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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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Supt. presents priorities for plan

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Superintendent Sheila Hoffman presented the priorities for the five-year strategic plan she and a committee are developing.

These priorities will be used to guide the district toward focusing on areas of improvement over the next five years.

The committee working on developing the priorities for this plan was made up of a variety of community members.

“It has representatives from our school community, including students, parents, teachers and administrators,” Hoffman said.

The committee met over several months in order to come up with the four priorities of the strategic plan.

“We led several working sessions that were facilitated by a partner that we brought on to

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City Councilor Dino Mercadante acknowledges the crowd as the parade begins. See more photos on page 6.
TURLEY PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Library hosts kids Stuffy Show

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Agawam Public Library hosted a Stuffy Show for kids, based around the concept of a dog show.

This program was open for kids in kindergarten through second grade and each child was invited to bring in a stuffed animal to show off. This event was packed with fun.

“Everyone seemed to have a great time,” Youth Associate Isabel Malvezzi said. “There was a lot of energy in the room and the kids were having so much fun, which is all I could ask for.”

They started off with a story read by Malvezzi that detailed how to behave at a dog show.

This was followed by an agility course where kids could walk their stuffed animals across a low to floor balance beam and do some hopscotch.

The kids were then able to do a special walk around the room with their stuffed animal to show off all it could do. They also each made a show card for their stuffed animals.

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New teenagers’ space expands, gets major overhaul now open at library

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The Agawam Public Library has been working on updating their teen space over

the last month.

Now the changes are nearly complete, with the new space providing teens with more space to relax after a school day.

Youth Associate Evan Delano

has been leading this project and is pleased with how well everything is coming along.

“I’m really happy with how it’s going so far,” Delano said.

In the updated space, the teens

now have the length of the bottom floor of the library to spread out with their friends.

Delano wanted to ensure them more space than the previous area, which had mainly been a corner of the room, so they were happy to be able to secure this new area.

“It (the old space) proved not to be big enough, there was really only enough space for one group to spend time in,” Delano said. “It’s ideal to have a teen space to accommodate all of the teens who come here.”

This new area allows the teens to hang out in different sections with their groups of friends, without feeling too condensed together.

In these areas there are also different activities for the teens to do.

One section has an art cart, where teens can do different crafts including jewelry making and coloring.

This area will also contain the monthly take and make craft

for the teens to get creative with. October’s take and make will be adding ghosts to pre-existing artworks.

“It will be little canvases that have works of art modge podged onto them and then paint for adding ghosts because there was a trend of adding ghosts to thrift store art,” Delano said.

Another area has different board games and role playing games for teens to enjoy.

“We have all the RPG books and the board games for them to play while they’re here,” Delano said.

Throughout all sections of the teen space there are also chargers and charging stations as well as a variety of books.

According to Delano, they wanted to ensure that there were chargers present in the teen space as many teens had requested them as a priority in a survey sent out this past spring.

They also wanted to ensure

TENNAGERS | page 12



(Left to right) Teens Autumn Carmen, Mary Reed and Nevaeh McNamee did some jewelry making in the new teen space.
TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA



Senior Center announces upcoming events

AGAWAM – The Agawam Senior center, 954 Main St., has great events planned for the month of April.

The Center is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, please call 413-821-0605

Flu Clinic

Thursday Oct. 17, from 1 to 3 p.m. at Agawam Senior Center Auditorium

Instructions: Pre-registration paperwork and a copy of your insurance card is required in order to make an appointment to receive a flu shot. We have the forms and will make a copy of your card for you. Please come to the Senior Center and we can assist you. All paperwork must be filled out by Oct. 10. Agawam and Feeding Hills residents in collaboration with the Board of Health

Treats and Trivia

Tuesday, Oct. 8 at 1 p.m.

Treats and Trivia with Nicole Matson from Home Helpers is back. Join in the Dining Room of the Senior Center. Call Kristina at 726.2836 to reserve your spot. We are excited to offer Treats and Trivia with Nicole on the second Tuesday of every month at 1 p.m.

Senior Cinemas

Wednesday, Oct. 9

1:30 p.m. in the Veterans Hall

Join in twice in the month of October for a fabulous film. Feel free to bring a friend and a snack to munch on. Wednesday, Oct. 9 About My Father starring: Robert DeNiro & Sebastian Maniscalco Description: A man's fiancée encourages him and his father to spend the weekend with her wealthy and exceedingly eccentric family.

The gathering soon develops into a cultural clash, allowing father and son to discover the true meaning of family.

Making budgets work for you

Thursday, Oct. 10 at 10 a.m. in the Seminar Hall

Join M & T Agawam Branch Manager, Alyssa Tillotson as she discusses the importance of making a household budget work for YOU! Please join us for our financial education workshop around budgeting! Participants will explore the importance of creating and maintaining a budget, examine the difference between wants and needs, and set goals for spending, saving, and debt repayment. This is a very beneficial educational seminar and we hope you will join us. Coffee and donut holes will be served. Call Kristina at 726.2836 to register.

Basketball program now registering

AGAWAM – The In-Town Basketball Program is for children currently in Agawam Schools grades 3-8. Practices will be held once a week beginning in November.

Games will begin in December. Registration has begun in person and online. Online registration will be available through Oct. 7.

The cost is for Grades 3-8, \$90.00 per person through Oct. 7 and \$115 per person effective Oct. 8.

Please contact the Agawam Parks and Recreation Department at 413-821-0513 for more information.

ACC bazaar seeking vendors

AGAWAM – The Agawam Congregational Church is seeking crafters and vendors for our Christmas Holly Wreath bazaar to be held on Nov. 23 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. To reg-



ister pick up an application at the church, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. For more details call the church at (413) 786-7111 or email at office@agawamcong.com

Crafters needed for Oct. 27 sale

AGAWAM – Agawam Congregational Church will host their annual family friendly Trunk or Treat, on Sunday, Oct. 27, at 745 Main St. This event will take place from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. There will be candy, trunks to judge and more. Please bring a box of

elbow macaroni or a jar of pasta sauce to support the Loaves & Fishes ministry and be entered into a special raffle.

If interested in having a trunk at this event, please email office@agawamcong.com or call 413-786-7111.



Join Catholic Women's Club to pray rosary

AGAWAM – Everyone is invited to join The Catholic Women's Club of Agawam in praying the Rosary on Tuesday, Oct. 15, in St. John the Evangelist Church at 6:30 p.m. It is located at 833 Main St., Agawam. Members are requested to arrive at church by 6 p.m. Refreshments will follow in the parish center located behind the church, and the club's monthly business meeting will follow.

APL hosts 'This is Greece' exhibit

AGAWAM – The Agawam Public Library is proud to host a collection of photographs and artifacts named "This is Greece" from local resident George Bitzas. This exhibit will feature beautiful pictures of the Acropolis of Athens, the oracle of Delphi, the Poseidon Temple on Cape Sounion, the



Meterora monasteries, and pictures of the island of Lefkada and his hometown of Ioannina. Bitzas was an art teacher in West Springfield Junior and Senior High School and also worked as an interior designer for Stickleby, Audi and Company. He has a BA in fine arts and education from Westfield State University. He also serves as an Agawam City Councillor. His works will be on display on the main floor gallery walls and cases.

Any displays are available for viewing any time the library is open. Library hours for the summer are Mondays through Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Fridays and Saturdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The library will be closed Monday, Oct. 14 for Columbus/Indigenous Peoples Day. Please contact Adult Services Library Associate, Erica LeFebvre at (413) 789-1550 x8858 or elefebvre@agawamlibrary.org if you are interested in displaying artwork at the library.

Garden Club announces next meeting

AGAWAM – The next meeting of the Agawam Garden Club will be held Tuesday, Oct. 8, 6:30 p.m. at the Agawam Public Library located at 750 Cooper St. After a short business meeting club member Denise Carmody will present a program on Forcing Spring bulbs. All meetings are open to the public and not restricted to Agawam residents.



Wilbraham & Monson Academy

OPEN HOUSE

Sunday, Oct. 6, 10 a.m.



For families interested in grades 6-12, PG.

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Learn more about our programs and community. Tour our campus.

rsvp: www.wma.us/openhouse



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Blessing of the animals

FEEDING HILLS – Sacred Heart Parish in Feeding Hills will hold the annual Blessing of the Animals on Saturday, Oct. 5, at 10 a.m. in honor of the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. The Blessing of the Animals celebrates the important place that pets hold in the lives of families; it also reminds us of the blessing of all God's creatures. Please keep all pets on a leash or in crates so they do not disturb other animals or people. Children who are unable to have a live pet may bring their stuffed animals for a blessing.



Town releases latest stormwater report

AGAWAM – Under the Federal Clean Water Act, municipalities throughout Massachusetts are required to reduce the amount of storm water pollution entering our waters. The Town of Agawam received its current Phase II Storm water NPDES permit on Oct. 1, 2016. The intent of the regulations is to reduce the adverse impacts of water quality and aquatic habitat by controlling unregulated sources of stormwater discharges. Unregulated sources of stormwater discharges would include but not be limited to: excess

fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides from agricultural lands and residential areas, oil, grease, and toxic chemicals from urban runoff and energy production, sediment from improperly managed construction sites, crop and forest lands and eroding streams, and bacterial and nutrients from livestock, pet wastes, and faulty septic systems. The NPDES Permit regulations require municipalities to develop and implement a stormwater management program that addresses six minimum control measures: Public Ed-

ucation and Outreach; Public Involvement and Participation; Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination; Construction Site Stormwater Runoff Control; Post-Construction Stormwater Management; Pollution Prevention / Good Housekeeping.

To learn more about Agawam's Stormwater Management Program or to review the Year 6 Annual Report, visit <https://www.agawam.ma.us/537/NPDES-MS4-General-Permit>. Comments may be made by emailing stormwater@agawam.ma.us

Whimsical Fairy Walk on display at Stanley Park

WESTFIELD – On Saturday, Oct. 12, and Sunday, Oct. 13, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., join in for a whimsical walk that will be sprinkled with fairy houses for a magical experience of the natural world. Volunteer builders create a fairyland of small structures built out of natural materials, opening a portal to the imagination and the incredible world around us through deep observation of nature's gifts.

Please contact the Development Office for information on submitting a fairy house.

The fairy houses will be sprinkled throughout our Woodland Wildflower Garden leading out to the Enchanted Oak Tree. Arts and crafts will be in the Beveridge Pavilion on both days. Sunday's event will also include a Fairies of the Seasons puppet show from noon to 12:45 p.m. on the Beveridge Pa-

vilion stage. There is still time to register as a builder if to create a fairy or gnome house. Email development@stanleypark.org to register.

Parking for this event is in Rose Garden parking area accessible using Gates 2, 3 and 4. This event will be held rain or shine and is free of charge however donations are accepted and greatly appreciated.

FHCC hosting antique appraisals on Oct. 5

FEEDING HILLS – Wondering what a family heirloom is worth or have old jewelry, have it appraised by expert Antique dealers.

Feeding Hills Congregational Church, 21 North Westfield St., is hosting an antique appraisal Saturday, Oct. 5 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The cost is \$5 an item or 3 for \$12 with a three-item limit.

All appraisals are verbal intended to give the owner an idea of value and a sense of history. Items should be small enough to be hand carried. Please no firearms or weapons of any kind.

There will also be an outdoor tag sale held in conjunction with the antique appraisal event.

For more information call Kathy at 413-786-0195.



Bigfoot Talk with Vogel Brothers

AGAWAM – Join in for a discussion with local Bigfoot Research & Investigators, from the Cobble Mountain Critter Project, the Vogel Brothers. They will share stories and present items discovered while researching this elusive creature.

This discussion will take place in the open-air Beveridge Pavilion from 5 to 7 p.m. so dress accordingly. Chairs will be set up under the pavilion for guests or bring a chair. \$5 donation is suggested to attend the event.

For more information, please contact Stanley Park Office & Development at (413) 568-9312 x108 or e-mail to development@stanleypark.org.

Vine and Branches Gift shop announces hours

FEEDING HILLS – Sacred Heart Parish Vine and Branches Gift shop announces new hours and expanded merchandise. The Catholic religious store that has been in existence for several decades, provides religious items such as rosaries, crucifixes,

and medals as well as books, bibles, and statues. Latest items include wall plaques, memory lamps, baptism, first communion and confirmation items. The store has a selection of gift ideas appropriate for children, teens, and adults.

The store, located in the Sacred Heart Parish Center at 1061 Springfield St., is open Tuesday and Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and alternating Sundays from 9 a.m. to Noon.

Food Fest West to be held on Nov. 20

AGAWAM – The Food Fest West will be taking place on Wednesday, Nov. 20, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at the Crestview Country Club, Shoemake Ln. For more information and tickets visit westoftheriverchamber.com.



Annual Run Stanley 5K run/walk set to take off on Oct. 6

WESTFIELD – Stanley Park will be hosting the 12th Annual Run Stanley which has grown into a fun yearly tradition for the whole family, whether they like to run, walk, roll, or bark. Join in for this all-inclusive event on Sunday, Oct. 6, at 10 a.m. at Stanley Park. This event includes the 5K trail run/walk, a 5K K9 trail run/walk, the Munchkin Run hosted by Dunkin' Donuts, and The Stroll & Roll. The Stroll & Roll is a wheel friendly 1-mile non-competitive walk through Stanley Park's accessible paths.

There is also the Stanley Cup School Spirit trophy for the

school with the most participation in Run Stanley. Form a team and get friends and family involved. When registering, be sure to enter the school name.

Run Stanley 2024 continues the fundraising efforts to benefit the care of the Frank Stanley Beveridge Wildlife Sanctuary. Please join the community of runners, walkers, hikers, dog owners, and nature lovers of all ages who care about Stanley Park for a fun event that will help to improve the safety and accessibility of its wildlife trails. Registration is now open. Participants can register by going to <https://runsignup.com/Race/MA/Westfield/RunStanley>.



WSU awarded \$55,000 grant

WESTFIELD – The Westfield State University Foundation has been awarded a \$55,000 grant from The Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation in support of the Leadership, Excellence, Achievement, Diversity Scholars program.

Westfield State's LEAD Scholars program provides holistic services for students who self-identify as first-generation and demonstrate a financial need, with a special focus on increasing the representation of students who may have historically been excluded from the benefits of a college education

By providing extra support throughout their college journey, the LEAD Scholars Program helps students overcome the unique challenges they face as they work to achieve their academic and personal goals, increasing retention and graduation rates. The investment by The Irene E.

& George A. Davis Foundation will change the trajectory of students' lives and increase future possibilities for their families and communities.

Westfield State University's Urban Education program was established in 1968 to provide college orientation, mentoring, and academic advising to students of color. In 2023, Urban Education modernized its' structure and name to become the Leadership, Excellence, Achievement, Diversity (LEAD) Scholars Program.

This update honors the 55-year legacy and founding vision of the Urban Education Program while highlighting the University's continuing commitment to implementing educational innovations that cultivate excellence in all students, recognize their achievements, and celebrate the diversity that enriches our campus community.

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Opinion

Guest Column



Veteran asks about special credits for military service

Dear Rusty

I just learned that if I served in the military during an active-duty period, I could get extra earnings for Social Security and that these benefits would be automatically added to my record, but I was never asked by the SS employee, who calculated my benefits if I was in the military. I took benefits at age 62 (2013) due to health reasons. Should I ask for a recalculation or is it too late?

Signed: Proud Veteran

Dear Proud Veteran

Thank you for your service to our country, for which you have every right to be proud. You likely heard about "Special Extra Credits for military service," which applies to those who served in the military during certain periods earlier than the year 2001. This rule can add up to \$1,200 per year to your Social Security earnings record for the years you served and, since your SS benefit is based on your lifetime earnings record, your military earnings may have been included when calculating your Social Security benefit.

But the rules for getting that "extra earnings credit" are a bit complex, and how much extra earnings credit you receive depends entirely on which years you served. Here's a quick summary:

SS taxes have been withheld from military pay since 1957, so your actual military earnings are already included as part of your lifetime SS earnings record.

If you served between 1957 and 1977, an extra \$300 for each quarter of active-duty service would be added to your military pay, up to \$1,200 per year maximum.

If you served between 1978 and 2001, an extra \$100 would be added to your military pay for each \$300 of active duty pay received, up to a maximum of \$1,200 per year. FYI, no additional earnings are added to your military pay for service years after 2001.

Those who served on active duty before 1967 should inform SS when applying for benefits about their military service (e.g., provide a copy of DD-214). For those who served after 1967, the "special extra credits" were automatically added to their military earnings record when they applied for SS benefits.

It's important to note that the "extra credits" are additional earnings added to your military pay record – not an additional benefit amount added to your Social Security payment because of your military service. If, however, your military pay was included in the 35 years used to compute your Social Security

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Guest Column



A Brimfield resident recently visited a pond on New Reed Street in Warren where he saw a northern harrier "cruising" over the marsh.

He said in an email, "The bird (northern harrier) dove after something on the ground then sat for a couple of minutes before taking off to cruise over the vegetation along the far side of the pond."

The northern harrier is 18 inches long. It feeds by coursing close to the ground and quickly swooping down on its prey.

This behavior is what the Brimfield resident observed. The male is grey above and white below. The female is larger than the male, common in many hawks, brown above and streaked underneath. The immature harrier is brown above, reddish brown to creamy below and streaking only on the chest. Harriers eat mice, rats, birds, snakes, frogs and other small animals. They inhabit open fields, grasslands, prairies and marshes.

The female lays three to nine bluish, white eggs



Northern Harrier

in a nest of sticks and grasses lined with finer materials placed on the ground. Males are polygamous, mating with up to three females.

They often hunt at dusk and catch prey by sound as well as sight. Their owl like facial disk of feathers may function to help them locate sounds.

Other birds in Warren

Other birds at the pond on New Reed Street in Warren beside the northern harrier were an adult bald eagle, adult osprey, four great egrets, a great blue heron and a belted kingfisher.

On another trip to the ponds in Warren with his wife, the Brimfield residents saw two great egrets at one pond and one great egret at another pond. They also saw an adult osprey, a belted kingfisher, two great blue heron, three eastern phoebes and six mallards. The male mallards were in eclipse plumage.

Unsuccessful hawk watch

He also did a mini hawk watch – an hour in the morning and an hour in the afternoon. He said, "Unfortunately, the hawks chose not to participate." He did see a Carolina wren and two ruby-throated hummingbirds, one an immature male.

Feeding peanuts

The Brimfield resident likes to feed the birds whole peanuts. He fills a tray feeder every day and by the end of the days, they are gone. Blue jays and tufted titmice are especially fond of them along with an occasional red-bellied woodpecker. This summer he has had up to eight blue jays at a time come for the peanuts. He said, "Lately the peanut tray has not been empty when I go out to take down the feeder and some days I only see one jay and most days and I did see three a few days ago."

I feed shelled peanuts in the winter in a tray feeder and they are very popular. I've had up to ten blue jays at a time and the smaller birds like titmice and downy woodpeckers come for them as well

Wild turkeys

I see wild turkeys almost daily when I travel around town. It is either a group of hens with almost grown poults or a smaller group of Tom turkeys.

SECURITY | page 5

Election letters to the editor welcome

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

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

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the news-

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

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



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

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Opinion

Health care from a nurse-advocate's point of view



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

Hello, readers! Having spent my growing-up years and graduating from nursing school here in western Mass, I am delighted to be able to share my perspective on today's health care with you in this new weekly column.

Health care has changed in a million ways since I earned my RN at Memorial Hospital School of Nursing in Worcester in 1976. I went on to become a critical care nurse and worked for decades in hospitals. I am now a board-certified patient advocate, owner of NShore Patient Advocates, and considered a national authority in the field of patient advocacy.

My columns and two Amazon best-selling books arise from my philosophy of health care: That knowledge is power and that we are empowered to take charge of our health.

As a private patient advocate, I help people do just that: Take charge. I leverage my knowledge of the health care system to help them navigate complex issues, whether it's caring for a loved one with dementia

or getting a second opinion.

While I believe everyone needs a health-care advocate, I also believe that we can learn to advocate for ourselves and our loved ones. It just takes a bit of common sense and preparation.

Here are a few of the basics:

Be a good patient.

You are a good patient if you are on time for your appointments, have your questions written down in advance, are succinct in your questions and comments, take your medications as prescribed and follow all health-care instructions. Sometimes, it's also helpful to bring someone with you – spouse, partner, child, friend – who can listen, fill in information gaps and help you remember what the doctor said.

Good patients are also respectful. You want to be the patient who doctors, nurses and health-care providers enjoy serving.

Be prepared.

A medical emergency can happen at any time, and when it does, our minds seem to go blank because of fear and worry. Here's where a little bit of preparation comes in handy.

Compile the following and keep it where you or first responders can find it:

- Health conditions (i.e. heart disease, hypertension, cancer, diabetes, etc.)
- Copies of insurance cards
- All surgeries
- All medications, with dosages and when they're taken

Allergies
Name and contact information for the primary care doctor

Name and contact information for the patient's representative, if that person isn't on hand

A signed HIPAA release form

Be knowledgeable.

In this era of internet scams, bogus information and deep-fake videos, we must take care to get our health-care information from reputable sources – and it's not some random Facebook account or website.

When you're searching for information about healthy lifestyles or medical conditions, stick with tried-and-true resources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cdc.gov), WebMD (webmd.com) or Harvard Health (health.harvard.edu).

Know your rights.

Who owns your health-care information? You do! Not the doctor or the hospital. You have the right to see and review your medical records, doctor's notes after an appointment and what medications you might be receiving in the hospital.

You also have the right to appoint a patient representative, also known as an advocate. This is someone who is authorized to communicate on your behalf with health-care providers – they are your stand-in. In most states, the default patient representative is a spouse or a parent, if a

child is under 18.

But if you can designate anyone by completing a HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) release form, which is available on the Massachusetts Department of Public Health website. Make sure it's on file with your doctor and the hospital.

My first experience advocating for a patient was during a family cruise in the Caribbean when my then-father-in-law developed a life-threatening health emergency. I stayed with him in order to communicate with doctors and make sure he was well-attended.

Back at work in the hospital ICU, I advocated for a patient who was experiencing complications from surgery. The doctor didn't like my questioning the patient's treatment, so I was placed on leave – and during my downtime, I realized the good I could do by helping other patients in similar situations. A patient advocate was born.

I hope you'll join me every week as I discuss current issues in health care and provide the tips you need to advocate for yourself and loved ones.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN, is a board-certified patient advocate and Monson resident. A critical care nurse for 30+ years, she is founder of NShore Patient Advocates, (www.NorthshoreRN.com). Her book, "How to Be a Healthcare Advocate for Yourself & Your Loved Ones" is available on Amazon. She is offering a free phone consultation to Turley Newspaper readers. Contact her at Teri@northshorern.com to set it up.

BACKYARD ■ from page 4

The Brimfield resident saw a hen with four half grown poults while driving away from his house

He believes this is the group that was seen in the yard some time ago when the poults were about half the size they were when I saw them on the road. He said in

the email, "Just after seeing these turkeys another hen flew across the road in front of my car."

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

benefit when you claimed, then your military pay affected your SS payment amount.

In any case, if you served in the military after 1967, the special extra earnings credits were automatically included in your military pay record and, thus, were automatically included when calculating your Social Security benefit when you applied. If your non-military working career consisted of over 35 years during which you earned more than you did while serving, your years in the military wouldn't be included when computing your Social Security benefit anyway (only your highest earning 35 years of earnings are included when calculating your SS benefit).

Although it's never "too late" to request a recalculation, if you served after 1967 your military pay during your service years was automatically increased by SS

to account for your military service. If you served before 1967, you could contact Social Security to ensure that the extra credits were included when calculating your SS benefit. FYI, here's a copy of the Social Security rules on this topic: www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10017.pdf.

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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CLUES ACROSS

1. Separate with an instrument
5. State clearly
11. One-time MLB speedster Gordon
14. Broad in scope
15. Lacking social polish
16. Amount of time
17. Frame
19. Automobile
20. Caps
21. High school dances
22. Utilize
23. Checked
25. One-sided
27. Having an extreme greed for wealth
31. Potted plants
34. We all have one
35. Lake north of the Kalahari
38. Unidentified flying object
39. Aging persons
41. Small amount
42. Mother of Perseus
44. Ornamental waist box
45. Officials
46. Uncertain
49. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
51. Extensive, treeless plains
55. Your consciousness of your own identity
56. Consumer advocate Ralph
60. Notable Spanish sports club
61. Body part
62. One's responsiveness
64. Woman (French)
65. Ready and willing to be taught
66. Muslim ruler title
67. Unhappy
68. Gradually disappeared
69. Able to think clearly

CLUES DOWN

1. Brushed
2. Water sprite
3. Ones to look up to
4. Monetary units
5. We all have one
6. Marine invertebrate
7. One who institutes a legal proceeding
8. Outer
9. Parallelograms
10. Uncomfortable feelings
11. Cross to form an X
12. Remove
13. Some pages are dog-__
18. Capital of Ukraine
24. A citizen of Denmark
26. Eighth month (abbr.)
28. Hindu queens
29. Acids structurally related to amino acids
30. Rider of Rohan in Tolkien
31. Wet dirt
32. Russian city
33. Observed
36. Irrate
37. Travelers need them
39. Musical composition
40. Auction
43. Form of "to be"
45. Women
47. Inspire with love
48. Think Japanese ankle sock
49. Appears
50. Old World lizard
52. The lead dancer: __ ballerina
53. Protein involved in motion
54. Rosalind Franklin biographer
57. Popular 1920s style art __
58. __ Blyton, children's author
59. Abnormal breathing
63. A place to rest

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The high school band heads down the route.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Agawam dignitaries wave to the parade crowd.



The town's new DARE vehicle gets a part in the parade.



The band begins playing in the parade.



The drummers do their part in the performance.



Members of the high school twirlers perform.



The floats bring up the rear of the parade, showering Agawam residents with Mardi Gras beads.



The Mardi Gras floats make their way down the route.

Salute to Agawam at The Big E

WEST SPRINGFIELD – Once again, the Salute to Agawam was held at The Big E. Last Wednesday, Sept. 25, the event included the annual parade featuring Agawam elected officials and the high school band.

The recently donated DARE vehicle was also a part of the parade. The Big E concluded on Sunday, Sept. 29. The overall attendance record for the 17-day fair was an all-time record.

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SPORTS



Hannah Jock goes the point for the Brownies.



Mia Atkins is ready for the set.



Sophia Laprise sets the ball near the net.
TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Isabella Spaulding gets the spike across the net.

Pair of defeats for girls volleyball

AGAWAM – It was a tough end to the week for Agawam High School girls volleyball. Last Wednesday and Friday, the Brownies suffered a pair of 3-2 losses.

The first was against Ludlow as Agawam came back from two sets down and went to the limit in the deciding fifth set, but fell 15-13 against the Lions.

The Brownies had a similar comeback against Frontier, but was not able to get any momentum in the fifth set, losing 15-6 to fall in the match.

The Brownies are 4-7 and hope to rebound this week against Lee on Oct. 3 at 6 p.m.

Brownies rebound with three straight wins

AGAWAM – Last week was a crucial one for Agawam High School field hockey. After starting the regular season with a 1-3 mark, the Brownies scored three straight wins, defeating Westfield 4-2, Greenfield 1-0, and West Springfield 7-0 to improve to 4-3 on the season. The Brownies had one game away at Frontier this week and then had a seven-day break before facing Holyoke on Monday, Oct. 7 at 5 p.m.



Kyra Benard takes a shot into the circle.
TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Awkal scores pair for Wolves

CHICOPEE – Last Tuesday afternoon, Pathfinder boys soccer visited Hampden Charter in Chicopee and scored a 5-3 win. Evan Costa had a huge match with four goals for the Pioneers, while Kareem Awkal, who resides in Agawam, scored twice for the Wolves.

The Pioneers improved to 6-2 while Hampden Charter suffered its first defeat of the season and is 6-1-1.



Kareem Awkal takes a free kick for Hampden Charter School of Science in a matchup last week with Pathfinder. Awkal, who resides in Agawam, scored a pair of goals for the Wolves.
PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Sydney Fraiser looks for a different path to the goal during action last week against Greenfield.



Alyssa DaSilva makes the insert pass on the penalty corner.



Brooke Dwyer takes a shot on goal.



Finnola Mahoney gets a stick on the ball.



Alexina Lentjes tries to get around the opposing defense.



Mehmet Yesilbas, of Agawam, gets a header for Hampden Charter.

Sports

Emerling takes modifieds event at Monadnock

WINCHESTER, N.H. – Empire State Modified star Patrick Emerling had a huge day Saturday at Monadnock Speedway, topping the 200-lap second annual Winchester Fair main event and, with that win, securing the 2024 Granite State Short Track Cup championship while also moving just shy of the top of the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour points parade.

The quarter-mile oval's last event of the 2024 season ended with a large fireworks display lighting up the crisp autumn air with all the oomph and pizzazz that JDV Productions shows have been known for this summer, but not before Emerling had basked in the glory of victory lane, as had Chris Riendeau, twice, Randy Cabral, and Rob Richardi Jr...

No fewer than seven drivers turned in blistering sub-12 second laps in pre-event qualifying for the USNE Power presents the second annual Winchester Fair main event. Youthful rocketman Austin Beers

was quickest, setting fast time at 11.723 seconds around the high-banked quarter-mile.

A top-four redraw would switch Beers and Craig Lutz spots on row one, with Lutz taking over the inside groove pole. From there, he was all over the lap-one lead, setting a fast pace that would keep him at the head of the 21-car pack for 76 laps.

Matt Hirschman, Big Money Matt, firing from row three, took second from Beers on lap 18, then grabbed Lutz in a high-speed bear hug before low-lining to the point on the 77th circuit. He held the lead until lap 191 when Emerling sped by.

But while Lutz, then Hirschman, was putting on a show up front, much of the huge crowd's eyes were on superstar Ron Silk. Involved in a lap-three tangle that dropped him to 19th on the grid, the Norwalk, Connecticut star was gobbling up positions like there was no tomorrow. But, somehow, he and five-time Monadnock

winner Justin Bonsignore couldn't get along.

When the potent pair tangled out of turn four to draw the event's third and final caution on lap 183, changes aplenty took place. Along with both Silk and Bonsignore now refring deeper in the field, Big Money Matt now seemed almost mortal.

Restarting lap 191 in second, Emerling quickly had the lead and never looked back. Anthony Nocella got up for second with six to go, and Hirschman held on for third. Lutz and Woody Pitkat, from way back in row nine, rounded out the top five, with former Monadnock regular Matt Kimball coming home sixth.

Emerling's Sunday victory, coupled with earlier strong runs in both the Granite State Derby and Duel At The Dog events, earned him the \$3,000 winner's bonus atop the Whelen Granite State Short Track Cup series conceived for the series by JDV Productions.

MIAA looks to honor officials

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association is looking to collectively recognize the efforts of our Game Officials. The fall National Officials Appreciation Week will be held Oct. 6 to 12. Once again, MIAA staff members will travel around the state to personally thank officials and support their efforts on the local level. We hope that you will consider recognizing them in some manner. The Winter Officials Appreciation Week will be Jan. 13-18, 2025 and the Spring Officials Appreciation Week will be April 6-12, 2025.



Westfield Owls football team defeats Worcester State

WESTFIELD – Westfield State got a pair of touchdowns each from Dylan Disabella and Curtis Dion, and the Owls held on late to beat Worcester State, 35-27 and spoil the Lancers' homecoming at Coughlin Field on Saturday.

Westfield improves to 2-2 overall and 2-1 in the Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference, while Worcester is also 2-2 and 2-1 in the league.

Westfield ground out the win with the rushing game, carrying the ball 61 times in their 76 plays. The Owls held the ball for 44 minutes, limiting the Lancers' opportunities.

Sean Willis led the Owls with 131 yards rushing on 32 carries, with Dion adding 49 yards and two td's on 10 carries, Gabe Fernandez carried five times for 39 yards, and Disabella scored a pair of TD and gained 36 yards on just five carries.

After trailing 7-0 less than two minutes into the game, Westfield built a 28-14 lead by the half on runs of 8 and 18 yards from Disabella, and 3 and 2 yards from Dion.

Worcester pulled within a point at 28-

27 late in third quarter, but missed the extra point to give the Owls the advantage.

Westfield nearly ran out the clock with a 14-play, 61-yard drive that was capped by a 1-yard TD plunge from Willis to go ahead 35-27 after Cooper Harvey's point-after kick with 1:47 left in regulation time.

Worcester wasn't done, marching the ball all the way to the Westfield 12-yard line, but a chop block on an apparent scoring play backed the Lancers up to the 25, and Westfield's Corey Henderson picked off a pass at the 1-yard line as time expired.

Westfield registered 30 first downs to the Lancers 11, and outgained Worcester State 415-197. Turnovers plagued the Owls, with two lost fumbles and two interceptions on the day. Westfield's defense held the lancers to negative-12 yards on 15 attempts.

Westfield will be on the road next weekend, travelling to Castleton, Vermont to play Vermont State-Castleton, which will be the first-ever meeting between the Owls and the Spartans. VSU joined the MASCAC for the 2024 season.

Springfield Thunderbirds open up training camp

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds opened their 2024-25 training camp on Monday morning ahead of their trio of exhibition games on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday.

The initial training camp roster can be seen below. Please note this list will change as the St. Louis Blues reduce their roster ahead of NHL opening night on Oct. 8.

Springfield Thunderbirds Initial Training Camp Roster (as of Sept. 30)

Forwards: #15 Dalibor Dvorsky, #20 Oliver Chau, #22 Dylan Peterson, #24 Tanner Dickinson, #28 Colin Theisen, #34 Sam Bitten, #37 Reece Newkirk, #38 Tarun Fizer, #41 Aleksanteri Kaskimaki, #43 Greg Meireles, #46 Anthony Callin, #63 Matthew Peca, #77 Drew Callin, #81 Marcus Sylvegard

Defensemen: #7 Leo Loof, #9 Michael Buchinger, #13 Jeremie Biakabutuka, #25 Gianni Fairbrother, #33 Anton Malmstrom, #44 Scott Harrington, #49 Sean Allen

Goaltenders: #31 Colten Ellis, #35 Cam Johnson, #40 Will Cranley

The Thunderbirds begin their exhibition slate on Wednesday, Oct. 2 when they host the Hartford Wolf Pack at 7:05 p.m. at the MassMutual Center. They will also play a pre-season tuneup on Friday at 7:05 p.m. on home ice against the Providence Bruins before traveling to Rhode Island for a rematch on Saturday at 7:05 p.m. at Amica Mutual Pavilion.

The regular season opens on Saturday, Oct. 12 against the Laval Rocket at 7:05 p.m. for Opening Night presented by MGM Springfield.





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Free computer classes start on Oct. 9

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College is offering a free six-week beginner computer training course starting Oct. 9.

The real-time, instructor-led online classes will run Mondays and Wednesdays Oct. 9 to Nov. 25, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Laptops and WiFi hotspots for internet access will be provided for students who need them. The program was originally scheduled to start Sept. 30.

The program, run in partnership with the Albany, N.Y.-based nonprofit CanCode Communities, is aimed at helping individuals build essential computer skills for both personal and professional development. Participants will explore the Microsoft Office program, learn how to create resumes, manage calendars, and send email, and be introduced to the world of artificial intelligence.

Funding for the program comes from the Western Mass Alliance for Digital Equity.

To sign up for classes, please send an email to admissions@albanyancode.org or call 518-238-6808 (ext. 702).

Holyoke Community College honored with award

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College recently received the “Igniting Workforce Success” award from the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission for a cybersecurity training program it runs in partnership with the agency, which recently changed its name to MassAbility.

Specifically, the award recognizes HCC for its CyberOps training program, a free, nine-month remote program that trains MassAbility consumers to be cybersecurity analysts. MassAbility works with people with disabilities to empower their lives through counseling and various career and employment programs.

Kermit Dunkelberg, vice president of adult basic education and workforce development, accepted the award on behalf of HCC at the MRC’s Igniting Workforce Success conference in June.

“We just completed our fourth year with MassRehab,” said Dunkelberg. “This award is a great recognition of that partnership. In MassRehab, which is now MassAbility, we have a great partner. They bring as much to the table as we do in terms of innovation and attentiveness to student success.”

The pilot program launched by HCC and MassRehab in 2020 was the first of its kind in Massachusetts. Based on the program’s success, MRC launched a second with Roxbury Community College, which also received an Igniting Work-

force Success award.

“Together we are re-envisioning employment and people’s lives,” MassAbility Commissioner Toni Wolf said in 2020 after the first cohort of students graduated from the HCC program. “In the wake of COVID-19, our perspective on what is possible for remote work is expanding on a daily basis, particularly how resilient and adaptive people with disabilities are. These Cisco certifications are nationally recognized and highly sought-after workplace credentials that will give these students the needed leverage to enter a high paying industry.”

Since 2020, about 60 MassRehab clients have gone through the program, many emerging with paid internships that have led to full time, benefitted positions as cybersecurity analysts.

“It was MassRehab’s vision to offer training in the area of cybersecurity,” said Dunkelberg. “This is by far the longest duration program that they run and the most expensive, because it is not only a long duration, but very intensive. These students are studying 30 hours a week for about 10 months, so it ends up being 900 hours of training, but the difference that it can make in someone’s life is huge in terms of economic self-sufficiency.”

Once students complete the training, they take exams to qualify as Cisco Certified Support Technicians and Cisco Certi-

fied Networking Associates. Past program graduates have gone on to work as cybersecurity consultants and systems analysts for big tech companies, such as Dell Technologies.

“The story we always like to tell is one about a participant from our first program class who was making pizza at Big Y,” Dunkelberg said. “Upon conclusion of the program he was making \$80,000 a year as a consultant.”

Other students have more modest but no less meaningful career outcomes, Dunkelberg said.

“We’ve had four or five students intern here at HCC in our IT department,” he said. “For a lot of people, just getting that hands-on experience is the next step. Another one of our students got a job working in IT support at her local library, and that was just what she needed. Her family told us that before she went through our program, she hardly had a life outside her home. Having a job she could walk to was the perfect outcome for her.”

In 2023, program instructor Dalip Singh received the Above and Beyond Award from the Cisco Networking Academy for developing and teaching the cybersecurity class.

Overall, the program has been so successful, Dunkelberg said the agency wants to explore new training partnerships with HCC.

Public Notices

LEGAL NOTICE PUBLIC HEARING AGAWAM CITY COUNCIL

The Agawam City Council will hold a public hearing on **Monday, October 7, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.** in Veterans Hall at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. The purpose of this hearing will be to hear an Ordinance to amend Chapter 180 of the Code of the Town of Agawam by adding definitions for driveway and driveway-common/shared as sponsored by Mayor Johnson and Council President Sandlin (TOR-2024-8). This public hearing will be live-streamed on the Town of Agawam’s website at www.agawam.ma.us and will also be televised on Cable Access Channel 15 or Channel 1074. TOR-2024-8 is available for public inspection by emailing the office of the City Clerk for an electronic copy at vgioscia@agawam.ma.us

BY ORDER OF:

Rosemary Sandlin
City Council President
09/26, 10/03/2024

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 Docket No. HD19P2282PM In the matter of: Frederick Blair Of: Springfield, MA Protected Person/ Disabled Person/ Respondent CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF CONSERVATOR’S ACCOUNT

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, you are hereby notified pursuant to Rule 72 of the Supplemental Rules of the Probate & Family Court, that the **First and Final** account(s) of Bonnie Blair of Brooklyn, NY as Conservator of the property of said Respondent has or have been presented to the Court for allowance.

You have the right to

object to the account(s).

If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this court on or before 10:00 A.M. on the return date of **10/30/2024**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to object to the account(s). If you fail to file the written appearance and objection by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you, including the allowance of the account(s).

Additionally, within thirty days after said return day (or within such other time as the Court upon motion may order), you must file a written affidavit of objections stating the specific facts and grounds upon which each objection is based and a copy shall be served upon the Conservator pursuant to Rule 3 of the Supplemental Rules of the Probate & Family Court.

You have the right to send to the Conservator, by registered or certified mail, a written request to receive a copy of the Petition and account(s) at no cost to you.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

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

Witness, Hon. **Barbara M. Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: September 25, 2024
Rosemary A. Saccamoni
Register of Probate
10/03/2024

**Commonwealth of
Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Division
Docket No. HD19P2267EA
Estate of:**

Mary A. Blakesley Date of Death: May 3, 2019 INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Daniel E. Blakesley of Longmeadow, MA**

a Will has been admitted to informal probate.

Daniel E. Blakesley of Longmeadow, MA has been informally appointed as the Successor 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.
10/04/2024

FINAL NOTICE AND PUBLIC EXPLANATION OF A PROPOSED ACTIVITY IN A FLOODPLAIN

**TOWN OF AGAWAM
HAMPDEN COUNTY,
MASSACHUSETTS
MOORE AND
VALLEY STREETS
INFRASTRUCTURE
IMPROVEMENTS
PROJECT (PHASE 1)
October 3, 2024**

To: All interested Agencies, Groups and Individuals

This is to give notice that the Town of Agawam under

CFR Part 58 has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order 11988 and 11990, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management, to determine the potential affect that its activity in the floodplain and/or wetland will have on the human environment for the Moore and Valley Streets Infrastructure Improvements Project (Phase 1) (hereinafter, the “proposed activity”) under the Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant Program. The proposed activity is intended to update existing water, sewer and drainage infrastructure on Moore Street and Valley Streets. The location of the proposed activities falls partially within a floodplain. Fully compliant water, sewer and drainage infrastructure will improve surface conditions, as well as provide residents with updated, efficient water and sewer systems. The proposed project is located on Moore Street, from High Street running North, and on the Eastern portion of Valley Street in the Town of Agawam, Hampden County, Massachusetts.

The Town of Agawam has considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to be taken to minimize the adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial values: the project must take place within the floodplain because the water, sewer and drainage systems are directly tied to the locations of homes on Moore and Valley Streets. The only alternative that could be considered would be the “No Action Alternative”. Under the No Action alternative, Moore and Valley Streets will retain their existing failing drainage, water and sewer systems, along with deteriorating pavement. The town would not be able to achieve any of the benefits to be provided by the proposed infrastructure improvement project. The Town will comply with local and state wetland permitting and protection pro-

cedure requirements will be followed.

The Town of Agawam has reevaluated the alternatives to building in the wetlands and has determined that it has no practicable alternative. Environmental files that document compliance with steps 3 through 6 of Executive Order 11988 and/or 11990, are available for public inspection, review and copying upon request at the times and location delineated in the last paragraph of this notice for receipt of comments. This activity will have no significant impact on the environment for the following reasons:

The proposed activity will be replacing failed drainage, water and sewer systems, as well as updated pavement. The project will only have temporary impacts on the site including excavation, filling and grading. Drainage improvements will provide protections to the surrounding floodplains. The project will not result in any significant changes from its current usage. All mitigation measures will be followed, and the Town will comply with all state and local wetlands protection procedures.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First,

people who may be affected by activities in floodplains and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information about floodplains can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in floodplains, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by the Town of Agawam at the Agawam Town Hall, 36 Main Street, Agawam, MA 01001 on or before October 18, 2024. Please contact Pam Kerr, Agawam Environmental Certifying Officer, during the hours of 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Phone: 413-786-0400, Comments may also be submitted via email at pkerr@agawam.ma.us.
10/03/2024

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THE TOWN OF PALMER DPW is seeking contractors for snow removal for the upcoming winter season. If interested, contracts are available on the town website or at the DPW office. Completed contracts with a copy of the necessary insurance forms can be delivered to the DPW office located at 1015 Bridge St. Palmer. Rates have been increased for fiscal year 2025. Please call our office at **(413) 283-2615, M-F, 7a-330p,** with any questions.

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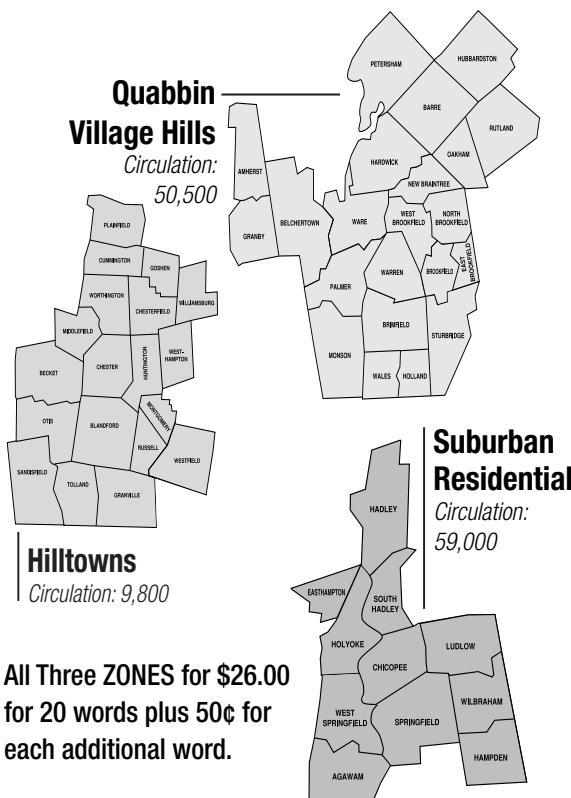
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DA warns residents of Facebook marketing scam

SPRINGFIELD – Hampden District Attorney Anthony Gulluni is issuing a warning to residents about a recent Facebook scam where hackers gain control of someone's account and falsely claim that a loved one has entered a long-term health care facility, prompting them to sell the loved one's possessions. D.A. Gulluni urges all residents to remain vigilant and take necessary precautions to protect themselves from falling victim to this scam.

Hampden District Attorney Anthony Gulluni stated, "My office has recently become aware of this Facebook scam that looks to exploit your emotions and preys upon your relationships and friendships. Don't be fooled, always verify where you are sending money beforehand, and be preventative, make sure you are securing your accounts adequately to deter a security breach. switch your passwords regularly on your high priority accounts in the event your credentials were exposed in a data breach."

Description of the Scam: Hackers target

Facebook and email accounts to obtain your personal information and take control of them by stealing login credentials. Once in control, they post messages pretending to be the account owner, claiming a loved one has had to enter a long-term health care facility and that their possessions need to be sold urgently. The scammer then asks for money to be sent electronically, often for items that do not exist, preying on the emotions and trust of friends and family.

Strengthen Your Passwords

Use a unique, strong password for your Facebook account that includes a combination of letters, numbers, and special characters. Avoid using easily guessed passwords such as birthdays, names, or common words.

Enable Two-Factor Authentication (2FA):

Activate 2FA on your Facebook account to add an extra layer of security. This feature requires a second form of verification,

such as a code sent to your phone, in addition to your password.

Be Cautious with Friend Requests

Do not accept friend requests from people you do not know personally. Scammers often create fake profiles to gain access to your personal information.

Monitor Account Activity

Regularly review your account activity and privacy settings. Look out for any unfamiliar logins or changes that you did not make.

Educate Yourself and Others: Stay informed about common online scams and share this information with friends and family to prevent them from becoming victims.

Verify Claims Independently

If you receive a message from someone claiming to sell possessions due to a loved one's health situation, contact the person

directly through a trusted means (e.g., a phone call) to verify the claim.

Be Skeptical of Urgent Requests: Scammers often create a sense of urgency to pressure victims into sending money quickly. Take your time to verify the authenticity of the request.

Do Not Share Personal Information

Avoid sharing personal or financial information through social media or messaging apps. Scammers can use this information to further exploit you.

Report Suspicious Activity

If you suspect you have been contacted by a scammer, report the message to Facebook and local authorities. Additionally, inform the person whose account has been compromised.

If you find yourself being a victim of hacking be sure to contact your local police department and make a report it to protect yourself.

Exit 7 Players announce fall production 'Next to Normal'

LUDLOW – The Exit 7 Players are pleased to announce its fall production of Next to Normal, taking place on the Paul R. Hamel Stage at 37 Chestnut St., from Sept. 27 through Oct. 13.

Next to Normal is the story of Diana Goodman and her family. Traumatized by the death of her infant son, Diana has lived with bipolar depressive disorder and delusional episodes for the past several years. The illness has affected everyone in her life and has nearly torn her family apart on several occasions. Next to Normal, with book and lyrics by Brian Yorkey and music by Tom Kitt, explores how one suburban household copes with crisis and mental illness. Winner of three 2009 Tony Awards, including Best Musical Score and the 2010 Pulitzer Prize.

Next to Normal takes audiences into the minds and hearts of each character, presenting their family's story with love,

sympathy and heart, while exploring pressing contemporary issues of trauma, loss, mental health treatment, and the meaning of family.

This production is intended for audiences aged 13 and up, and contains themes and depictions of mental illness, profanity, discussions of self-harm and the loss of a family member.

For this production the Exit 7 Players are partnering with Empty Arms Bereavement, a nonprofit helping parents who have experienced a miscarriage, stillbirth, termination for medical reasons, or infant loss.

Due to a town event, parking for our October 6 show may be limited. Please plan on arriving early.

For more information contact the Exit 7 Players at 413.583.4301 or admin@exit7players.org. Tickets can be purchased directly from our website.

SUPT. ■ from page 1

help us facilitate the work, collect the data and the feedback," Hoffman said.

The committee worked hard over the course of last year to develop this plan, and they now feel confident in presenting their priorities.

"We feel as though we were able to compile all of that information, all the feedback from stakeholders, and our final step was to develop four key priority areas," Hoffman said.

The priorities they decided on are: fostering a sense of belonging, providing support and resources for social, civic and wellbeing development, improving communication, collaboration and diversity of perspectives, and increasing opportunities for choice and voice.

Around these priorities they have developed basic strategies for how they intend to focus on improving them in the district.

To foster a sense of belonging in schools they want to ensure they have safe and inclusive schools.

They intended to work toward that through data collections and analysis, professional development, and adding communication.

To provide support and resources for social, civic and wellbeing development, the district intends to equip schools with the materials and staff they need to support students.

"This is a lot about resources and strategies, making sure schools have what they need to support students adequately and really focusing on community partnerships," Hoffman said. "Partnering with community members to help with counseling, grief sessions, attendance rates and all of that."

In order to work on improving their communication, collaboration and the diversity of perspectives included in conversation, the strategic plan committee discussed improving their translator resources and working on new collaboration methods.

"[We plan to] build a multi-tiered collaborative communication process that is inclusive of the diverse needs of our stakeholders," Hoffman said. "This is looking for a multimodal form of communication so that we are communicating in different ways to different peoples and respecting the needs of the community with translation services and other supports."

Finally, to increase the opportunities for choice and voice in the schools, Hoffman and the rest of the strategic plan committee want to ensure that students have a better say on opportunities available to them in school.

"This is really focused around college and career readiness and focuses a lot on collecting data, on what we are doing now and what areas we need to improve," Hoffman said. "It also focuses on relevant student learning experiences at all levels...so students have a voice and increases agency."

The school committee was quite supportive of all of these priorities.

"I think that these are all excellent measures and areas to be focusing on," School Committee Member Catherine McDougal said. "I think you've done a really good job of categorizing them and linking them to the overall goals."

They voted unanimously to approve these priorities and allow Hoffman and the other members of the strategic plan committee to continue to develop and dive deeper into them.

Stargazing program returns to Springfield Science Museum

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Museums and the Springfield STARS Club present a new season of Stars Over Springfield, beginning Friday, Oct. 4, at 7:30 p.m. at the Springfield Science Museum. Events continue on the first Friday of each month through May. Admission is \$5 for Museum and STARS Club members and \$7 for nonmembers (recommended for ages 8 and up).

The long-running beginner's astronomy program surged in popularity last year, selling out the entire 2023-2024 season. Each evening includes a short talk by a local expert, hands-on activities or demonstrations, a full dome show in the Seymour Planetarium featuring both the historic Korkosz starball and a brand-new Zeiss projector, and stargazing in the rooftop observatory. Due to the popularity of these events, registration is required at SpringfieldMuseums.org.

October's topic is "Getting Started in Astronomy." The Science Museum's astronomy team and volunteers from the STARS Club will share what sparked their love of the night sky and how budding enthusiasts can begin to explore the study of celestial objects like planets, stars, galaxies, comets, and black holes, as well as the phenomena that occur in the cosmos.

The Thursday, Nov. 1, program brings the features of the Moon into focus. Using the Science Museum's 20-inch rooftop telescope, attendees can zoom in on

seas, mountain ranges, and of course, craters. Richard Sanderson, Adjunct Curator of Physical Science, will share his own iPhone photos of the moon and explain what creates the moon's stunning surface.

On Friday, Dec. 6, the STARS Club will explore the properties of stars along with the shapes and patterns they create in the sky, known as constellations.

Springfield Telescope and Reflector Society (STARS), founded 1934, is celebrating its 90th anniversary this year. Its mission is to inform and motivate people of all ages and backgrounds in the mysteries and science of space at all levels, near and far.

MassMutual is the season sponsor of the Springfield Museums.



STUFFY ■ from page 1

Everyone who attended got to leave with a stuffed animal library card, a program the library was doing throughout September as a part of National Library Card Month.

Each kid also got a "First Annual Agawam Library Stuffy Show" award, which was a gold medal with a blue ribbon.

Malvezzi drew ideas for how to structure the event by thinking of what events would typically make up a dog show.

"Usually each dog has something like a presentation card...so the kids each got to each draw a picture of their stuffy, write down their name and their stuffy's name, and write down a fun fact about their stuffy," Malvezzi said. "It was kind of seeing how I could turn a dog show into something that was kid-friendly."

Malvezzi's favorite part of the event wound up being the section where the kids walked their dogs across the floor.

"The kids took it very seriously," Malvezzi said. "Some of them were doing gymnastics, such as flips and tricks, and they just had so much fun with it."

Malvezzi came up with the idea for this program through a conversation

with Children's Librarian Pamela Weingart.

Weingart and Malvezzi had heard that a library nearby was putting on an actual dog show with some of their patrons and they had a conversation around how the logistics of such a program would work.

Along the way, Malvezzi mentioned that it would be fun to do a dog show but with stuffed animals and for kids, she thought it would go well with the stuffed animal library card program the library was doing.

Weingart fell in love with the idea and Malvezzi fleshed it out from there.

"We just kind of ran with it," Malvezzi said.

Malvezzi would be interested in doing a program similar to this in the future, perhaps even bringing it outside so that she can add more activities for the kids and their stuffed animals to compete in, such as an obstacle course.

The library has many more events planned for the upcoming fall, including book clubs, a Halloween party and escape rooms.

To keep updated on the events happening at APL, go to their website at <https://www.agawamlibrary.org/>.



The teen space has a designated area where there is a variety of role-playing games and board games for teens to play.



The new teen space at the library has an art cart where teens can get art supplies for different crafts they want to do.



Youth Associate Evan Delano welcomed teens to the teen space. TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA

TEENAGERS ■ from page 1

that there were different books throughout the space for teens to peruse.

“I try to have books around as much as I can because then if they’re sitting and hanging out with their friends a book may catch their eye and they may check it out and read it,” Delano said.

Delano intends to continue adding posters, bulletin boards and artwork made by the teens to the space. They believe that the area will continually be a work in progress

as they try to make it feel at home to the different teens who come by.

As Delano has been working on fleshing out the teen space, they have also been preparing some events for teens in the month of October.

They plan to hold a haunted house escape room on Oct. 23 for teens. There will also be the second annual APL Halloween Parade on Oct. 30, which will be open for anyone to join.

To keep updated on the different events at the library, go to their website at <https://www.agawamlibrary.org/>.

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