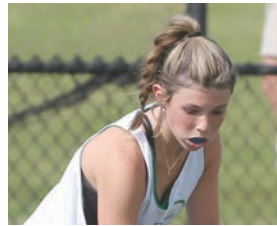




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# AGAWAM

## ADVERTISER NEWS

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# Flying frenzy Library hosts paper airplane races

By Quinn Suomala  
 Staff Writer

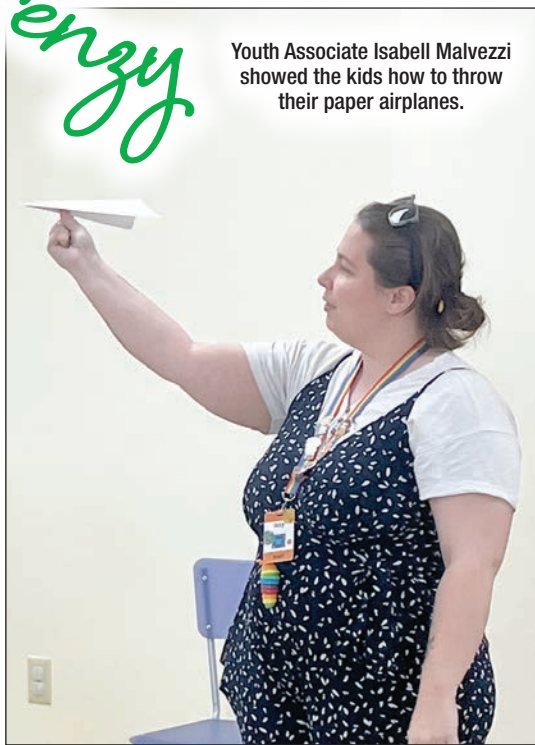
AGAWAM – The library held paper airplane races for kids in kindergarten through sixth grade.

The event was held in two sections, with kindergarten through second grade going first and then third through sixth grade.

During this event kids were able to build paper airplanes based on instructions provided by Youth Associate Isabell Malvezzi.

“First they’ll all make the same paper airplane so they can figure how it works, give it a throw, see how it sails and, especially for the younger group, most of them may not have made a paper airplane before so I want them to get a feel for it,” Malvezzi said.

PAPER AIRPLANE | page 6



Youth Associate Isabell Malvezzi showed the kids how to throw their paper airplanes.



The kids lined up to try out their paper airplanes with weights added to both sides in order to see how they would fly.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA

## Scout seeks to restore bridge

By Quinn Suomala  
 Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Scout Peyton Fleagle is working on restoring a bridge in Robinson State Park for his Eagle Project.

Fleagle has often been on the bridge with his troop and he was inspired to try to fix it up, as it has been weathered over the years.

“It’s really been weathered,” Fleagle said. “Some of the planks are rotten, one of the sides has started falling off...I just want to fix it up and make it look good again.”

The bridge itself was put in in 2005 by a former scout. Fleagle is glad to be able to fix up a project that had initially been put in by a

SCOUT | page 11



A bridge at Robinson State Park is in need of repair and restoration.



Peyton Fleagle is looking for help for his upcoming Eagle Scout project.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

## Rave reviews for school superintendent

By Quinn Suomala  
 Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Superintendent Sheila Hoffman received her superintendent evaluation from the school committee at their meeting on June 25.

Hoffman scored well on all of the sections of her evaluation and received much praise from the committee for her efforts toward Agawam Public Schools in this last year.

“Mrs. Hoffman is truly dedicated to transforming Agawam into an educational powerhouse,” School Committee Member Dawn DeMatteo said. “Her leadership style emphasizes both academic achievement and the emotional well-being of students, which is commendable.”

The evaluation summative report contains 4 steps: assessing progress towards goals, assessing performance of standards, the overall performance rating and the individual school committee

member’s comments. This report is set by the state and is used to determine if a superintendent is meeting the benchmark for a “good” superintendent.

Scores for each section of the report are determined by averaging together each school committee member’s individual ratings.

The goal categories were focused on professional practice goals, student learning goals and district improvement goals. The ratings for this section are: did not meet, some progress, significant progress, met and exceeded.

Superintendents strive to reach “met” for their ratings in this category.

Hoffman was rated as meeting her goals for all of the categories.

“I believe Mrs. Hoffman has exceeded all three of her performance goals based on the large amount of evidence,” School Committee Member Shelley Reed.

Additionally, Hoffman was rated SUPERINTENDENT | page 11



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# The Horace Smith Fund awards students

AGAWAM – On Thursday, June 20, The Horace Smith Fund held its 125th Annual Corporators’ Meeting and Scholarship Awards Ceremony in the Carriage House at Storowton Tavern for recipients, their parents, review committee members, and Corporators. This event was funded, in part, by a Community Care grant from PeoplesBank.

Wayne Webster, Chair of the Board of Trustees, announced that this year there were 20 Walter S. Barr Scholarships awards, with 15 going to graduating high school seniors and five to students already attending college. The William R. Rooney Award was granted to one high school candidate who has received special education services. Additionally, three Walter S. Barr Fellowships were given to students pursuing graduate education.

The Keynote Speaker, Alina Antropova, was a 2020 graduate of Southwick-Tolland Regional High School and Walter S. Barr Scholarship recipient and a 2024 graduate of UMass Amherst and Walter S. Barr Fellowship recipient.

The 2024 scholarship recipients in attendance from the Agawam/Feeding Hills area and who graduated from Agawam High School are Gabriel R. Rua and Nicholas A. Ugolini.

Providing that students maintain at least a B average in college, each scholarship provides a total of \$12,000 over four years and each fellowship provides \$15,000 over two years. Therefore, The Horace Smith Fund is happy to be able to grant a total award of \$297,000 to area students this year.

Students were selected on a variety



The 2024 scholarship recipients from the Agawam/Feeding Hills area and who graduated from Agawam High School are Gabriel R. Rua and Nicholas A. Ugolini. SUBMITTED PHOTOS

of criteria, including their test scores, class rank, extra-curricular activities, and a personal written account of why

the student feels deserving of financial assistance.

Applications for next year’s awards

will be available September 15 on-line at [www.HoraceSmithFund.org](http://www.HoraceSmithFund.org) or by calling (413) 739-4222.

## Community cookout fundraiser

AGAWAM – The historic Thomas Smith House, 251 North West St., will be the site of a Community cookout fundraiser hosted by the Agawam Historical Association on Saturday, July 27, from noon to 4 p.m. Hamburgers and hotdogs, served by the Agawam Lions Club, will be offered from noon to 2 p.m., with all proceeds benefiting the Agawam Historical Association’s preservation efforts at the c. 1757 National Register-listed building.

Visitors are encouraged to bring a picnic blanket and/or chairs to be able to enjoy their meals in the shade of the property’s black walnut and maple trees. A raffle will also be held for an original

artwork depicting historic Agawam by a member of the Agawam Community Artists & Artisans. Details regarding the artwork can be found on the historical association’s Facebook page.

Members of the 25th Continental Regiment will return to the Thomas Smith House to present facets of civilian and military life during the American Revolutionary War era, including a blacksmithing demonstration by Master Blacksmith John Richard on his portable forge, cooking and baking, and marching and musket drill by the soldiers of the regiment. The house and its recently preserved 1920s garage will also be open for tours.

## Agawam’s new treasurer/collector

AGAWAM – Christopher C. Johnson, mayor of Agawam, has announced the appointment of Mackenzie Gamache as the new treasurer/collector for the Town of Agawam. Gamache has worked for the Town of Agawam for the past 12 years in various capacities. She started her career in Agawam in the treasurer/collector’s office and has now come full circle. Gamache currently works as payroll specialist for the Agawam Public Schools in the Superintendent’s of school’s office. Gamache also previously worked in the Auditor’s office.

Johnson said “I am excited to bring Mackenzie on board as our new treasurer/collector. She brings extensive knowledge and experience regarding Agawam and its financial operations. I am impressed by her drive and initiatives that she plans to bring to the treasurer/ collector’s office. I look forward to working with Mackenzie.”

Gamache has a Bachelor of Science in Business Management with a concentration in finance from WSU and brings much experience to the table. Gamache will start in her new capacity on July 8.

## Tash’s artwork on exhibit this month

AGAWAM – The Agawam Public Library is thrilled to display “Shades of Black & White,” a photographic art display by MJ Tash that evokes emotions and wonder throughout the month of July on the main floor gallery walls. Originally from Danbury, CT, Tash is a local photographer as well as a retired health teacher for West Springfield Schools. She has helped at the Springfield and Westfield YMCAs, and serves as a member of Mass Audubon, The Trustees, the American Guild of Organists, and Allen Bird Club. A lifelong learner, Tash loves the outdoors and views the viewfinder on her camera as her window to the world.

Alongside Tash’s photography, visitors can see the prizes offered for the 2024 Summer Reading program for youth of all ages.

These will be visible in the Johnson Case and the cases leading into the Children’s Room. Children interested in participating in the summer reading program can sign up online at [agawamlibrary.beanstack.com](http://agawamlibrary.beanstack.com), and log days of reading from June 24th to August 9th. Keep an eye on the Children’s page at [agawamlibrary.org/children](http://agawamlibrary.org/children) for the full event listing and guidelines.

All displays are available for viewing during regular library hours. The library is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The library is closed on Saturdays from June 1 through Labor Day, and will resume Saturday hours on Sept. 7. If you are interested in exhibiting your art, please contact Library Associate Erica by email [elefevre@agawamlibrary.org](mailto:elefevre@agawamlibrary.org) or by calling 413-789-1550 x4.

## Vacation Bible school at ACC

AGAWAM – Vacation Bible school at Agawam Congregational Church is scheduled for July 15 through July 19, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at no cost. Have fun learning how to grow in faith. A community dinner for the attendees will be served at 5:15 p.m. each night. For more information and registration call our office at (413) 786-7111 or by email [atoffice@agawamcong.com](mailto:atoffice@agawamcong.com).

## Party at Agawam Congregational Church July 19

AGAWAM – Let’s party vbs at Agawam Congregational Church from July 15 through July 19 from 5 to 7 p.m. with a community dinner at 5:15 p.m. each night.

For more information call 413-786-7111 or email [office@agawamcong.com](mailto:office@agawamcong.com).

# Cooper's Gifts hosting drive to benefit Westover families

AGAWAM – Cooper's Gifts will collect non-perishable food items, books, games, school supplies and toiletries for the Westover Galaxy Community Council (WGCC). The Westover GCC is a 501(c)3 charitable organization; comprised of veterans, local business owners and community members. Their goal is to support the military men, women, families and the mission of Westover ARB. They support team-building and morale-boosting activities for our Airmen, Soldiers and Marines. The WGCC works with and contributes to on base activities such as the Family Readiness Center, the Westover Young Marines,

the Civil Air Patrol & Youth Out-Reach Day and Back-To-School Drive. Donations go to our military reservists in need. All donations stay local.

Cooper's has supported the Westover families for many years, through the stores charity Round Up Program. "We worked with our closest USA-made vendors to curate wonderful raffle items that would entice people to donate more items to benefit the good folks over at the Westover GCC," said Kate Gourde, Owner of Cooper's Gifts Apparel Home. In exchange, Cooper's will swap entry tickets for the raffle prizes. Entries are also available for purchase at \$1

each, or 6 for \$5. All monies collected will go to the Westover Galaxy Community Council. Raffle prize winners will be notified in early August.

Each month Gourde chooses a local charity to receive the profits of the store's Round Up program, through which customers are invited to round up their purchase total to the next dollar amount. Gourde will then match 50% of the total collected. The program has donated over \$50,000 to local organizations since its inception in 2014. "Our customers have been so supportive of Cooper's Round Up Program. We are so grateful and wanted to

pay it forward; to help the men and women who serve selflessly, and their families. With your help ... the WGCC strengthens our local military service members by keeping them connected to family, home and country throughout their service to our nation," Gourde said.

Cooper's is located at 161 Main St., Agawam, and is open 7 days a week. Weekdays 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sundays 12 to 4 p.m. More information on the Round Up program and how to nominate a charity, may be found on Cooper's website [www.coopersgifts.com/round-up/](http://www.coopersgifts.com/round-up/).

# Tips offered for safe electrical vehicle charging at home

As electric vehicles enter our roadways, the National Fire Protection Association\* has introduced a series of free resources, guidelines, and information to help raise awareness about EV fires and safe EV charging practices at home.

According to the International Energy Agency, global sales of electric vehicles exceeded 10 million in 2022 and are expected to grow in the coming years. At the same time, consumer concerns about the fire safety risk of EVs are increasing. Lithium-ion batteries, the most widely used and reliable source of energy for electric vehicles, are central to questions about safety.

"It is widely known that electric vehicles provide environmental and cost-effective benefits," said Lorraine Carli, vice president of Outreach and Advocacy at NFPA in a press release. "However, as fires involving EVs are reported in the news, concerns about the risks they pose persist. Through advocacy ef-

forts that highlight our new online resources and information, NFPA is working to better educate the public about the risks associated with EVs and other devices that use lithium-ion batteries, along with ways to use them safely."

The new online resources from NFPA feature more detailed information about lithium-ion batteries, EV maintenance, and what tips consumers can follow to stay safe when charging their electric vehicle at home.

Resources for safety educators and consumers, including a safety tip sheet and social media cards, are all free and downloadable. A free training course is also available to the public that helps address some of the common concerns and myths about owning an electrical vehicle, including safety features, charge types, and battery life.

NFPA recommends these tips when charging electric vehicles at home to help prevent fires:

- Before charging an electric vehicle at home, have a qualified electrician check your electrical system to see if it can handle charging.

- Install charging equipment in safe locations. Keep away from busy areas and things that could catch fire.

- Use devices that are listed by a qualified testing laboratory.

- Read and follow all manufacturer directions.

- Check chargers and cords for damage before using. Never use if damaged.

- Do not use more than one plug or extension cords with the charger.

- Keep charging items out of reach of children and animals when not in use.

- Cover charging station outlet to keep water out.

Learn more about electric vehicle fire safety, find training information, and download the free safety tip sheet at [nfpa.org/evsafetyinfo](http://nfpa.org/evsafetyinfo).

Information on the safe use of smaller devices that use lithium-ion batteries such as computers, smart phones, e-bikes and e-scooters, can be found at [nfpa.org/lithiumionsafety](http://nfpa.org/lithiumionsafety) and [nfpa.org/ebikes](http://nfpa.org/ebikes).

About the NFPA

Founded in 1896, NFPA\* is a global, self-funded, nonprofit organization devoted to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire, electrical and related hazards. The association delivers information and knowledge through more than 300 consensus codes and standards, research, training, education, outreach and advocacy; and by partnering with others who share an interest in furthering the NFPA mission.

For more information, visit [www.nfpa.org](http://www.nfpa.org). All NFPA codes and standards can be viewed online for free at [www.nfpa.org/free-access](http://www.nfpa.org/free-access).

# Michael J. Dias Foundation receives \$10,000 grant

SPRINGFIELD – The Michael J. Dias Foundation is pleased to announce receiving a generous \$10,000 grant from the MGM Resorts Foundation. This significant contribution underscores MGM Resorts' commitment to supporting community initiatives and enhancing the lives of individuals in recovery.

Since its inception in 2012, the Michael J. Dias Foundation has been dedicated to providing safe, structured, and supportive sober living environments for individuals overcoming substance use disorders. This grant from the MGM Resorts Foundation will be instrumental in furthering our mission, particularly as we expand our services and open a new home dedicated to women in recovery.

"We are profoundly grateful for support from the MGM Foundation," said Karen M. Blanchard, executive director of the Michael J. Dias Foundation. "This funding will allow us to continue to provide high-quality care and support to those in need, fostering an environment where individuals can rebuild their lives free from the grips of addiction. This gen-

erous grant is not just an investment in our organization but in the broader community as we work together to combat the challenges of substance use disorders."

MGM has a long-standing tradition of contributing to community-based organizations that promote health, wellness, and social equity. This grant to MJD aligns with MGM Resorts' commitment to corporate social responsibility and its dedication to creating positive impacts in the communities it serves.

The Michael J. Dias Foundation continues to play a crucial role in addressing the opioid crisis and supporting individuals and families affected by addiction. With this new funding, the Foundation is poised to extend its reach and impact even further, providing much-needed resources and support to those on the path to recovery.

For more information about the Michael J. Dias Foundation and its programs, please visit [www.mdiasfoundation.org](http://www.mdiasfoundation.org) or call Executive Director Blanchard at 413-304-0715.

# State sales tax holiday approved

BOSTON— The Massachusetts Legislature approved Aug. 10 and Aug. 11 as a sales tax holiday weekend for Massachusetts. On those days, the Massachusetts sales tax of 6.25% will be suspended for most items that retail for less than \$2,500.

The holiday welcomes Massachusetts residents to visit retailers and small businesses around the state. A spike in consumer activity routinely boosts indirect tax revenues. According to the Department of Revenue, during the 2023 sales tax holiday,

indirect tax revenues due to increased economic activity were approximately \$3.54 million.

"I am glad to see the sales tax holiday approved in the legislature today, giving our residents a great chance to get outside and embrace their local businesses and community at a little bit of a discount," said Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield). "This annual holiday gives a boost to our small business owners and consumers, and I am proud to support this measure annually."

# Stanley Park to celebrate 75th Anniversary August 17

WESTFIELD – Stanley Park is celebrating its 75th Anniversary this August with a big day long celebration and are in need of unique vehicles take part in our "Touch a Truck" program taking place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you have a cool vehicle that the kids will love that you don't mind them touching we'd love to have you. There is a suggested donation of \$10 per vehicle.

There will also be a classic car show taking place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. that

day which more cars, trucks and motorcycles are needed for. There is a \$10 donation per vehicle entered and we ask that you register in advance.

Please call the Development Office at 413-568-9312 x108 or x 112 or email [development@stanleypark.org](mailto:development@stanleypark.org) to register.

For further information on the 75th Anniversary Celebration or to be a sponsor of the event please go to [www.stanleypark.org](http://www.stanleypark.org), our Facebook page or call the park office at 413-568-9312.

# Summer Eats feeds kids and teens

BOSTON — Summer Eats, the Massachusetts Summer Food Service Program, is kicking off across the state, providing free meals to all kids and teens, ages 18 and under. In July 2023, over 2.1 million meals were served across over 1,400 sites statewide through the Summer Eats program.

Throughout the school year, children in Massachusetts rely on free school meals to meet most of their daily nutrition needs. Summer Eats closes the gap when the school year ends, helping to ensure children and teens continue to grow, learn and thrive over school vacation.

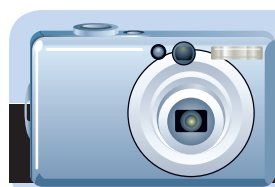
Participating meal providers operate and staff meal sites, often in conjunction with activities and educational programming at schools, libraries, local park and recreation areas, and more. This year, summer meal sites are operating a communal model of feeding kids onsite. Grab & Go meals are available in select rural communities. All are welcome. No registration or ID is required. Summer Eats can be accessed in conjunction with Summer EBT, additional funding for groceries while kids are out of school.

For more than 20 years, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and statewide food security nonprofit Project Bread have partnered to support meal providers in offering Summer Eats meals to children in Massa-

chusetts. Throughout the school year, the nonprofit and DESE also partner to expand access to and participation in school meal programs. This year, Project Bread has granted a total of \$226,000 to 51 Summer Eats sponsors for their program outreach and capacity-building. During Summer Eats Awareness Week, Project Bread is encouraging community members to help spread the news about this free program statewide.

"Last week a mom of two called Project Bread worried about how she'd feed her kids when school lets out," says Erin McAleer, Project Bread CEO. "She's not alone. In the summer, many families are forced to stretch exhausted grocery budgets even further. Summer Eats is such an important program because it helps close that gap. Summer Eats meal providers bring the community together and take some of the pressure off of families' budgets. These local providers go above and beyond to make healthy meals accessible for all kids and teens. Children should spend their summer playing, growing, and enjoying time with family and friends, not worrying about their next meal."

For more information about Summer Eats, including meal site locations, visit [www.projectbread.org/summer-eats](http://www.projectbread.org/summer-eats), text FOOD or COMIDA to 304-304, or call 1-800-645-8333 for help in any language.



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# Opinion

## Guest Column



### Will IRA withdrawals affect my Medicare premiums?

Dear Rusty:

I am a member of AMAC and learn so much from the Ask Rusty column.

I hope you can give me some information about a question that has come up in my family. My husband is retired and has reached Full Retirement Age. He is considering withdrawing money from an IRA to pay off our mortgage. We are wondering what, if any, penalties may be incurred on Social Security, Medicare and income tax. Thank you for your help in this matter.

Signed: Concerned Taxpayer

Dear Concerned:

Thank you for contacting the AMAC Foundation Social Security Advisory Service.

Regarding your question on the impact of withdrawing IRA funds, there is no impact to your husband's gross Social Security benefit. The amount withdrawn, of course, is considered ordinary income for federal income tax purposes and will need to be included as such on your federal income tax return and will therefore affect your federal income tax liability when you file the return.

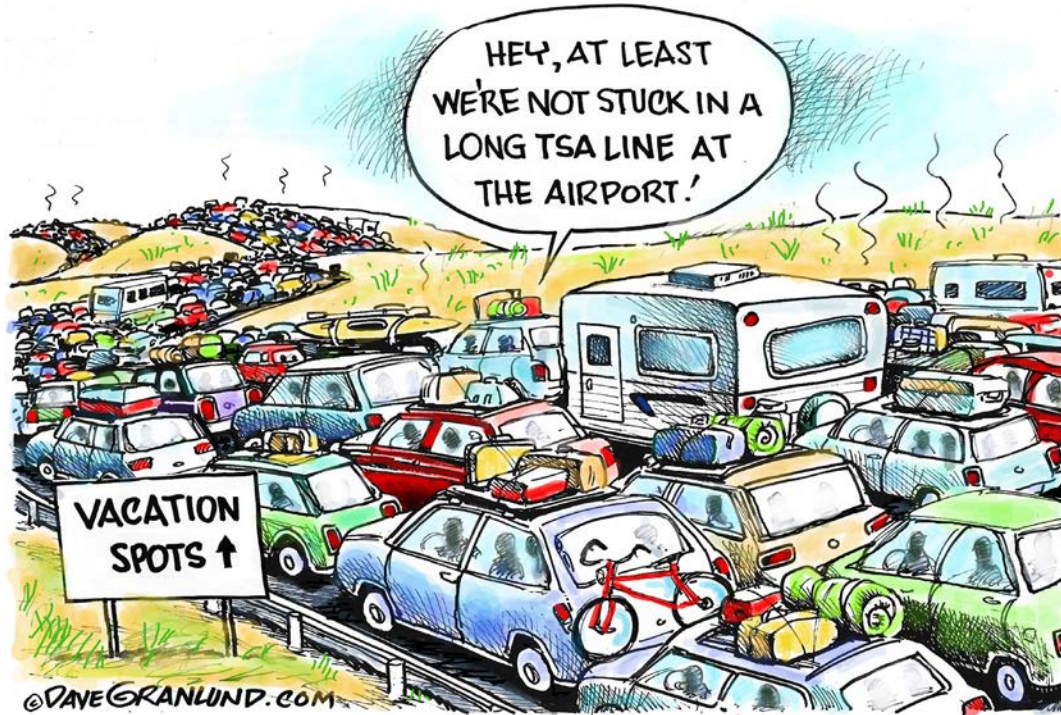
Depending on the amount withdrawn, there could be an impact to the Medicare premium due to the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount provision. Assuming you file jointly, you will pay a higher Medicare Part B premium if your modified adjusted gross income is above certain thresholds, i.e., more than \$103,000 for an individual and \$206,000 for a married couple.

Please note that Medicare's procedures will not note this income change for two years, so if you make the withdrawal in 2024 it will not trigger the increases until your 2026 Medicare premiums. A change to your Medicare premium might also result in a change to your net Social Security payment at that time since Medicare is automatically deducted from your Social Security payment.

Also depending on the amount withdrawn, you may have to pay an additional amount on top of your Medicare Part D premium. The Part D adjustment amount is calculated based on a percentage of the Part D national base beneficiary premium, not on a percentage of the plan premium.

The Social Security Administration mails letters to beneficiaries, who currently pay a Part B Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount and, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, are in a Part D plan. The letter explains the additional Part D amount and how exactly Social Security

SECURITY | page 5



## Guest Column

### The Garden Lady tackles the Rose of Sharon



Paul, who gardens in Palmer, wrote in with this timely question for the Garden Lady: "My question deals with the Rose of Sharon and the many seedlings that it disbursts. I have a large bush/tree in my front yard, and it disbursts many seedlings. I have weeded the seedlings going on three times this spring and summer. When is the best time to cut the dead blossoms off the tree so that I don't repeat this task? Please share any other hints/ideas about the Rose of Sharon shrub."

This is a perfect question, since bloom time for the Rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*) is right around the corner.

Like you, I am familiar with the shrub's tendency to self-sow, a lot. The best way to halt all of the seedlings coming is to "dead-head" the flowers as they begin to fade, before they are given the opportunity to make and drop seed.

Some would argue that this is, in fact, as much or more work as weeding the seedlings away. I guess it all depends whether you prefer to work standing up or on your hands and knees.

One suggestion I have would be to weed by use of a scuffle hoe. It's a tool you use standing up whereby you drag the scuffle across the soil.

It cuts the weed away from its roots, stopping it dead in its tracks. If you do this every week, the weeds will be so small that they will just wither in the sun- you don't even have to pick them up.

That may be the easiest way out of your overabundance of seedlings.

You also asked for some information about the shrub. Here are some excerpts from a column I wrote a few years ago that you might find interesting, especially in regard to the appropriate time of year to prune.

The Rose of Sharon is also known as Shrub Althea. It is a member of the mallow family, a diverse bunch of plants that include hollyhocks, marsh mallows, cotton, okra and even tropical hibiscus as kin.

Although native to Asia, it had already found a home in North America by 1600. In the 19th century it was among the most popular shrubs in the nursery trade. It grows well in zones 5-8.

The Rose of Sharon has an upright growth habit that lends itself well to all types of combination plantings: in foundation plantings, as stand alone hedges, and as the backdrop for perennial borders. Likewise, a single shrub can be trained to be an outstanding specimen.

Because its flowers are borne on new growth rather than old, pruning can be accomplished in late winter or early spring without the risk of sacrificing blooms. As with most shrubs, concentrate first on removing any dead branches, then remove those that are crossing or rubbing on one another.

If growth needs to be checked, cut well into the shrub to decrease its height and girth.

Cutting back to a bud that points outward and in the direction of least competition will result in a bushy, less lanky shrub- one suitable for use as a specimen. Frequent pruning results in fewer but larger flowers, whereas no or little pruning gives way to many small flowers.

Plant the Rose of Sharon in full sun or part shade situations. Although it is tolerant of many types of soil, from seashore sandy to wet, this shrub prefers deep, well-drained soil to perform its best.

Fertilization is rarely necessary.

Although Japanese beetles are said to favor the flowers, I haven't had much of a problem with them at home or at work.

To intentionally propagate this plant, simply take a softwood cutting four or five inches long in early summer. Remove lower foliage and insert into the ground in a shady location.

Water as needed.

By the season end roots will have likely formed, but wait until spring to move your cutting to a nursery bed.

As mentioned, seeds of the Rose of Sharon have also been known to sprout under the mother plant, sometimes to the degree of being a nuisance. Grow these seedlings on and see what color flower you get; there is no guarantee it will be the same as mother.

Single or double hibiscus shaped flowers come in shades of red, pink, purple and white, depending on the cultivar. Like those of their tropical cousin, individual Rose of Sharon flowers bloom for a sin-

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PHONE  
413.283.8393  
Fax: 413.283.7107  
Subscriptions: 413.283.8393

EMAIL  
Advertising Sales  
Wendy Delcamp  
wdelcamp@turley.com

Editor  
Gregory Scibelli  
aan@turley.com

Subscriptions  
cgriswold@turley.com

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www.agawamadvertisernews.turley.com

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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.

### AGAWAM ADVERTISER NEWS TEAM

EDITOR/SPORTS  
Greg Scibelli  
aan@turley.com  
sports@turley.com

ADVERTISING SALES  
Wendy Delcamp  
wdelcamp@turley.com

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@AgawamAdvertiserNews

WEB  
www.agawamadvertisernews.turley.com

PATRICK H. TURLEY  
CEO

KEITH TURLEY  
President

DEANNA SLOAT  
Graphics Manager



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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



I received an email from a Belchertown resident, she said, "I have had a whip-poor-will in my yard for about a month." She also said, "I hear the call every morning around 4 a.m. and in the evening



Whip-poor-will

around 9 p.m. I have not had one for the past 10 years and am quite lucky to have again."

She said she lives in a quiet neighborhood and she was wondering if any other folks have them. She is fortunate. It has been many years since I heard the call of the whip-poor-will.

The whip-poor-will is ten inches long and are mostly heard calling in the evening. It is a brownish to dusk colored bird, which blends in well with its surroundings. In flight, the rounded wings and long tail are visible. They eat aerial insects and feed mostly at night on moths. They are nocturnal and rest during the day. They also eat beetles and grasshoppers.

The whip-poor-will nest on the woodland floor and lays two white eggs with gray or brown spots. Their call is "whip-poor-will," with emphasis on the last syllable. They inhabit open woods, canyons and dry, brushy areas.

### Green heron and more

My daughter saw a green heron fly across Route 32 in Ware, near the power supply at the town line on Thursday, June

27. It landed in a small, swampy area. Green herons unlike the great blue and blue heron has a short neck and legs. They have a blue-green back, reddish brown neck and chest and a long, pointed bill.

The week before she saw a family of raccoons near the pond across from Church Street. The little ones frolicked in the grass; it was the cutest thing. She also saw a pileated woodpecker at the Lucy Stone Park in Warren on a new section of trail. She said, "It flew ahead and landed on a tree. I've never seen one so close before." On June 29, she saw a pair of cedar waxwings at Hardwick Pond.

### Loon facts

The Loon Preservation Committee provided this interesting information in one of their newsletters.

"Loons diving to deeper depths tend to spend more time underwater than those diving in more shallow areas. In a study of loons using Lake Michigan as a stopover site during fall migration, Kenow et al. (2018) found that loons diving to depths of 131 feet were spending, on average, 139 seconds, over two minutes, underwater

per dive. In contrast, loons diving to depths of 65 feet in that study were spending less time under water per dive, 87 seconds, on average."

The article also said, "It can be difficult to quantify the absolute maximum amount of time that a loon can spend underwater, as loons likely have no need to test their limits during normal bouts of foraging. While there have been anecdotal reports of loons spending up to five minutes at a time underwater, the maximum documented dive duration that we were able to find in the published literature for loons was 219 seconds or 3.65 minutes. However, given that the loon that was documented making this dive was doing so in the process of normal foraging, it is possible (and likely) that under duress, loons may be able to stay under even longer, perhaps up to the fabled five minutes, or even more."

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.

### GARDEN | from page 4

gle day, close at night, then eventually drop from the plant.

Even at that rate, flowering occurs for many weeks throughout late July, August and sometimes into September.

In my opinion, single flowered cultivars are more desirable; they put on a better show and are more tolerant of rainy weather. Double types turn to mush after a rainstorm - much like petunia flowers do. Not very attractive and oh so squishy!

"Diana" is my all time favorite cultivar. Four- six inch pure white single flowers

bloom in abundance, even through the night, making it a perfect candidate for use in a moonlit garden.

"Woodbridge" is another popular variety. It is deep pink and darker at the base. "Blue Bird" is unique, sky blue with a red center.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 32 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

### SECURITY | from page 4



ty will collect it. You can contact SSA at 1-800-772-1213 or your local SSA agency if you have any further questions about your Part D IRMAA premium.

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

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Groom's Town Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

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**CLUES ACROSS**

1. Book size

8. Indonesian Island

13. "The Sopranos" character

14. Plants often found in stews

15. Stern

19. Atomic #52

20. Often seen after a company name

21. Silk garments

22. Inhibiting hormone (abbr.)

23. Type of beer

24. Margarine

25. Throw lightly

26. Explains again

30. Raccoon-like animal

31. Sneaker parts

32. Platforms

33. Scored perfectly

34. One's essence

35. Strikes with a firm blow

38. Makes tractors

39. Music term

40. Lack of energy

44. Vestments

45. \_\_\_ and feathers

46. Total

47. Gobbler

48. One with Japanese immigrant parents

49. Type of braking system (abbr.)

50. Home of Rudy Flyer

51. Manageable

55. Lugged

57. Irritated

58. Sea eagles

59. Warm seasons

**CLUES DOWN**

1. About visual sense

2. Part of a horse's saddle

3. In a way,

interchanged

4. Rocker's accessory

5. Very important person

6. It precedes two

7. Flavored

8. Musical notes

9. String instrument (slang)

10. Mister

11. Fine, light linen fabric

12. Absence of bacteria

16. Discounts

17. Area units

18. A description of one's life

22. Gazelles

25. Plumbing fixture

27. Makes especially happy

28. One side of something many-sided

29. Frosts

30. Defunct monetary unit of Guinea

32. Female animal species

34. School terms

35. Written law

36. Unpleasant aroma

37. Nuclear weapon

38. One who challenges

40. Opposite of first

41. Able to be utilized

42. Less interesting

43. Implants

45. Canister

48. Gestures

51. After B

52. Romanian monetary unit

53. Long-term memory

54. Cash machine

56. The Volunteer State

**CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE 9**

**PAPER AIRPLANE** | from page 1

Following that, they experimented with the planes by adding bingo chips to different sides of the planes in order to see how they impacted their flight.

"I'm hoping to teach them the ability to tell how weight impacts things," Malvezzi said. "It is a simple scientific concept, but for the littles it is a good introduction of how matter takes up space and how it impacts other objects."

They concluded the day by getting to make paper airplanes using their own designs in order to experiment and see what they could do to improve or alter the planes.

Malvezzi thought this was a good program to start off summer reading with as it was simple and got kids involved.

"I just thought it would be something fun and simple for the first week of summer reading," Malvezzi said. "With paper airplanes it is really just: give the kids a stack of paper and some instructions and let them be a little more self-sufficient, it's nice to have programs like that."

Malvezzi had done this type of activity with a group of college students before, so she was excited to see how it worked with a younger age group.

"I'm excited to do it with the littles because they're still working on their finger dexterity, they're still working on how to fold things and I think that will be fun," Malvezzi said.

She also enjoyed getting to see the older group get more creative with their airplane designs as they had a greater understanding of how paper airplanes work and how they can alter them.

The library has several other programs planned for this summer.

Malvezzi plans to do another STEM-related program, involving making popsicle stick catapults.

"Basically you're given rubber bands, a bunch of popsicle sticks and a spoon and you have to try to build the catapult that launches a marshmallow the farthest," Malvezzi said.

Youth Associate Evan Delano will be running Project Waddleway, which is Project Runway for giant rubber ducks. They will also do a paint and snack event for high schoolers.

Additionally, Malvezzi will be hosting fantasy bingo as well as rock painting.

All of these programs are a part of summer reading at the library. Malvezzi and the other library staff encourage everyone to sign up for summer reading and to come in and enjoy the different programs.

"People seem really excited," Malvezzi said. "They're enjoying all the extra things we have going on."

In order to learn more about the programs and events at the library, go to their website at <https://www.agawamlibrary.org/>.



Kids got to make paper airplanes at Agawam Public Library.



Kids and their parents got to design their own paper airplanes.



The kids test-flew their personally designed paper airplanes.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA



Youth Associate Isabell Malvezzi walked the kids through the instructions for the paper airplane program.



Youth Associate Isabell Malvezzi instructed kids to add bingo chips to the sides of their paper airplanes to see how it affected their flight.

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# SPORTS

## Field hockey summer campaign opens



Finnola Mahoney winds up for a hit.



Megan Outhuse attempts to keep the ball out of the goal.



Samantha Matland looks to make a pass.

**SOUTH HADLEY** – On Wednesday, June 26, South Hadley High School hosted more than a dozen field hockey squads made up of players from several area high schools.

Among the participants are Agawam, Belchertown, South Hadley, Holyoke, Quabog, and Minnechaug. Teams participating in the league are playing short games every Wednesday for several weeks in an effort to get more repetitions prior to the fall season.

There is also hope more high school players will come try out the game.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Stella Christopher drags the ball up the field.



Lily Charest makes her way up the field.



Lilianna Atkins drags the ball up the field.

## Pioneers holding steady, notch more wins



Camilo Comi changes direction to avoid the opposing defense.



Aidan Kelly makes his way up the field.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

**LUDLOW** – During the past two weeks, the Western Mass. Pioneers picked up more wins, defeating Albany Rush 4-1, Black Rock FC 1-0, and last Saturday, defeated Boston City 5-0 to go to 10-1-1 on the season. Their only loss this season came against the Seacoast Phantoms. Their tie is against Vermont Green, who they will meet in their final regular season game this Saturday, July 13 at 7 p.m.



Gianluca Cersosimo socks a goal kick away.

## PeoplesBank takes down Tigers

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

**HOLYOKE** – Since losing back-to-back games to Hilltown Tents at the beginning of the Tri-County League regular season, PeoplesBank has been on a roll.

PeoplesBank, who have won a total of 18 TCL championship titles since 1995, won their sixth consecutive game following a 6-2 victory over the Chicopee Falls Tigers at Cougar Field, which is located on the Holyoke Community College campus, last Tuesday night.

“We were able to score a couple of runs with some timely two out base hits in tonight’s game. Our pitchers also pitched well, said PeoplesBank player/coach Joe Ferry. “We now have a week off and we’ll finish the regular season with a bunch of home games.”

PeoplesBank, who posted an 11-1 win over the Tigers down the street at Mackenzie Stadium on June 18, entered their week off with a 7-2 overall record.

Lefthander James Flahive was

Santiago Blasco Gomez looks to keep the ball away from an opponent.

# Sports

## New player leads Blue Sox to win

HOLYOKE – Blue Sox third baseman Kollin Ritchie joined Valley last Saturday for his first game of the season.

Ritchie led the way for Valley with a two-run 418-foot home run and an RBI double en route to a 11-2 victory against the Sanford Mainers.

Valley hitters walked three times in the first two innings, but they couldn't come around and score. Sanford walked twice in the first two and also failed to score. The first hit came in the third inning on a Caleb Shpur single.

In the third, Logan Hugo led off with a walk and scored on a Jay Bant single to make it 1-0 Valley.

Valley opened the game wide open in the bottom of the fifth. The first five batters of the inning all reached base and scored. Newcomer Connor Misch hit a two-RBI single. Valley tacked on three runs in the sixth, capitalized by Ritchie's two-run home run.

Jared Davis hit a home run to left field and made it 10-2. But that's all Sanford could muster up. Valley scored one more in the bottom of the eighth to make it 11-2.

Second baseman Mike O'Connor continues to see the ball well as he extended his

hitting streak to 14 games.

Blue Sox starter Gregory Shaw earned the win after going five innings of one hit ball. He walked five and struck out just one. On the other side, Mainers starter Colton Trisch went three plus innings and gave up one run on two hits. The southpaw also walked five hitters but recorded zero strikeouts.

### Blue Sox beat Mountaineers

The Vermont Mountaineers (16-6) walked into last Friday's game with a 10-2 record since June 15, and holding the best record in the NECBL. The Valley Blue Sox on the other hand, after finding a possible turnaround in their season, found themselves on a five-game losing streak. Holding a 2-0 season lead over Valley as well, Vermont looked to finish off the sweep and extend the Valley losing streak.

In the early going, the Mountaineers continued their narrative. Led by David Michael Jefferson, the Mountaineers jumped out to an early 4-0 lead, and the Blue Sox trends telegraphed how the game would result.

Yet this game was different than the few in recent memory. After David Case

was pulled in the fourth inning, after starting the first four giving up four runs off six hits, Will Newell and Chris Torres stepped in and led the Blue Sox charge. Newell pitched three and Torres the final two, they gave up a combined 0 hits and 0 runs with six strikeouts each. An unbelievable display of relief pitching from the Blue Sox, when their strength was needed most in a season defining game, it showed true.

This spark was all the offense needed as well, with Michael Toth leading the charge in the top of the seventh inning, the Blue Sox scored four straight to tie the game. In the following inning, Chase Jans hit a double to bring Kyle Hennington home, giving the Blue Sox the lead they finished with.

In a gritty win to say the least, it's one that will be looked highly upon as the season progresses. After crossing the halfway mark of the season, the Valley Blue Sox find themselves just a half game back now on the Bristol Blues for the West division crown. It will be interesting as the two teams still have 4 head-to-head matchups yet to come, but for now the Valley spirits must be high as ever, with hope pumped back into their season.



Austin LeClerc, of Palmer, catches an out at first base for the Tigers.



Johnny Gegetskas rounds third after hitting a home run out to right field.



Ryan Magni looks to field a grounder to short.



Dustin Brisson, of Wilbraham, catches the ball at first.



Sam Allen slides into third base safely for PeoplesBank.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY

### PEOPLESBANK ■ from page 7

scheduled to be the PeoplesBank starting pitcher in the second meeting of the regular season against the Tigers (6-4). He arrived to the field late and righty Mikey Rivera was the opener for the visiting team.

"Jimmy had a prior engagement, and he didn't have his normal pregame routine," said Ferry, who's the PeoplesBank starting left fielder. "In my opinion, not only is he the best pitcher on our team during the past three years, but he's probably the best pitcher in this league this year."

Rivera allowed a leadoff single to centerfielder Travis Kagan in the bottom of the first inning before retiring the next three Tigers batters.

"Mikey is a new player on our team, and he had the honor of pitching the first inning," Ferry said. "He's fitting in very well with us."

Flahive, who was the winning pitcher, took over on the mound at the start of the second inning. He pitched the next five innings allowing two runs (one earned) on six hits with 10 strikeouts and no walks. Veteran righty Danny Gaines allowed only a double in the seventh inning.

The Tigers also used three pitchers in the game.

Righty Brendan Fournier made his first start of the season for the Tigers.

"This was the first time that Brendan pitched in a game for us this season," said Tigers player/coach Ryan Magni, who's also the baseball coach at Holyoke Community College. "I thought he pitched well in the first three innings."

After not allowing any runs in the first two innings, Fournier, who also pitched at Chicopee High School, got himself into a jam with two-outs in the top of the third inning.

Centerfielder Seth Allen began the two-out rally by

blasting a double to deep centerfield. Then catcher Pete Hogan was hit-by-a pitch and right fielder Johnny Gegetskas drew a walk which loaded the bases. First baseman Dustin Brisson drove home two runs with a hard ground-ball single into right field.

Brisson, who played college baseball at Central Florida, was selected in the 15th round of the 2000 MLB draft by the Boston Red Sox. He played in 345 career minor league games without being called up by a major league team.

With two-outs in the following frame, PeoplesBank pinch-hitter Kyle Platner delivered a two-run single to right field off righty relief pitcher Evan Dougherty increasing the lead to 4-0.

The Tigers broke the ice when first baseman Austin Leclerc, who played high school baseball at Pathfinder Tech, blasted a home run over the left field fence.

After Allen hit a double that bounced off the left field fence leading off the fifth inning, Gegetskas smashed a two-run homer over the right field fence, which increased the PeoplesBank lead to 6-1.

It was the first home run of the season for Gegetskas, who played college baseball at Westfield State University. The Tigers scored an unearned run with two outs in the bottom of the sixth.

Righthander Race Drobiak pitched the final two final innings for the home team without allowing a run.

The third meeting of the regular season between the two squads is slated to take place at Mackenzie Stadium on July 16.



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# Schools & Youth

## Middle Atlantic Conference Academic Honor Roll

ANNVILLE, PA – Cameron Croteau of Feeding Hills was one of nearly 250 Lebanon Valley College student-athletes to be named to the 2023-2024 Middle Atlantic Conference's Winter/Spring Academic Honor roll.

Croteau, a graduate of Tec Connections Academy, is a member of the Lebanon Valley College men's ice hockey team and is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in exercise science at The Valley.

The academic honor roll is comprised of student-athletes who compete in a varsity-level sport and registered a term/semester GPA of 3.20 (on a 4.00 scale) or higher.

## Dean College Spring 2024 Dean's List

FRANKLIN – Dean College is pleased to announce the students who have earned a place on the Dean's List for the Spring 2024 semester. These students demonstrated a serious commitment to their studies while at Dean College and are from Agawam/Feeding Hills.

Emily Larouche and Emily Ball.

## Emmanuel College celebrates 102nd Commencement

BOSTON – Emmanuel College in Boston celebrated its 102nd Commencement on Saturday, May 18, adding hundreds of graduates to the global network of Emmanuel alumni who are making their mark on the world. The following local students graduated from Emmanuel:

Olivia Frogameni of Agawam. Frogameni received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing during the ceremony. Frogameni graduated magna cum laude.

Jaylee Hiersche of Feeding Hills. Hiersche received a Bachelor of Arts in a double major in English and Secondary Education during the ceremony. Hiersche graduated summa cum laude and with distinction in the field of study.

## Elms College Announces Dean's List for Spring 2024

CHICOPEE – The College of Our Lady of the Elms has named the following students to the Dean's List for the spring 2024 semester. Congratulations to all the students who are named on the list. The following students are from Agawam and Feeding Hills.

Carson Asselin, Alexis Barna, Santino Giordano, Katelynn Gordner, Sabrina McBride, Amy McKinley, Aidan Noftall, Brady Spaulding, Nick Uschmann and Jessica Vinci.

## University of Hartford Dean's and President's Lists

WEST HARTFORD – The University of Hartford is pleased to announce that 1,927 students have been named to the Dean's List and President's List for the spring 2024 semester.

The Dean's List recognizes students achieving superior academic standing. The requirement, with some exceptions based on school or college, is a grade point average of at least 3.0 and no grade below C.

The President's List recognizes a select group of students reaching the highest level of academic standing. To be placed on the President's list, students must maintain a GPA of at least a 3.75 and receive grades of C or better.

Among the students honored for their academic achievements are:

- Amara Agosto of Agawam - President's List
- Brianna Benjamin of Agawam - President's List
- Kolby Lindell of Agawam - President's List
- Athena Gonzalez of Agawam - Dean's List
- Aly Gouvan of Agawam - Dean's List

## Roger Williams University spring 2024 Dean's List

BRISTOL, RI – Select students have been named to the Spring 2024 Dean's List at Roger Williams University in Bristol, R.I. Full-time students who complete 12 or more credits per semester and earn a GPA of 3.4 or higher are placed on the Dean's List that semester. The following students are residents of your coverage area:

- Arianna Albano of Agawam
- Jacob Barber of Feeding Hills
- Ethan Timms of Agawam
- Zack Wieners of Agawam

## Toby Trench inducted into WNEU National Honor Society

SPRINGFIELD – Toby Trench was welcomed into Omicron Delta Kappa National Honor Society on April 19 at the Western New England University chapter's annual induction ceremony.

Omicron Delta Kappa is a national leadership honor society that recognizes and encourages achievement in scholarship, athletics, campus or community service, social and religious activities, as well as campus government, journalism, speech and the mass media, and creative and performing arts.

Trench is working toward a degree in Computer Science.

## Residents shine at Springfield College

AGAWAM – Agawam residents Megan Crawford, Nadia Ghareeb and Anna Russo recently graduated from Springfield College. Crawford and Russo from the School of Health Sciences and Ghareeb from the School of Arts and Sciences. All three were members of Agawam High School's Class of 2020.



# Public Notices

### NOTICE OF TIER CLASSIFICATION 536 NORTH WESTFIELD STREET, AGAWAM, MA MassDEP RELEASE TRACKING NUMBER 1-21824

A release of oil and/or hazardous materials has occurred at this location, which is a disposal site as defined by M.G.L. c. 21E, § 2 and the Massachusetts Contingency Plan, 310 CMR 40.0000. To evaluate the release, a Phase I Initial Site Investigation was performed pursuant to 310 CMR 40.0480. The site has been classified as **Tier I** pursuant to 310 CMR 40.0500. On or around **July 5, 2024**, Mr. John McCarthy filed a **Tier I** Classification Submittal with the Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP). To obtain more information on this disposal site, please contact Mr. John McCarthy [536 North Westfield Street, Agawam, MA 01030].

The Tier Classification Submittal and the disposal site file can be viewed at the MassDEP website at <https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/portal#!/search/waste-site> using Release Tracking Number (RTN) **1-21824**.

Additional public involvement opportunities are available under 310 CMR 40.1403(9) and 310 CMR 40.1404. 07/11/2024

### LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given by USA Towing, 71 Garden St., Feeding Hills, MA 01030, sale of a motor vehicle pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. C. 255, Section 39A, that on **July 29, 2024 at 8:00 a.m.**, at USA Towing, said motor vehicle will be sold at a private sale to satisfy the garage keeper's lien for towing, storage and costs of sale. 2000 Buick Century VIN:2G4WY55J0Y1156519 No Plates w/ vehicle Last known reg. owner:

Adam Pro 1191 E. 92nd St. Brooklyn, NY 11236 07/11, 07/18, 07/25/2024

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Division 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413) 748-8600 Docket No. HD24P1355EA Estate of: David George Vershon Also Known As: David G. Vershon Date of Death: March 4, 2024**

**INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE**

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Denise E. Vershon of Agawam, MA.**

**Denise E. Vershon of Agawam, MA** has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without**

surety on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner. 07/11/2024

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758 Docket No. HD22P2170EA Estate of: Donald R Mason Date of Death: 11/12/2021 CITATION ON PETITION FOR ORDER OF COMPLETE SETTLEMENT**

A Petition for **Order of Complete Settlement** has been filed by **Jesse C Mason** of Summerville, SC requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including the allowance of a final account, a determination of testacy and heirs at law and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition.

**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 07/26/2024.**

**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.**

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M. Hyland**, First Justice of this Court. Date: July 09, 2024

**Rosemary A. Saccomani** Register of Probate 07/11/2024

## Agawam Advertiser News 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](mailto:obits@turley.com).

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

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- 1 Email all notices to [notices@turley.com](mailto:notices@turley.com)
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- 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](http://www.publicnotices.turley.com)

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**SUPERINTENDENT** ■ from page 1

ed in how she met the standards for being a superintendent.

The standards included instructional leadership, management and operations, family and community engagement, and professional culture.

The ratings for this section are: unsatisfactory, needs improvement, proficient (which is the benchmark) and exemplary. Hoffman scored proficient in all of these categories.

"Mrs. Hoffman's performance is exemplary," School Committee Member Wendy Rua said. "Her dedication to improving safety protocols combined with her active presence in the community underscore her commitment to authentic engagement, willingness to receive community feedback and a diligent focus on keeping our kids safe."

Overall, the committee was very impressed with Hoffman's work this year.

They appreciated her emphasis on social-emotional learning and support in the schools.

"Her balanced focus on both the social-emotional and academic needs of the students combined with her commitment to development makes her a valued super-

intendent," School Committee Member AJ Christopher said.

"I appreciate her focus on not only the academic needs of students but also their social-emotional needs," Mayor Christopher Johnson had written.

*"I appreciate her focus on not only the academic needs of students but also their social-emotional needs."*

— Mayor Christopher Johnson

Additionally, they approved of her focus on safety in the schools throughout this school year.

"Her engagement with other personnel demonstrates a commitment to ensuring a safe and healthy learning environment for all students within the district," School Committee Member Michael Perry said.

They also admired the budget that Hoffman had put forward for the schools this year, which Johnson had mentioned being one of the better school budgets out of sur-

rounding communities.

"Thank you to Superintendent Hoffman for your proactive approach to allocating ESSER funds during the COVID pandemic and developing a budget which does not require layoffs and which was able to be unanimously approved," Committee Member Catherine McDougal said.

Finally, they mentioned their appreciation for all of the work she has put in toward making the new high school project possible.

"Your leadership, along with the rest of the project team, on the AHS building project has been extremely valuable," McDougal said.

The committee agreed that they hope to see academic performance of students continue to improve in the future, but they feel Hoffman has done a good job of supporting students in these improvements thus far.

Hoffman was appreciative of all of the committee's feedback and she hopes to continue to improve in her future years in Agawam schools.

"I want to thank the committee for going through the review of my goals and my evidence," Hoffman said. "I appreciate your feedback and, as always, I will take it and reflect upon this year and then help to set and talk about goals for next year."

# Yoga classes offered

HOLYOKE – NAMI Western Massachusetts would like to announce Mindfulness Yoga with Kateri's third anniversary yoga series.

This class is designed as a gentle, therapeutic yoga class with beginners in mind. It is easy-paced, helps reduce stress and anxiety, and aids in the management of mental health symptoms.

Kateri is a certified yoga instructor and is vice president of our board of directors.

This series will be 4 weeks starting on Monday July 29 and continuing August 5, August 12, and concluding on August 19. Come celebrate Kateri's Third Anniversary, July 29, with a free yoga class. The remaining three classes are available for just \$30.

Partial proceeds go to NAMI-WM. Pre-registration is required. To Register email Kateri at: [mindfulnessyogawithkateri721@gmail.com](mailto:mindfulnessyogawithkateri721@gmail.com)

**SCOUT** ■ from page 1

fellow scout doing their Eagle Project.

"I really like the idea of fixing up something that was already done by a previous scout," he said. "So it was scout-built and then 19 years later, a scout is fixing it up."

Fleagle plans to clean up the area around the bridge and then fix the bridge itself in order to make it safer for the many people and animals who use it on a daily basis.

"I'm glad to be able to help out at a place where my troop and I go a lot," Fleagle said. "It really is a nice, pretty area and I like being able to help out a place that I have been to so many times."

This project is Fleagle's Eagle Scout Project, which is one of the big requirements to become an Eagle Scout.

The project is meant to act as a culmination of the skills that scouts have learned thus far. It is entirely led by the scouts themselves.

Additionally, the project has to be something that helps the entire community and displays the scout's leadership skills.

"You need to come up with a project, lead people on how to do it and actually do it," Fleagle said.

Fleagle has put in a lot of time and planning toward this project so far. He had to get the project approved by the council in the Scouts and he had to work with RSP in order to get permission to actually fix up the bridge.

This project is Fleagle's last step in

becoming an Eagle Scout. He has either earned or is about to earn all the needed merit badges and filled the other requirements.

Fleagle hopes to begin clearing the brush around the bridge on July 21. There will be adults present with saws and power tools to help break up logs.

There will also be volunteers to take the brush and hike it up to where the Park Rangers will have their trucks to haul it away.

Then Fleagle plans to rebuild the bridge on Aug. 18.

In order to get this project going, Fleagle needs support from the community. He asks that people donate to his project so

that he can afford the supplies, such as the wood and nuts, that he needs.

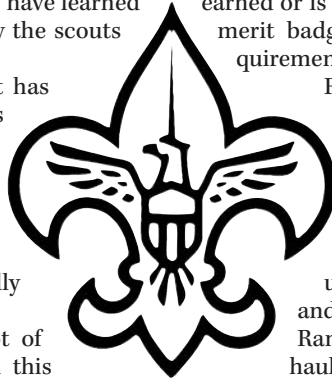
He emphasizes that all of the donations will go toward this bridge and Robinson State Park, not toward himself or toward the Scouts.

He hopes to raise about \$650 to \$700 in order to get the needed supplies. The goal is to have the donations in by early August so there is enough time to acquire the supplies before Aug. 18.

People can also volunteer to help in fixing up the bridge and cleaning up the brush, if they are interested in being more hands-on with the project.

Checks for donations can be made out to Troop 82 and mailed to 21 Raymond Circle, Agawam MA 01001.

Donations can also be sent to @CFleagle via Venmo.



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# Tips on how to choose the right mortgage lender

**Paula Fleming**  
 pfleming@boston.bbb.org

The housing market is constantly changing. Whether it's competitive or slow, if you want to buy a home, you need to be prepared.

As a prospective buyer, you can make your offers on homes more competitive by getting pre-approved for financing from a mortgage lender before even bidding on a house. This lets the seller know you're a serious buyer and provides reassurance that the sale will close without issues.

Fortunately, shopping around, comparing prices, and negotiating deals can save you thousands of dollars on a mortgage. To get the best deal, compare all the costs, and understand how mortgages work.

If you are buying a home, refinancing your home, or taking out a home equity loan, follow these tips to help make your search for a mortgage lender a success.

### How to shop for a mortgage lender

- Know how much you can spend up-front. Before you ask for information from a lender, it's a good idea to know how much you can spend on a loan and the maximum monthly payment you can afford. This information will be crucial to your home search and negotiations, so review your budget beforehand. Get familiar with interest rates, too. Depending on the economy and if mortgage loan interest rates are high or low, this may impact how much you can spend on a home.

- Get to know your loan options. Loan options include loan terms, interest rates, and the loan type. The loan term refers to the length of the loan, which may be 15 or 30 years. Shorter loans usually have higher monthly payments with lower interest



rates. Interest rate types may be fixed or adjustable. Fixed-rate loans are lower risk but carry higher interest rates. Adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs) have lower interest rates, but the rates can change over time. Loan types may be conventional or part of a government program. A trustworthy mortgage lender can help you understand your options and choose the best loan for you.

- Understand the difference between a broker and a lender. According to ConsumerFinance.gov, a lender is a bank or other financial institution that loans money directly to you. A broker acts as a middleman, comparing loan options on your behalf. The Federal Trade Commission adds, "It might not always be clear if you're dealing with a lender or a broker, so if you're not sure, ask." You'll want to know who you're working with since brokers usually pay a service fee separate from the lender's fees.

There are brokers and lenders, so evaluate those differences and see what works best for you.

- Get information from multiple lenders and brokers before making a decision. The FTC advises getting as much information from each lender as possible. Keep your options open since different lenders may offer different rates. Ask about interest rates, loan types, annual percentage rates, points, down payments, mortgage insurance, and all other fees. This will help you get a clear view of the actual cost of the mortgage.

- Understand whether you should pay points. Your mortgage lender will likely give you the option of paying for discount points. Mortgage points are fees you pay a lender to reduce the interest rate on a mortgage. Typically, one discount point equals 1% of the mortgage amount and will reduce your interest rate by .25%. De-

pending on how long you plan to keep your home and your mortgage, this extra cost may or may not make sense. This calculator will help you figure that out.

- Working with a broker? Make sure they find you the best deal. If you prefer to hire a broker to shop for loans for you, know that while brokers can access several lenders, they aren't obligated to find the best deal for you unless they sign a contract to act as your agent. Always ask questions and be sure you're comfortable with the loan you choose.

- Be prepared to negotiate the best deal. Loan officers and brokers can keep some or all of the overages (the difference between the lowest available price and any higher price you agree to) of a loan as extra compensation. This means you can negotiate a price lower than what they initially offered. The best way to negotiate is to have the broker or lender give you a written list of all the costs and fees of the loan. Then, ask if they will reduce or waive completely one or more of the fees. You can also show them a competitor's offer to see if they will give you a better deal.

- Watch out for scams. Shopping around for a mortgage lender will help you get a general idea of how much a loan costs, which will help you spot and avoid any offers that seem too good to be true. Be wary of unsolicited calls and emails offering you great rates on a mortgage or "no-cost" loans. Never give in to high-pressure sales tactics. ConsumerFinance.gov warns about phishing scams where con artists attempt to divert your closing costs and down payment by suggesting you wire the money into a fraudulent account right before your loan closes. Never wire money until you verify the closing instructions in person with your trusted loan representatives.

## Send Us Your Autumn Event Information

Turley Publications will print your Autumn event **FREE OF CHARGE** in our **Autumn Fest Supplement** which will be published **September 11, 2024.**

Total circulation of 85,000 reaching over 200,000 readers in the Pioneer Valley.

**Deadline for Calendar submissions is August 12.**

## Community Autumn Events

**Event Should Be Non-Profit & Open to the Public**

**FREE Calendar Listings Reaching over 200,000 Readers in the Pioneer Valley**

Event Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Description \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Cost \_\_\_\_\_

Contact name & phone number for more information \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**MAIL YOUR LISTING INFORMATION TO:**  
**Turley Publications, Attn: Jamie Joslyn, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069**  
**or email\* them to: jamie@turley.com**  
**\*Be sure to indicate "Autumn Event" in the subject line of your email.**