’s process.

The high school project has a total cost of \$231.5 million, with the town’s share as \$132 million.

The impact on the average single-family taxpayer would be \$465 to \$488 per year.

The projected cost to fix the existing building would be \$73 million, with an impact of \$340 to \$353 per year.

Building a new high school will ensure that Agawam maintains its NEASC accreditation and would help to improve the instructional capabilities of the current high school.

It would also allow for the building of a new early childhood center.

To fix the existing school, AHS would need a roof replacement, a full HVAC replacement and it

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Library hosts SLIME LAB for middleschoolers

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The library hosted a slime lab for grades five to eight on Wednesday May 22.

The children participating got to make several different kinds of slime using elmer’s glue, borax, shaving cream, glitter and metallic paint.

The program was run by Youth Associate Evan Delano, who was excited to see the children experiment with the slime.

“People can mess around with ingredients and amounts and try to get a different result,” they said. “I’m excited to see what they come up with...it’s just about making slime, playing around, experimenting and having fun.”

At the beginning of the program Delano gave a brief overview of some of the basic science behind slime. They explained that the creation of slime is thanks to a chemical reaction between the borax and glue used to make it.

They also explained that slime is a non-newtonian fluid, mean-



The childrens’ first slime creations began to come together at the slime lab hosted by Agawam Public Library.

TURLEY PHOTO BY QUINN SUOMALA

ing that it can act as both a liquid and a solid. It is similar to oobleck, another non-newtonian fluid children often make in school.

“It acts as a liquid but it reacts differently when you put pressure on it,” Delano said.

Delano was inspired to try this program as they had made slime with kids in a previous library they had worked at.

“It just was so much fun to see what they [the kids] made,” Delano said. “It also is just really cool that you can mix these ingredients together and then magically it turns into something really different.”

They hoped that the program would allow children familiar with slime to have fun making something they enjoy and that those who maybe hadn’t had a chance to make it before would be able to give it a try.

The program was a big success, with the children having fun experimenting with the slime. Several tried out different combina-

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Coyote that attacked woman in park identified as rabid

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – A rabid coyote was found in Robinson State Park on Friday, May 10.

The coyote in question attacked some individuals at the park before it was subdued.

This is the second rabid animal identified in the area since April 30. The prior animal was a cat found in north Agawam.

Any person who thinks they may have come in contact with either of these animals is encouraged to contact the Massachusetts Department of Public Health at 617-983-6800 or their health care provider.

Illness in people can be prevented following exposure to the disease if they receive administration of rabies post-exposure prophylaxis.

A person has a high risk of exposure to the disease if they were bitten or scratched by the animal, or if they had saliva from the coyote in an open wound, their eyes, their nose or their mouth.

“Rabies is spread by one animal biting another or transferring bodily fluids, whether its blood or saliva from one animal to another,” Black Bear and Furbear Biologist from the Massachusetts Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Dave Wattles said.

If a person thinks their pet may have come in contact with the coyote, they are encouraged to contact Agawam Animal Control at 413-726-9754.

“Just be as careful as you can and report any animal that is acting strangely,” Mayor Christopher Johnson said. “Contact the police so that the animal control officer or the health department can go out to try to observe to lessen any potential impact.”

People who frequently go to Robinson Park are encouraged to keep their pets on a leash while walking around in the area.

Additionally, all pet owners are encouraged to ensure that their pets are up to date on their rabies vaccinations.

Johnson encourages people to be wary of wildlife they encounter, especially if they appear to be behaving oddly.

Wattles agreed with this advice.

“If an animal is acting abnormally, it appears disoriented or certainly if it is acting aggressively, that is an animal that you are going to want to try to get away from as quickly as possible,” Wattles said. “For animals like coyotes you don’t want to run away from them, that can instinctively cause them to chase someone, but just back away, increase your space from the animal and leave the area and then report it to authorities.”

Wattles also did not want the public in Agawam to be alarmed by the finding of the rabid coyote.

“I don’t think that just because there were two animals detected that there is an elevated risk that it be in the area,” he said. “Animals test positive for rabies every year...but in animals like coyotes it tends to be pretty darn rare, anywhere from zero to three per year in the state test positive for rabies. So the fact that a rabid coyote was found in the area does not mean, and I would be surprised if there was another in

the immediate area.”

Wattles suggests that people can continue to use the park as they always have; he does not believe there to be any elevated risk associated with the detention of rabies.

“It is important to remind folks that there are people running, biking, jogging, walking in that park every single day, there are people recreating in all the forest parks of Massachusetts and we have very, very few of these incidents, so while this incident did occur and it’s unfortunate, but I do not think there’s any greater risk there than normal,” he said.

However he does want people to still keep in mind that anytime they see a wild animal that they should give the animal space.

“That’s just good practice regardless of the animal, you don’t want to get too close to it necessarily,” Wattles said.

To learn more about rabies, you can search up the disease on the world health organization website.

June programs announced for adults at the Agawam Library

AGAWAM – The Agawam Library is busy preparing for our annual Summer Reading Program. We are excited to offer summer reading for all ages, so stay tuned for later this month when we kick off “Adventure Begins at Your Library”. Adults can participate in fun programs and earn prizes just for reading! In the meantime, the library is ready for Summer and all the celebrations that come in the month of June.

The library recognizes Pride Month and is proud to host a Gender and Sexuality 101 workshop from the Stonewall Center from UMASS. On Monday, June 3 at 6:30 p.m., LGBTQIA+ Educator Genny Beemyn will offer this presentation that covers basic LGBTQIA+ terminology and discusses the experiences of LGBTQIA+ people. Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of LGBTQIA+ identities and how to approach LGBTQIA+ topics through an intersectional lens. This is sponsored by the Agawam Center Library Association. Registration is required for this event.

Our regular monthly programs continue in June. Adult Drop-In Game-Night brings together adults interested in good, old-fashioned board games and snacks. The library has a growing collection of board games that patrons can check-out with their library cards. Join us on Wednesday, June 5 at 6:30 p.m. in the Judith Clini Community Room. This is a drop-in event and no registration is required.

Afternoon Tea & Trivia will take place on June 12 at 2:30 p.m. and Evening Tea & Trivia will be Tuesday, June 18 at 6:30 p.m. Come by yourself or with a team, and prepare for the ultimate match of minds. Prizes will be awarded to the win-

ning team and tea will be available. Please register for this event.

Just in time for summer reading, our June Library Tech session will review Beanstack, the online reading tracker that will help you play along with the reading challenge. Erica will be on-hand Tuesday, June 25 at 10 a.m. to demonstrate Beanstack and answer any questions you might have. Be sure to bring your mobile device!

June is also Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month and to bring awareness, the library is hosting Mark Nutting from the Alzheimer’s Association on Friday, June 28 at 10:30 a.m. Mark will present Ten Warning Signs of Alzheimer’s Disease. Learn how early signs of Alzheimer’s differ from typical age-related memory and behavior issues. Please register for this event.

Adults will be invited to help us officially kick-off Summer Reading on Monday evening, June 24th at 6:30 p.m. in the Judith Clini Community Room. Win raffle tickets for reading and completing activities or join us for a program or two! Why should kids have all the fun when it comes to summer reading? Details will be released soon!

The Agawam community is invited to visit our website for a complete listing of June events, including our virtual author talk series. Please note that the library will be closed on Wednesday, June 19 in observance of Juneteenth. Also, the library is closed on Saturdays until September. Visitors are welcome Monday – Thursday 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Registration for adult events opens on June 1. Patrons can register online www.agawamlibrary.org or by calling the Information Desk (413) 789-1550 X4.

ACAA present artist Donna Roy

AGAWAM – Donna Roy will be the presenter at the Wednesday June 12, meeting of the Agawam Community Artists and Artisans beginning at 6 p.m. at the Agawam Public Library, 750 Cooper St.

Roy’s Eco Art originals are a fusion of art and nature. Inspired by the beauty of nature while Plein Air painting, she began to re-envision her artistic relationship with nature by exploring botanical sketching and an eco-print process

Roy is a mixed media artist and a Western Mass native. Her foundational impact

in her art studies came from weekly oil painting lessons with a local artist when she was 10 years old. Roy paints plein air during most of the New England seasons. Roy is a member of the Pastel Society of America, a juried member, Quabbin Art Association, Amherst Plein Air Society, and Agawam Community Artists and Artisans.

This art presentation is free and open to the public. For further information please contact Ceil Rossi at email: tocarefree2@hotmail.com or call (413) 207-1247.

Suffield Players looking for new faces

SUFFIELD, CT – The Suffield Players, a renowned community theater group, are excited to announce auditions for New Faces 2024, an exhilarating opportunity for aspiring actors to showcase their talent on stage.

Auditions for New Faces 2024 will take place on July 13 starting at 2 p.m. at Mapleton Hall located at 1305 Mapleton Avenue, Suffield, CT 06078. Performance dates are set for Aug. 17 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., providing participants the chance to shine in the spotlight.

Open to individuals aged 16 and above, New Faces aims to nurture, inspire, and cultivate the skills of all participants, regardless of their prior experience. Whether you’re new to the stage or a seasoned performer looking to refine your craft, this program offers a supportive environment for growth.

Under the guidance of experienced Suffield Players Directors, participants will engage in scene study and actor’s craft, while also providing an opportunity for new directors to hone their skills. The

performances will feature a series of short plays, approximately 10 minutes each, carefully selected by the directors and developed during the program.

New Faces 2024 kicks off with scheduled cold script readings/auditions for all participants on Saturday, July 13 at 2 pm. Every accepted participant will have the chance to perform in one of the shows, with auditions designed to place actors in one of the chosen ten-minute productions.

Rehearsal times will be coordinated by the cast and director of each individual play, allowing for flexibility and commitment. Space is limited, and participation will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis. The deadline to register interest is June 14.

For those who have participated in past New Faces programs and wish to re-qualify for a role, consideration will be given based on available space. Additionally, Suffield Players’ COVID-19 protocols will be strictly enforced to ensure the safety of all participants and attendees.

Senior Center announces upcoming news, activities set for June

AGAWAM – The Agawam Senior Center is announcing the following activities to take place in the month of June:



Manicures With Jane
Monday, June 3

Are you looking to pamper yourself... you deserve it. Here at the Agawam Senior Center we are excited to be offering Manicures with Jane.

Jane is a licensed nail specialist, who will give your fingernails that extra special attention and love they deserve. She is offering simple manicures that include clipping, filing, soak, massage of the hands and your

choice of color. These appointments are 20 minutes each. The cost is \$15 per person. Call Kristina at 413.726.2836 to book.

Advanced Care Planning Wednesday, June 5 at 1 p.m.

Greater Springfield Senior Services will offer a free, one-hour presentation called Advance Care Planning: It’s About the Conversation on Wednesday, June 5, from 1 to 2 p.m. The goal is to educate people of all ages about the importance of choosing a healthcare proxy, writing advanced care directives, and having these conversations with loved ones.

Light refreshments will be served, and all participants will receive a free copy of the Honoring Choices toolkit, which includes relevant Massachusetts forms. Space is limited to 12 participants, and registration is required. Please see the Senior Center staff to sign up; however, if you have any questions

related to the course, please contact Lenora Johnson at 413-781-8800 ext. 1385. Call Kristina at 726-2836 to register. The seminar will take place in the seminar hall.

Coffee Talk with Veterans Tuesday, June 11 at 1 p.m.

Are you a Veteran? We here at the Agawam Senior Center would like to offer you a space to have a coffee or tea on us. Come alone or bring a buddy. We would love to get to know you.

Medicare Saving Program Wednesday, June 12 at 1 p.m. in the Dining Room

“Is your monthly income at or below \$2824 (individual) or \$3833 (couple)? If so, you likely qualify for assistance paying your Medicare Part B premium of \$174.70 monthly. Erica Beaudry, Independent Medicare Advisor, will teach us about the Medicare

Savings Program and how to qualify for this assistance. She will also be available to help members complete this very short application the day of her presentation.” Call Kristina at 726-2836 to register.

Free Screening Balance Clinic Thursday, June 27, 1 to 3 p.m.

Powerback Rehabilitation will be at the Agawam Senior Center offering free screenings that include Balance/Strength. These are 15 minute appointments. Call Kristina at 725-2836 to schedule one. The screenings will take place in the Garden Room of the Senior Center.

Foot Care Available

We have a new Foot Care Nurse available here at the Agawam Senior Center, the cost is \$35 Call 821.0604 to book an appointment. Appointments on: Thursday, June 6 and June 24.

State granting emergency education licenses to teachers

WESTFIELD – In response to the challenges faced by educators during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) in Massachusetts has taken a proactive step to address the dwindling number of educators in the field. Approximately 4,000 emergency licenses were issued to individuals who were unable to complete their schooling or take the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTELs) due to lockdowns, and with these emergency licenses set to expire starting this year, Massachusetts is establishing four regional centers across the state to facilitate the transition of emergency license holders to permanent licensure.

Westfield State University, in collaboration with Bridgewater State University, Class Measures, Salem State University, Stonehill College, and the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts (MCLA), will operate these regional centers to cater to different counties in Massachusetts. Westfield State University will specifically serve educators in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampshire, and Hampden counties, where a total of 856 emergency licenses

have been issued. Governor Maura Healey, whose office approved the establishment of these centers, emphasized the importance of supporting educators during this critical transition period. “The license for educators was an important tool during the pandemic, and we want to help these teachers remain and grow in the field,” she said. “The licensure centers will help ensure that educators receive the additional support they need in order to obtain a standard teaching license and remain in the profession.”

The regional centers will offer free support and guidance to emergency license holders, including mentoring, coaching, and access to resources such as coursework, field experience opportunities, and preparation classes for the MTELs. Dr. Megan Kennedy, Director of Educator Preparation, Accreditation, and Outreach at Westfield State highlighted the importance of these centers in providing essential support to highly qualified educators and ensure that they receive the assistance needed to obtain standard teaching licenses and remain in the profession.

“We have a longstanding reputation in

the area for teacher preparation and support,” she commented. “We felt it was really important to support emergency licenses in particular. The population of those who hold emergency licenses is much more diverse than the population being currently drawn into traditional programs, so it’s an opportunity for Westfield State to be a leader in this area. This is about community support.”

Stephanie Grimaldi, Professor of Education at the University, emphasized the role of dedicated coaches in helping educators navigate the licensure process and overcome any barriers they may face, such as registering for exams or arranging childcare. The centers will also tailor resources based on locality, bringing support directly to educators in areas where emergency licenses are prevalent, such as Springfield. “Some people need someone to help navigate the systems with them,” she said. “We can provide some of these things to remove any barriers that they’ve had up until this point.”

Grimaldi has also lead discussions with direct partner MCLA to identify qualified individuals in strategically important lo-

cations and recruit dedicated coaches for this respective regional center. To further reduce obstacles, the regional centers will tailor their resources to suit each locality’s needs. For instance, given that there are 200 emergency license-holders based in the Springfield area, resources will be deployed to them directly, eliminating the need for them to travel to Westfield. Recruitment for coaching positions will commence in the summer, with University faculty prioritizing training to ensure a seamless launch of the initiative.

The establishment of regional centers by Massachusetts, including the leadership of Westfield State University, marks a proactive step in supporting educators during the challenging transition from emergency licenses to permanent roles. With tailored resources and mentoring, these centers not only address immediate licensure needs but also contribute to the long-term stability of the education workforce in the state.

For more information visit: <https://www.westfield.ma.edu/WesternMassRegionalCenter>.

Garden Club annual plant sale June 1

AGAWAM – The Agawam Garden Club is planning its annual plant sale for Saturday, June 1. This year’s event will be held at the Historic Thomas Smith House, 251 North West Street, Feeding Hills and will run from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

The sale will include many perennials and shrubs all from members gardens and all a bargain.

Proceeds from the sale go towards funding the club’s scholarship and providing educational programs for the year.

Please check the club’s website for further information. agawamgardenclub.com.

Pavement milling, utility structure work ongoing

AGAWAM – Last Thursday, the Department of Public Work began pavement milling activities. They are occurring on the following streets: Simpson Cir., Merrell Dr., Meadowbrook Rd, Western Dr., Clifton Dr., and Ruth Ave.

Construction activities include milling the top layer of pavement, the adjustment of utility structures and installation of new asphalt pavement surface.

Residents are reminded on-street parking will not be allowed within the work limits of the project during the construction peri-

od. The construction may cause traffic delays or detours so residents are encouraged to plan accordingly.

Residents should also be aware the construction schedule dates are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances such as inclement weather or necessary emergency work.

Updates to the paving schedule and a copy of the Agawam Pavement Management Report can be found on the Town of Agawam website at www.agawam.us/492/Pavement-Management.

Grange hosting strawberry shortcake lunch

AGAWAM – Community Grange #382 of Feeding Hills will hold a Strawberry Shortcake Luncheon “to-go” on Saturday, June 15. The Grange Hall is located at 47 North West Street in Feeding Hills. Pick-up hours will be 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The menu will consist of a freshly made sandwich of your choice served with coleslaw and baked beans. Dessert will be a strawberry shortcake and a beverage will also be included. Donation is \$12. Please pre-order your meal(s) by calling (413) 789-2061. The last day for orders is June 12. Proceeds will benefit 2024 community projects.

Canoe, kayak river cruise set

WESTFIELD – On Saturday, June 8, the Westfield River Watershed Association (WRWA) will sponsor a scenic six-mile paddle from the Great River Bridge in Westfield to Robinson State Park in Agawam. For those used to seeing the river only in glimpses from the road, the family-friendly canoe and kayak cruise offers a new, close-up view of the waterway.

“We’re excited to be back on the water this year for our Canoe and Kayak Cruise after needing to cancel last year due to river conditions. This is a fun section of river to paddle for anyone who enjoys being on the water and it is ideal for beginners looking to develop their skills,” says Mark Damon, WRWA Board president. The Cruise begins just below the Great Bridges in Westfield and continues down to Robinson Park in Agawam.

“Nature enthusiasts will enjoy the early summer vegetation and birdlife. Perhaps you’ll spot some of the more charismatic animals such as bald eagles, beavers, or snapping turtle,” adds Damon. “We hope you can come out and join us!” In the past, participants paused paddling to watch a pair of nesting bald eagles as they soared and landed in a tall tree along the river. “Wow! Those eagles were amazing—and so close up! It was my first time down the Westfield, and I loved it,” recalled a previous Cruise participant. “It was easier and a lot more fun than I expected. I’m a novice kayaker, so I really appreciated the help we got in the trickier spots, although no one who is experienced would call that water fast!”

For those who wished they could participate in the Wildwater Races sponsored by the WRWA in March, Damon suggested, “For anyone interested in building up to the Wildwater Races this is a chance to expand your knowledge and experience. There will be some experienced paddlers participating in the Cruise and they will likely be glad to share their knowledge of the river and paddling in general.”

“People are amazed that the pollution is

now gone and the river is really clean. You don’t see any of the commercial businesses near the river while paddling, just birds, wildflowers, even beaver dams and animals native to our area,” states Phil Sousa, who is a long-time member of the river organization. He encourages paddlers to “Come and meet new people. You’ll have a great time. This cruise is suitable for people with at least a little paddling experience. The water is mostly flat—we guide folks around any really fast spots.”

Participants need to bring their own canoe or kayak, paddles and personal safety devices, as well as sunscreen and drinking water. Organizers recommend that participants have some experience paddling, given that river conditions may be unpredictable. Children under 18 must be supervised by a parent or guardian. Children under 14 must paddle in the same boat as an adult. Other suggestions for what to bring include a picnic for a late lunch once you reach Robinson State Park and snacks for munching along the way.

An participation fee of \$15.00 per person will help cover shuttle service, insurance and light refreshments. Registration begins at 9 a.m. in the municipal parking lot off Meadow Street near the Great River Bridge in Westfield. Participants will register, unload boats and gear, drive their vehicles to Robinson State Park and return by shuttle to the launch area. Staggered Cruise departures will begin around 10:30 a.m.

Low or high water conditions or severe weather may require cancellation of the event. If you plan to participate and would like to receive a cancellation notice by email the evening before the event, email markjdamon@gmail.com and put the word “Notify” in the Subject line. WRWA will also post the cancellation on its facebook page and website, www.westfieldriver.org the evening before. For more information about the Canoe and Kayak Cruise, visit www.westfieldriver.org.

Asparagus festival set for June 1

HADLEY – With less than a month to go, the spirit (or, perhaps, “spearit”) of asparagus will once again be the focal point of the 10th Annual New England Public Media (NEPM) Asparagus Festival. Known as “the asparagus capital of the world,” western Massachusetts is still home to hundreds of working farms, and many locally-owned restaurants and breweries. Now in its tenth year, the NEPM Asparagus Festival returns to the Hadley Town Com-

mon on Saturday, June 1 from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. to celebrate the area’s local businesses and organizations and spotlight our agricultural heritage.

Each year, the NEPM Asparagus Festival brings people together in celebration of our region’s diversity, beauty, and bounty. The event brings over 7,500 people to the Hadley Town Common to enjoy the best of

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COLLEGE NOTES

Bonfiglio named to Assumption University’s Spring 2024 Dean’s List

WORCESTER – Assumption University has announced that Emily Bonfiglio, of Agawam, Class of 2024, has been named to the University’s Dean’s List for the spring 2024 semester. Students named to

the Dean’s List must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 for a five-class, 15-credit semester to be included on the prestigious list, which is announced at the completion of the fall and spring semesters.

Open for the season!

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Opinion

Guest Column



I'm working after age 65; Why aren't I exempt from Medicare Part B Premium?

Dear Rusty:

Why, as I continue to work after age 65 and have FICA taxes taken from my check, am I or anyone also compelled under the threat of penalties, rate increases, etc. to immediately take Medicare Part B?

Am I not then effectively paying into the system twice? As more and more people over 65 continue to work, isn't that a consideration that should be evaluated by Congress, if one is working past 65, above a specific level of income and paying FICA taxes, the Medicare Part B premium is waived?

Signed: Working Senior

Dear Working Senior:

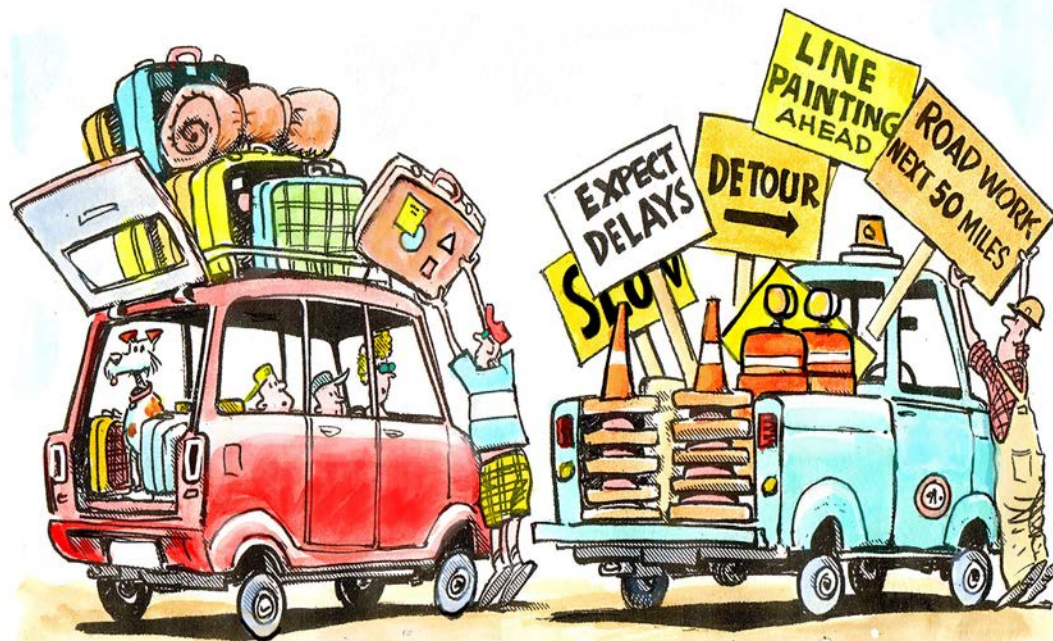
FYI, 6.2% of the FICA payroll taxes you pay while working goes to Social Security and another 1.45% goes to fund Medicare Part A (hospitalization coverage, which is free to you). None of the FICA payroll tax you pay from your work earnings goes to fund Medicare Part B, coverage for outpatient services, which is the part of Medicare for which you must pay a premium.

Said another way, your FICA payroll taxes do fund Medicare Part A, which is free to you, but do not provide any funding for Medicare Part B. Part B is funded from two primary sources: the premiums paid by beneficiaries and the federal government from the general Treasury. Premiums from enrollees pay for about 25% of Part B healthcare expenses and the remaining 75% of Part B operating expenses are paid from the general U.S. Treasury, not from Social Security money.

So, it's necessary to separate Part B from your thinking about the payroll taxes you pay while working you're not paying anything to fund Part B through your FICA taxes. You aren't compelled to enroll in Part B (it's optional), but if you don't enroll during your initial enrollment period (3 months on either side of the month you turn 65) and don't have other equivalent "creditable" coverage from an employer, and you enroll in Part B later, a late enrollment penalty will apply (10% additional premium for each full year after age 65 you go without creditable healthcare coverage).

So, your premise in suggesting that Part B be free (the premium waived) if you're working over a certain age or after an amount of time contributing to the program isn't valid, because no one contributes to Medicare Part B through FICA payroll taxes. Part B beneficiary contributions are only made through premiums paid by those enrolled in it.

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Guest Column

There's still time to sow Morning Glories seeds



It's amazing how quickly some seeds can germinate. I was worried that I was late in sowing my Morning Glory seeds when I planted them on the 17th of May. Lo and behold, two days later they are sprouted, and here we are a week plus more and they are nearly ready to be planted in the garden!

My first experience with Morning Glories was with a childhood friend. Her dad used to grow them so that they climbed up his fancy, road-side mailbox.

That memory has to be over four decades old at this point, but I still remember how well he grew those morning glories.

Are you interested in enhancing a lamp post or trellis with summer color? This annual flowering vine can put on upwards of ten feet of growth in just two months!

Although the trumpet-shaped flowers bloom from just dawn to late morning, most gardeners are enamored by them and their lovely heart-shaped leaves.

Here are some tips to get them off and running: Morning glories have hard seed coats. To speed up germination, nick the seeds lightly with a file and soak them overnight in lukewarm water.

If you are nervous about the nicking part, even just soaking will help. Sow them one-half inch deep directly in the ground in a spot in your yard that receives full sun or light shade.

It is not necessary to fertilize the soil heavily prior to planting. In fact, soil that is too rich will produce abundant foliage at the expense of flowers.

Once the plants are up and growing, thin morning glories to at least three inches apart. It is important to provide them with some sort of support immediately.

Therefore, install your trellis before planting and provide enough twiggy low branches up against

lamp posts or fences for twining stems to reach for until they get established. Wire fencing and twine "cages" will also do the trick.

Morning glories require little care other than water during droughty periods.

The hardest part about growing these climbers is deciding which variety to grow! Choose the deep purple, red-throated heirloom "Grandpa Ott's."

It climbs to a remarkable 15 feet with support and will self-sow abundantly each year. Another old favorite and readily available morning glory is "Heavenly Blue."

This variety has five-inch sky blue flowers with creamy white throats. It will top off at six to eight feet.

How about the 1939 All American Selections award winner "Scarlett O'Hara?" Her rosy red flowers are three to four inches wide, borne on vines eight to ten feet tall.

A new and most interesting morning glory goes by the name "Cotton Candy." Its flowers are double and ruffled, with a shape similar to that of a nasturtium.

With a height of just six feet, this variety is useful on shorter trellises. Another double variety goes by the name of "Sunrise Serenade."

This one boasts three inch flowers with ruby red, frilly petals. Although its height tops off at 15 feet, "Sunrise Serenade" will bloom earlier and stay open longer than most other varieties.

Consult your favorite seed catalog for other neat morning glories, including a pure white, a rosy "chocolate" and numerous bicolors. The sky is literally the limit, and these plants will sure reach for it!

If you want to get a head start next year, sow the seeds indoors two weeks prior to setting out. You will be delighted with flowers earlier in the summer.

Be careful when transplanting, however, or the vines will be set back. Also, use caution when handling the seeds around children and pets; they are considered poisonous.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 31 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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Election letters to the editor welcome

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

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

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the news-

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

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

Opinion



By Ellenor Downer

I received an email from a Brimfield couple, who spotted a male and female rose-breasted grosbeak at their feeder. They also had an indigo bunting and reported their hummingbirds were back.



Female rose-breasted grosbeak

The female rose-breasted grosbeak like many female bird species lacks the brilliant colors of the male. The female has a white eyebrow, brown in color with heavy streaking and two white wing bars. She shows yellow "armpits" in flight.

The male has a black head and back with a red triangle on its white breast. In flight it shows white patches and rose-red "armpits." Grosbeaks are eight inches long. Their song is a rapid series of whistles often called a "robin in a

hurry." Their call is a distinct squeak like a "sneaker on a gym floor."

The female lays three to six pale blue eggs with irregular brown spots in a nest of coarse and fine twigs lined with horsehair, rootlets and grasses placed in the branch of a tree 5 to 25 feet above the ground.

Belchertown birds

A Belchertown resident sent this email, "We saw our first Northern oriole this year on Thursday, May 9. He was scolding my husband as he changed the bird bath water. We usually have a pair nesting in the shagbark hickory in front of our house. Hopefully, they will do so again this year."

She also said she had not seen any chickadees and usually has many in her yard. She wonders why. She also has redwings, goldfinches, house finches, mockingbirds, cat birds, robins, bluebirds, swallows and house wrens.

Birds at Warren ponds

A Brimfield resident often reports on the birds he sees. He visited a pond on South Street in Warren on May 9 and saw an osprey and six great blue heron. There were two new nests at the pond making a total of four nest there. Other birds were a red-tailed hawk, turkey vulture, two mourning doves, one crow, three three swallows, one barn swallow, six common grackles and six red-winged blackbirds.

On the same day, he visited a pond on New Reed Street in Warren and saw two spotted sandpipers, two

double-crested cormorants, two turkey vultures, three Eastern kingbirds, five tree swallows, four red-winged blackbirds, six common grackles and on yellow warbler.

He said, "This week in the yard we have 4 catbirds, and a pair has started a nest in the quince bush near the house. I've see two female ruby-throated hummingbirds and one

male. A male was seen April 29 a little earlier than usual."

More birds

The same Brimfield resident saw two female Baltimore orioles and one male at the orange and jelly feeder. A common yellowthroat and an American redstart, both males, were in the yard recently as was a house wren. The wrens have nested in nesting boxes the last several years. He also said a Cooper's hawk has been patrolling the area the past week or so, but hasn't seen any piles of feather.

Another visit to Warren ponds

At the South Street pond in Warren, he said, "The ospreys are continuing to tend their nest

and there are now four for sure, maybe five great blue heron nests. One of the heron nests has three chicks as of a few days ago."

On New Reed Street in Warren, there were two double-crested cormorants for about a week until yesterday and I saw a blue-headed vireo there.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

SECURITY | from page 4

And you don't need to enroll in Part B if you have "creditable" healthcare coverage from an employer. The Part B non-enrollment penalty only applies if you enroll after your initial enrollment period has expired and didn't have "creditable" healthcare coverage after you turned 65. "Creditable" is a group plan with more than 20 participants.

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

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Fashion accessory
4. Engine additive
7. Small, faint constellation
8. Gives a job
10. Self-righteous person
12. Caucasian language
13. Surinam toad
14. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
16. Former French coin
17. Levels the score
19. What stage performers do
20. Egyptian Sun god
21. Localities
25. Spherical body

26. Licensed for Wall Street
27. Perfect
29. It's on many people's heads
30. Boxing's GOAT
31. Photo
32. Popular HBO show
39. Popular music awards show
41. Pouch
42. Lake in Botswana
43. Unruly group
44. One-fourth
45. Very eager
46. Edward ___, author and writer
48. Flying insect
49. Dragged forcibly
50. Thus far
51. Not just "play"
52. Commercials

CLUES DOWN

1. Occur
2. Show up
3. Capital of Taiwan
4. Brother or sister
5. Secret get-togethers
6. Type of tea
8. Where the action is
9. Cast out
11. Crime group
14. Type of vessel (abbr.)
15. Accept and handle
18. Sacrifice hit
19. One who buys and sells securities simultaneously
20. Month
22. Most thin
23. Naturally occurring

- material
24. Luke's mentor ___-Wan
27. Postmodernist Austrian "House"
28. Aquatic salamander
29. Baseball stat
31. Beginning military rank
32. Talk rapidly and unintelligibly
33. Paddle
34. Caregiver (abbr.)
35. Old Irish alphabet
36. Japanese city
37. In a way, acted
38. Things to see
39. Nursemaid
40. Type of tooth
44. To be demonstrated
47. Defunct European group

CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE 11

Chambers unite to raise funds for food bank

The East of the River Chamber, West of the River Chamber, Greater Chicopee Chamber, Greater Holyoke Chamber, Greater Westfield Chamber, and the Springfield Regional Chamber all came together on March 27 to fill the Food Bank. The event took place at the new Western Mass. Food Bank in Chicopee on March 27 for an evening of networking showcased the new building to the community while giving all of the area chamber members the opportunity to meet for a great cause.

Melissa Breor, Executive Director of the Greater Chicopee Chamber said "When Diana Szydal from the Springfield Chamber reached out to me with the idea for this event, I was all in. I thought it would be a great way for all the Hampden County chambers to unite for the first time in one event."

Grace Barone, Executive Director of the ERC5 said they all met collectively every other month to plan the event, and it came together quickly and easily.

"We all had the same vision, to support our local community while partnering together." Donations starting rolling in, and sponsorships were given. Many thanks to our generous sponsors: Bay-



Local chambers of commerce united to raise money for the Western Mass. Food Bank recently.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

state Health, Country Bank, KNF&T, Latino Economic Development Center, PeoplesBank & Westfield Gas & Electric, Andrews Associates, Comcast, Commercial Distributing, Employers Association of New England, Markens Group, The Polish National Credit Union, Blaze Express, Center for Ecotechnology, Development Associates, Florence Bank, Greenfield Cooperative Bank, Holiday Inn Ludlow, Holyoke Gas & Electric, MassHire Holyoke & Park Square Realty for their generous support. The Fill the Food Bank event raised \$10,863.00, and 1,400 pounds of food, which will give over 30,000 meals to people in need right here in our community.

The festivities were captured by Micheal Epaul photography, raffle donations by Six Flags New England, and the Valley Blue Sox.

Catering was provided by Partners Restaurant/Tanseys Catered Table in Agawam who provided an amazing potato bar with baked and mashed potatoes and all the fixins'.

To top off the event, Icecream Emergency was parked out front offering samples from their elaborate ice cream truck.

Craft Beer tasting to take place during renovation project

AGAWAM - Extensive preservation work at Agawam's historic Captain Charles Leonard House — funded primarily through a grant from the town's Community Preservation Act Committee — will pause momentarily on Friday evening, June 14, 2024, from 6pm-9pm for the return of the annual Summer Craft Beer Tasting and BBQ event that will benefit the preservation efforts at the 663 Main Street, Agawam, location. The event, sponsored by McCarthy's Liquors of Agawam, will be held rain or shine under tents on the spacious grounds. A wide variety of local and craft beers will be available for sampling, along with food prepared by Joey's Deli & Market in Feeding Hills and hot dogs and hamburgers grilled by the Captain Leonard House Trustees. Live music will be provided by Creedence Clearwater Revival tribute band Fortunate Sons.

Advance tickets are \$45 per person, available at McCarthy's Liquors, 430 Main Street, Agawam, and Joey's Deli & Market, 1226 Springfield St, Feeding Hills. Tickets will also be available at the door for \$50 per person. Proceeds from the event are being generously donated to the Captain Charles

Leonard House by the McCarthy family to aid in the preservation of the structure, which was built as a stage tavern in 1805 and has served as Agawam's Community House since 1939.

The McCarthys are longtime supporters of the Captain Charles Leonard House and have hosted this summer tasting event and an annual fall beer and wine tasting at the house for many years. The tastings are popular fundraising events held each year at the Captain Charles Leonard House to aid in its preservation.

You must be at least 21 years old with a valid ID to attend this event. Additional information about this and other events, and the Captain Charles Leonard House can be found at Facebook.com/captainleonardhouse.

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

The Captain Charles Leonard House was built in 1805 as a stage tavern to service travelers on the Hartford/Boston route. The house was restored in the late



The historic Captain Charles Leonard House in Agawam, Mass. will hold its annual Summer Craft Beer Tasting and BBQ fundraiser on Friday evening, June 14 from 6 to 9 p.m.. Live music will be provided by Creedence Clearwater Revival tribute band Fortunate Sons. Proceeds will benefit preservation efforts at the former stage tavern, built in 1805, and listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

1930s by Mrs. Minerva Davis, who established a Board of Trustees to oversee the operation of the Captain Charles Leonard House as Agawam's Community House, the role it has served since 1939. The house is available to rent for business functions

and social events. For more information, please call 413-786-9421 or visit www.captainleonardhouse.com. Please follow/like the Captain Charles Leonard House on Facebook at Facebook.com/captainleonardhouse.

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SPORTS

Reserves take Western Mass. title for Agawam

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

CHICOPEE – Because the outcome of the Western Mass. Class A boys' volleyball championship match between Westfield and Agawam didn't have any bearings on the MIAA Division 2 state power rankings, the two head coaches decided to use only their reserve players.

With the starters from both teams watching from the sideline, the second-seeded Brownies posted a 3-1 (14-25, 25-19, 25-17, 25-16) victory over the top-seeded Bombers at the Herbert H. Curry Gymnasium, which is located inside Chicopee Comp, last Saturday afternoon.

"Our normal starters played a different role, and our normal bench players also played a dif-



The Class A Western Mass. Champion Agawam Brownies.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Kyle Douglas keeps the ball inbounds.



Michael Lukomski battles at the top of the net.



Chase Gerani sends a hit away.



Ben Tokarev sends a spike over the net.



Andrei Batranciuc goes for the point.

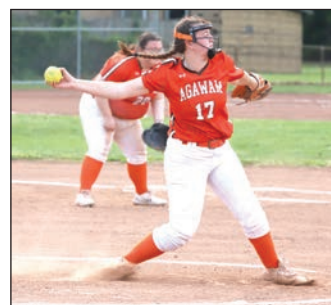


Samantha Izzo makes a throw.



Alexina Lentes takes a lead off first.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Pitcher Avery Gordon sends an offering to the plate.



Isabella Oliveira swings and fouls off a pitch.



Katelyn Cleavall comes up throwing.

Brownies reach WMass semifinals

AGAWAM – Last week, Agawam High School softball, which went 8-10 in the regular season, participated in the Western Mass. Class A Tournament, winning in the quarterfinals in a mercy-rule shortened 12-0 decision over Amherst Regional.

In the semifinals, the Brownies were defeated by East Longmeadow 14-6.

Agawam finished the season at 9-11 and was in the top 32 in the Division 2 power rankings and is likely to have at least one game in the state tournament coming up later this week or early next week.

Sports

Western Mass. Pioneers post shutout in home opener

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW – A couple of hours after winning his first soccer match as the New England Mutiny head coach, Federico Molinari guided the Western Mass. Pioneers to another win in their home opener.

The Pioneers, who held a 2-0 lead five minutes into the contest, posted a 4-0 shutout victory over Pathfinder FC at Lusitano Stadium on May 18.

"It feels very good to win our first game of the season in front of our fans. I'm happy for them," Molinari said. "Scoring the two early goals gave the team a lot of confidence."

The Pioneers (2-0) began the regular season with a 1-0 shutout road victory against the Boston Bolts on May 14.

The only goal of that contest was scored on a header by Scott Testori following a corner kick in the middle of the second half.

"Our first game of the season was very close," Testori said. "It was still scoreless going into the last twenty minutes. Then Jared Smith sent a perfect corner kick to me, and I headed it home. We were able to keep the clean sheet in that game."

Testori, who's one of the Pioneers first-year players, assisted on the Pioneers first goal in the home opener, which was scored by Alec Hughes during the third minute. Hughes is a second-year Pioneers player.

A couple of minutes later, Testori received a pass from Camilo Comi before lining a shot into the right corner of the net.

"We really needed to have a quick start in tonight's game," said Testori, who'll be a senior member of the UConn men's soccer team this fall. "Alec got things going with a huge goal. Then Camilo made a perfect pass to me, and I was able to finish the play by scoring a goal of my own. I'm very excited about being a member of this soccer team."

Testori and Hughes, who was a senior on last year's UMass men's soccer team, both graduated from different high schools in Connecticut.

"My high school soccer team never played against Alec's team," Testori said. "Our club soccer teams did face each other a few times. It has been a lot of fun being teammates with him for the first time. He's an outstanding soccer player. We complement each other very well."

Last Saturday's home opener wasn't the first time that Testori played a match on the turf soccer field located on Winsor Street in Ludlow. A couple of years ago, he played for AC Connecticut, which lost to the Pioneers.

"I've played a game in this stadium two years ago, so I already knew what the atmosphere was like here," said Testori, who signed several autographs following the



Jared Smith looks to get around an opponent.



Alec Hughes clears the ball away.



Scott Testori looks to center the ball.



Patrick Gryczewski advances the ball up the field.



Kwame Adu-Gyamfi sends a pass up the field.

match. "To have these fans rooting for you is just a great feeling. This is a talented soccer team, so I wanted to join them this year. I'm hoping that we can qualify for the playoffs."

During the 36th minute, Patrick Gryczewski dribbled the ball down the right side before cutting into the middle of the box. He then slid a shot into the lower right cor-

ner for the Pioneers third goal of the match, which was unassisted. Gryczewski, who's also from the Nutmeg state, plays college soccer at U.R.I.

Holding a commanding 3-0 halftime lead, the Pioneers final goal was scored by Lawrence Goddard, who's a returning player, during the 72nd minute.

Western Mass goalie Gianluca Cersosi-

mo didn't see very much action in recording his second consecutive clean sheet.

The Pioneers defensive unit is led by Jared Smith, Zach Sauer, Aidan Kelly, and team captain Nicholas Oberrauch.

The Pioneers were scheduled to play at the Albany Rush on Wednesday night (May 22) before returning home to face Black Rock FC at 7 p.m. on May 31.

Konowalchuk named new head coach of Thunderbirds

ST. LOUIS, MO – St. Louis Blues President of Hockey Operations and General Manager Doug Armstrong announced today that the team has named Steve Konowalchuk head coach of its AHL affiliate, the Springfield Thunderbirds.

"We went through an extensive interview process, and through those conversations, it became clear that Steve best fit what we were seeking in a head coach," said Thunderbirds General Manager Kevin Maxwell. "We look forward to seeing him work with the next wave of Blues prospects and developing them into successful NHL players in St. Louis."

Konowalchuk, 51, spent last season as an associate coach with the AHL's Colorado Eagles, where he helped lead the team to a 40-25-7 regular-season record and a 5th-place finish in the Western Conference. The Salt Lake City, Utah, native's coaching career began in Colorado where he served two seasons as an

assistant coach for the Avalanche. Then, in 2011, he was named head coach of the WHL's Seattle Thunderbirds and went on to spend six seasons behind their bench. During his tenure, he guided the Thunderbirds to five postseason appearances, including 2017 when they captured the Ed Chynoweth Cup (WHL championship). Following his time in Seattle, Konowalchuk served one season as an assistant coach with the Anaheim Ducks before spending two seasons as head coach of the WHL's Red Deer Rebels.

As a player, Konowalchuk was drafted by the Washington Capitals in 1991 and enjoyed a 14-year NHL career. Overall, he dressed in 790 career NHL regular-season games, including 693 with the Capitals. He also represented the United States in several international competitions, including the 1996 World Cup of Hockey, where he captured a gold medal.

Doiron dominant in Granite homecoming

CLAREMONT, N.H. – The last time the Granite State Pro Stock Series raced at Claremont Motorsports Park, Joey Doiron turned in a dominant performance to take home the big winner's purse.

And neither a year away from the tricky third-mile nor a different car could keep the two-time GSPSS champion from the winner's circle.

Doiron led every lap of Sunday night's Key Auto Group 125, earning his seventh career GSPSS win and a \$5,000 check.

The veteran racer from Berwick, Maine, was quick all night, turning the fastest lap in time trials and handily winning his qualifying heat. Former series regular Jeremy Sorel lined up alongside Doiron after his own heat win, but Doiron jumped out to an early lead as Sorel faced challenges from Casey Call and Cory Casagrande.

Call and Casagrande settled into second and third, and as the field stretched out over a long green-flag run, the three leaders drew closer together, setting up a thrilling battle for the closing laps.

Contact between Alex Quarterley and Ryan Green brought out the race's second caution on lap 77, though, and as the yellow flag waved, Call made a beeline for the pits with a flat tire. Casagrande, still searching

for his first GSPSS win, lined up alongside Doiron for the restart, but Doiron slipped away with the advantage.

Once again, Casagrande reeled in Doiron, closing the gap as the laps wound down. But he could not catch Doiron to make a move, and the veteran racer held on for his third career win at Claremont.

"I don't know how much [Casagrande] had left," Doiron said after the race. "But if that was all he had, I had a little bit more in the tank."

Doiron joins Gabe Brown and Ray Christian III as drivers who have scored consecutive GSPSS wins at Claremont. Doiron's third win also ties him with Brown, Christian and D.J. Shaw for the most series wins at the track.

Casagrande matched his GSPSS career best with his runner-up performance. Outside polesitter Sorel matched his own career best in third. Call drove back from his flat tire to place fourth, while Sorel's teammate and crew chief, Quarterley, was fifth in his GSPSS debut.

With top-five finishes in the first two races of 2024, Casey Call unofficially leads the point standings headed to the series' next race, a stop at Speedway 95 in Maine on June 16.

Senate adopts John Velis' amendments to support veterans ahead of Memorial Day

BOSTON – Ahead of Memorial Day, the Massachusetts State Senate adopted two amendments put forth by Senator John C. Velis (D-Westfield) focused on expanding access to veterans' behavioral health and supporting the unique needs of women veterans.

It is estimated 1 in 3 veterans return home with an invisible wound of war, whether it be PTSD, a traumatic brain injury, depression, or something else. Left unaddressed, these issues can have tragic outcomes. Since 9/11 over 1,400 veterans have lost their lives to suicide in the Commonwealth. Amendment 804 would allocate an additional \$500,000 to the Home Base program operated by Massachusetts General Hospital to support their expansion and training efforts across the state to provide veterans with behavioral health treatment close to home.

"In my opinion, Memorial Day is the most sacred day of the year. And as we honor and remember all those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our nation, we are also reminded of our sacred duty to ensure that we are doing everything we can for our veterans," shared Senator John Velis, Chair of the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs. "Home Base is truly a one-of-a-kind program that is dedicated to treating the behavioral health needs of our veterans,

including those invisible wounds, at no cost. It is critical that our Veterans, regardless of where they live in the Commonwealth, have access to these services close to home."

Senator Velis' second amendment focused on women veterans.

Women veterans are the fastest growing population of veterans in the country. The Massachusetts State Senate has historically championed women veterans' issues including providing additional funding for outreach to women veterans and funding a study on the changing needs of women veterans. Amendment 454 adopted by the Senate on Tuesday evening would build upon that work by codifying the Women's Veterans Network into state law and establish clear requirements to ensure outreach to women veterans.

"The reality is there are countless women veterans residing in our Commonwealth that are not utilizing the services and benefits available to them because they are simply not aware that they exist," said Velis. "Women veterans face entirely different challenges than their male counterparts and it is critical we recognize this and tailor our outreach efforts so that every woman veteran who calls Massachusetts home can access the services they've earned in service to our nation."

A 2022 report from then Auditor Bump found that the Women Veterans Network had only identified 6% of the over 25,000 women veterans living in the Commonwealth at that time. This amendment, which was unanimously adopted by the Senate, would also require the Network to submit annual reports to the Legislature on their outreach efforts to identify and support women veterans residing in the Commonwealth.

ASPARAGUS ■ from page 3

western Mass. flavors, agriculture, music, and, of course, Hadley grass. The festival is free and open to all with a suggested donation of \$5 per person or \$20 per family at the gates. Proceeds from the NEPM Asparagus Festival support public media in western Mass.

This year the Farmers & Makers Market will be open for the full day (10 a.m. to 7 p.m.) so attendees can have more opportunities to explore and connect with more than 100 local vendors and artisans featuring crafts, cultural items, nonprofit initiatives, agricultural products, and more. In addition, the festival will offer a wide selection of food trucks serving up delicious

Golf outing in July

WEST SPRINGFIELD – The Parish Cupboard, a food pantry and hot lunch program located in West Springfield will be holding a fundraiser on Saturday, June 1 with its annual golf outing. Golf is \$125 per person. To attend the dinner only is \$30. Sponsors and prize donors are also needed to make the event successful.

A tournament sponsor is available for \$1500, which includes a foursome. Silver Tee sponsors are available for \$125 and Gold Tee sponsors are available for \$250. For more information contact Bob at the Parish Cupboard at 413-794-7969 or email parishcupboard@aol.com.

food from asparagus fries to asparagus flavored ice cream. The Provisions Beers & Spears tent will feature local craft breweries including Building 8 Brewery, Abandoned Building Brewery and more.

There will be musical guests taking the Fabulous 413 Stage throughout the day, plus, there will be no shortage of children's fun. Families can find out how fast they can pick asparagus with the Asparagus Valley Pick game or join Wild Garden of Childhood Nursery for arts and crafts.

Sure to be a fun time for the entire family, this is an unmissable opportunity to enjoy one of the first festivals of the season, highlight this remarkable vegetable, and gather in a community celebration of all western Mass. has to offer.

VOLLEYBALL ■ from page 7

ferent role in today's match," said Agawam head coach Kevin Pender. "The result didn't have any impact on the state tournament rankings. The Western Mass tournament has changed during the past couple of years, and the state tournament is a little more important to us now. We thought this would be a very good opportunity to give the guys who work hard at practice and don't normally get a lot of playing time a chance to be in the spotlight."

All the other Western Mass. championship games also don't count towards the state power rankings. The new Western Mass. tournament format began in 2022 and is conducted by the PVIAC.

"I think it's a decision that the PVIAC needs to make across all sports, not just in volleyball," Pender added. "I loved the way that the Western Mass. tournament used to be run. The Walker System was great, and they did a very good job with the pairings."

Pender and Westfield head coach Tyler Wingate came up with the idea of only playing reserve players in the Western Mass. finals while playing 18 holes of golf.

"Tyler and I played in the Pioneers Ju-

nior Volleyball tournament together at the Agawam Municipal Golf Course," he said. "We talked about several different things that day. It was a mutual decision to play only our reserve players in today's match. We thought it was a very good opportunity for both teams."

Wingate gave his thoughts about the situation.

"Kevin and I knew that we were going to get some criticism about our decision because it's always an event whenever we do play each other," Wingate said. "This match was only an exhibition because it doesn't count towards the state power rankings. Both of us are trying to win the state championship title. We don't have any of our Western Mass. title banners hanging on the wall in the gym. It's pretty prestigious walking into our gym and seeing the four state championship banners on the wall."

Pender told his players what would take place at the Western Mass. finals at practice the day before.

"I had an honest talk with my players," Pender said. "The starters were a little bit bummed that they wouldn't be playing in the finals. I told them they needed to play a different role as teammates, and I thought

they did a very good job today. We just want our volleyball program to keep growing."

While the Bombers (18-4) were the top ranked team in the Division 2 power rankings, the Brownies (17-3), who captured the Western Mass. Class B title a year ago and defeated the Bombers in the Division 2 state title match, were ranked third. There is a very good chance that Agawam will be moving up a spot because Wayland High School, who was ranked second, lost their final regular season match.

"We're hoping to earn the number two seed in the state tournament," Pender said. "Even if we're number three, it won't change anything. We're going full throttle and we're hoping to make it back to the state finals again. We're also looking forward to facing Westfield again in the state tournament."

Last Saturday's contest was the third meeting of the spring between the North Division rivals. The Brownies won the first meeting of the regular season on the court, but they wound up having to forfeit that match after using an ineligible player. The Bombers, who didn't lose to a Western Mass. opponent during the regular season, pulled out a 3-1 win in the second meeting. The Brownies starters in this year's

Western Mass. finals were sophomore Ben Tokarev, sophomore Michael Lukomiski, sophomore David Zhmiadziak, junior Kyle Douglas, sophomore Andrei Batranciuc, and junior John Cote.

"The fans who were here today saw an outstanding match. There was a lot of energy in the gym," Pender said. "I loved the way Ben Tokarev (20 assists) handled the setting duties. Kyle Douglas (team-high 11 kills and 13 digs) played very well in the back row. Our hitters also did a very nice job."

After losing the opening set, Pender had Lukomiski and Batranciuc (11 assists) switch positions, which turned things around. Zhmiadziak had 16 digs.

The Brownies held the lead from almost start to finish in the second and third sets.

Westfield held a 4-1 advantage in the fourth set before Agawam took the lead with the help of a 7-1 run and they never trailed again the rest of the way.

If the two rivals do face each other for the fourth time during the state tournament, the starters from both teams will be in the spotlight instead of standing on the sideline. It'll also be a very meaningful match instead of just an exhibition.

VOTE ■ from page 1

would need plumbing and electrical updates.

"It's really a question of where do you want to make your investment, do you want to invest in a new modern high school with a new early childhood center and have an estimated useful life of 50 plus years?" Johnson said. "Or do you want to invest \$73 million to keep our building going for another 20 years?"

Johnson has been working hard to spread the word about the high school project and the logistics behind it.

Throughout this work, he has found most people to be supportive of the project.

"There are some residents who have called to say, 'we don't favor a new high school,'" he said. "But most I've been talking to are supportive of the project."

This support, he said, comes in further

when he explains that voting no on the project does not mean that there will be no increase in taxes.

"Most people when they learn what the true options are: build a new one or fix the existing, they agree that the best option is the project," Johnson said.

Johnson will have another meeting to explain the project on May 29 at 6 p.m. at AHS, which is open for anyone in the public who would like to attend.

Additionally, Johnson has uploaded videos covering the high school project on the Agawam media website at <https://www.agawam.ma.us/545/Agawam-Media>.

He hopes to see support at the polls when voting day comes.

"I am a fiscal conservative but as the leader of the community you have to look at what is the best investment and in my humble opinion the best investment for Agawam and for Agawam's taxpayers is to build a new school," he said.

BUDGET ■ from page 1

student-teacher ratios, providing educators with embedded professional development, access to instructional coaching and collaboration time to meet the ever growing needs of our students," Superintendent Sheila Hoffman said.

All budgets reflect the 3% cost of living increase previously negotiated with collective bargaining units.

The projected general fund revenue is \$117,810,798.

This projection, and the operating budget as a whole, were made based on the most conservative local aid proposal.

The Governor had a local aid proposal of \$31,830,409, the House Ways and Means local aid proposal was \$31,868,469 and the Senate Ways and Means local aid proposal was \$31,958,982.

Johnson based the budget on the most conservative proposal so that the town would be prepared to receive the least amount of funding if need be.

Additionally, Johnson took into account the cherry sheet assessments from the state. The cherry sheets are the official notification from the Commissioner of Revenue of the upcoming fiscal year's state aid and assessments to cities, towns and regional school districts.

The Governor's proposed local aid from the cherry sheets was \$1,268,075, the

House Ways and Means' was \$2,308,053 and the Senate Ways and Means local aid proposal was \$2,308,155.

The proposed cherry sheet offsets from all of these groups was \$540,585.

Once again, Johnson took into account the most conservative of these proposals when making the budget.

Overall, Johnson was proud of the budget he had put forward.

"This is our best foot forward as far as a fiscally conservative budget, while maintaining what I believe to be the overall excellent quality of services we already have," he said.

The council supported this proposed budget. They felt it was well done and took the town's future into consideration.

"I think we're running pretty lean and mean, I'm going to support this budget," Councilor Dino Mercadante said. "I noticed a surrounding town, I won't mention which one it was, came in at around 4.9% so I think a lot of hard work went into the budget and it looks pretty good."

They will take an official vote at the budget hearing on June 3.

To learn more about the specifics of this year's town budget, watch the operating budget workshop on the Agawam media website, which can be found at <https://www.agawam.ma.us/545/Agawam-Media>.

NEWS & FEATURES

As a paper of record, we attempt to cover all general news, personality profiles, and community features that we know about. This includes all selectmen and school committee meetings as well as spot planning board, board of health, finance, and other town meetings determined by the issue's relevance to our readers. There are the annual major community event features that we should always cover, but we are more than open to suggestions of other features to celebrate the fabric of our communities and their many interesting occupants. Our loyal advertisers provide funding for this paid staff coverage.

For more information on news or community features for the Agawam Advertiser News, please email aan@turley.com.

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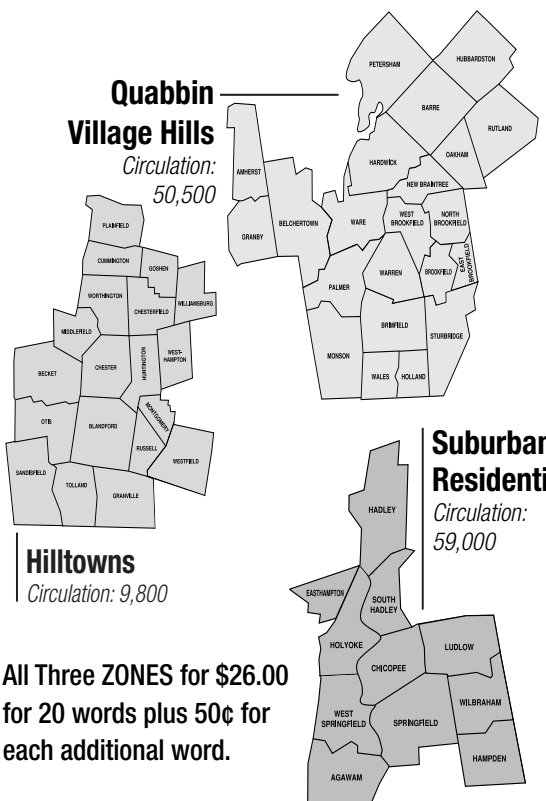
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CLEANING SERVICE WANTED - Town of Huntington is seeking quotations to clean 3 town buildings. Interested parties may submit quotations for the individual buildings, or as a group. Quotations are due by 3:00 p.m. on June 13. Specifications are available at www.huntingtonma.us or by emailing admin@huntingtonma.us. Mail proposals to **Selectboard Office, PO Box 430, Huntington, MA 01050** or email to admin@huntingtonma.us.

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Find archives of this local newspaper at www.newspapers.turley.com

HELP WANTED

The Town of Huntington is seeking a **TOWN CLERK.**

This is a salaried position for approximately 18 hours per week. Application and complete job description are available online at www.huntingtonma.us or by emailing admin@huntingtonma.us. Applications are due by June 13, 2024.

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Public Notices

AGAWAM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St., Agawam, MA on **Monday, June 10, 2024 at 6:30 PM** for all parties interested in the request of Cellco Partnership d/b/a Verizon Wireless who is seeking a Special Permit in accordance with the Town of Agawam Zoning Ordinances Ch. 180, Article XIV, Sections 90 through 103, to allow for the installation of a wireless facility at the premises identified as 1000 Suffield Street.
Doreen A. Prouty
Chairperson, ZBA
05/23, 05/30/2024

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
Docket No. HD21P1267PM
In the interests of**

Frank S Drewniak, Jr. Of Agawam, MA RESPONDENT Incapacitated Person/ Protected Person CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR TERMINATION OF A CONSERVATOR

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by **Susan A McCoy of Springfield, MA** in the above captioned matter requesting that the court:

Terminate the Conservatorship of the Respondent.

The petition asks the court to make a determination that the Guardian and/or Conservator should be allowed to resign; or should be removed for good cause; or that the Guardianship and/or Conservatorship is no longer necessary and therefore should be terminated. 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 **06/21/2024**. 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 expenses.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court

Date: May 17, 2024
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
05/30/2024

Notice from the Silver Lake Corporation in Agawam, and the Pond and Lake Connection
On **Thursday June 6, 2024** the Pond and Lake Connection will be conducting an Aquatic Plant Management program at Silver Lake in Agawam, MA.

Two additional treatments are scheduled for July 15, and August 14.

The use of the lake's water will be restricted as follows:

Swimming, Fishing, Boating – restricted until completion of treatment.

Livestock watering – 1 day.

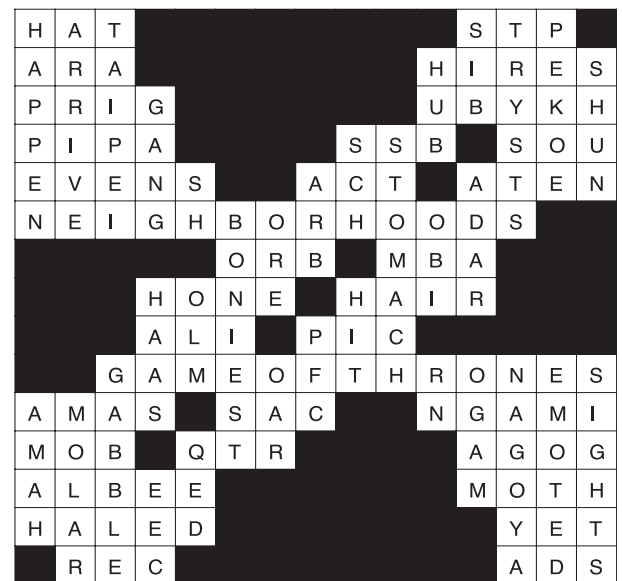
Direct Drinking – 3 days.

Irrigation – 5 days

If you need additional information, contact Silver Lake Corporation, or the Pond and Lake Connection @ 203-885-0184

05/30/2024

Support Your Local Newspaper



CORRESPONDENT OPPORTUNITIES

Turley Publications seeks **Experienced Writers/Journalists** to produce news and/or feature stories of local interest for various towns and cities.

- Must be dependable, professional and able to meet strict deadlines
- Salary based on a flat rate by story and photo

Send writing samples with resume to

Deanna Sloat
24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069
or email directly to dsloat@turley.com

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OBITUARY POLICY

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 \$225, 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.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 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



The dignitaries in attendance stand for the National Anthem.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Veterans Council Chairman Aldo Mancini leads the ceremony.



Mayor Christopher Johnson delivers remarks.



Veterans Agent Chris Lanski speaks at the event.

Town celebrates Memorial Day

AGAWAM – On a rainy Monday morning, Agawam celebrated Memorial Day with a short ceremony. The festivities were moved to Agawam Junior High School due

to the rain and a parade that was scheduled had to be cancelled. The event is usually held at Veterans Green in front of Phelps Elementary School.



Youth Associate Evan Delano welcomed the kids to the slime lab and explained to them some of the science behind slime.



The kids began to mix their slime ingredients together using the instructions provided by Youth Associate Evan Delano.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA

SLIME ■ from page 1

tions of ingredients and they enjoyed seeing what came of their attempts.

The library has several other programs upcoming. Throughout the month of June they will host several different pride programs.

On June 3 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. the Stonewall Center from UMass will present Gender and Sexuality 101.

There will also be a Family Rainbow Pride Story Time on June 6 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. as well as Magical Girls & Fighting Dreamers: An Exploration of Queer Representation in Manga & Anime on June 18 at

7 p.m. on Zoom.

These are not the only pride events throughout the month, and the library invites all interested to check their calendar and to come stop by.

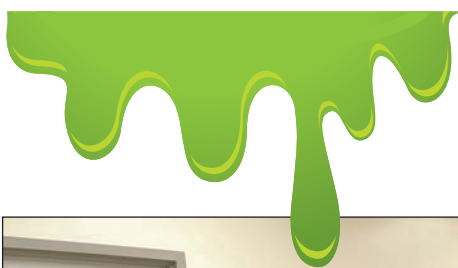
The library is also busy preparing for summer reading. The program will officially start on the 24 of June.

“People can log their reading,” Delano said. “Kids and teens can track every day they read for at least 15 minutes, and then for each day that they read they get a virtual raffle ticket.”

To learn more about different upcoming library programs, go to their website at <https://www.agawamlibrary.org/>.



The making of the slime was rather hands on, with the kids unafraid to get their hands dirty.



Agawam Public Library hosted a slime lab for children in grades five to eight.



As the program progressed, the kids experimented with different slime formulas.