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AGAWAM

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Students selected to perform in festival



SUBMITTED PHOTO

AHS Music students Aubrey Lamontagne, Tessa Kowarsky, Finn Mansur, Chelsea Casamento, Kassie Sagan, Gabby Gebo, Khuong Le, Cullen Kirk, Sam Beckwith, Jacob Marino, and Mia Milidakis (not pictured) were selected to perform with the MMEA Western District Senior Festival with students from across Western Massachusetts. The concert was Saturday, Jan. 17 at Minnechaug Regional High School.

Longroad shares plans for Lucia Lumber site

Those plans include multiple safeguards for fires

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

AGAWAM — Earlier this month, on Monday, Jan. 12, Boston-based developer Longroad Energy held an informational meeting inside the town's senior center to discuss the implementation of a new battery energy storage project at the old Lucia Lumber property at 769 Silver St., which drew more than 100 in attendance, including various members of the city council and Mayor Christopher Johnson.

In addition, it was reported that Longroad held two public informational sessions that transpired throughout the afternoon and another during the evening. During both meetings, Chad Allen, the director of development from Longroad Energy, revealed that the 250-megawatt energy storage facility being proposed on the 17-acre property would be able to generate enough power equivalent to more than 285,000 homes for more than four hours. Additionally, this project differs from a separate topic of public concern that arose last year, which involved a site previously proposed by New Leaf Energy at 404 Silver St.

Allen then explained that the intention of the developer throughout this process will be to go through the local ordinance, despite being a state-led project. He then revealed that the project is still in its infancy.

"This is really the first step we have been working on this for about a year, and now we feel were at a place of comfort where we can share the progress put forth," Allen said. "This past year, we have been looking at the environmental side of things, site investigation, recruiting engineers, and understanding the business structure of everything, and how the state will procure this energy reserve, and so were here to provide you that information."

As the presentation continued, Allen also pointed out that he and Longroad are looking to push the facility as far back from Silver Street, in a way to avoid wetlands on the property, and the conversation of current resource habitats. Allen also passed along that the process for the battery storage facility is simple, as it follows: the facility would buy power from the grid at times when it is in a state of prime accumulation and cheaper, and then would sell electricity back to the grid at times of higher prices and demand.

He also provided clarity to the crowded audience that the developer will not add development to the site anymore, so that includes no additional tree clearing, and will use the foundation of what's in place.

Allen also introduced the concept of what drew Longroad to the town; He cited that the site in question is adjacent to an Ever-source substation, and that it's a low-cost investment for the developer, as he did admit that the state didn't award the project a con-

Borgatti-Reed re-elected vice chair

Wendy Rua was named secretary of the School Committee

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM — A pair of veteran school committee members were re-elected to officer positions on the school board.

While the mayor is the automatic chair of the school committee, the committee elects a vice chair and a secretary.

Shelley Borgatti-Reed, who enters her ninth term as a member of the committee, was re-elected as the vice chair of the committee.

During her recent re-election

campaign, Borgatti-Reed said she wants to see the roofs of the town's four elementary schools be addressed. The school district was recently invited to take part in the Massachusetts School Building Authority's Accelerated Repair Program, allowing all of the buildings to be addressed.

"Agawam Public Schools receive a check for \$125,000 from the state to assist us in starting the process," Borgatti-Reed said in October. "Hopefully, with some additional funding, we can have them all replaced within the next few years."

Borgatti-Reed was also asked during her re-election campaign what program or class she wished to see im-

plemented in the school district. She said more courses involving life skills would be helpful for students.

"In recent years, we have made personal finance a required course to ensure students gain essential life skills such as budgeting and understanding credit," said Borgatti-Reed. "In addition, we continue to offer a broad range of classes through the Lower Pioneer Valley Career and Technical Education Center. Looking ahead, I believe expanding Health and Wellness programs to include cooking basics, nutrition, stress management, effective communication, conflict resolution, relationship building, and self-advocacy would further prepare

our students for success in life beyond the classroom."

Rua is also a veteran on Agawam School Committee, and was re-elected as the secretary. She enters her eighth term on the committee.

Rua echoed Borgatti-Reed's comments about life skills courses being needed for students. She added more technology-based programs are needed at earlier levels.

"I think we can improve by offering practical courses on budgeting, civic engagement, and everyday problem-solving to prepare students with lifelong skills," Rua said. "I'd also like us to

RE-ELECTED | page 6

Councilor seeks recognition of domestic partnerships

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM — With the swearing in ceremonies and board re-organizations out of the way, it is time for the elected officials of Agawam to get to work.

The Jan. 20 meeting of the city council, which is now under the leadership of Council President Anthony Russo and Vice President Anthony Sufriti, saw a few new items introduced to the agenda that will have to be considered.

Council Thomas Hendrickson, who enters his second full term as an elected councilor, is bringing forward a new ordinance for consideration. Hendrickson served a partial term following the

death of former Councilor Gina Letellier.

The councilor is looking to add an ordinance known as Chapter 62 regarding domestic partnerships in the Town of Agawam.

According to Hendrickson's ordinance proposal, the town acknowledged many laws governing family relationships were enacted in a time when not all families were properly recognized. He states the city, recognizing a commitment to nondiscrimination and fair treatment of its citizens and employees adopts an ordinance acknowledging domestic partnerships to recognize the relationships who meet certain criteria to register their domestic partnership in the

Town of Agawam.

This new ordinance would allow partnerships among those couples who are not legally married to have their relationships recognized by the town if they meet particular criteria. This includes traditional couples as well as same-sex couples. Same-sex marriage has been legal for many years.

According to what the new chapter would state, a domestic partnership would be defined as two more persons who meet the following criteria: They have made a commitment of mutual support and caring for their domestic partners; they are at least age 18 and competent

COUNCILOR | page 6

Rising high schoolers learn about programs



SUBMITTED PHOTO

According to Agawam High School Principal James Blain, throughout the past week, eighth graders (Class of 2030) spent time at AHS to learn about our Innovation Pathways (Health and Social Assisting, Advanced Manufacturing and Information Technology). The introduction is part of preparing the junior high students for what is being offered to them when the move up to the high school next year.



New activities coming up in February at APL

AGAWAM – Our Adult Winter Reading Challenge has begun, but there is still plenty of time to log your hours, complete activities, and contribute to our community reading goal! Visit agawamlibrary.beanstack.org to participate online or visit the Agawam Library Information Desk to participate in person. The last day to enter your raffle tickets for the end-of-challenge drawing is Saturday, Feb. 21.

Can you feel the love? We've got a great slate of events this month themed around Valentine's Day that you won't want to miss! Everybody loves chocolate, but did you know that it's good for you? Learn about the health benefits of both dark chocolate and coffee at **A Perky Pairing: A Coffee and Chocolate Tasting** with presenter Kim Larkin, taking place on Thursday, Feb. 5 at 6:30 p.m. At this fun and educational workshop, Kim will uncover the histories of both coffee and chocolate while participants sample different pairings. Each person will receive a coffee-chocolate tasting wheel to help throughout the workshop. This decadent class is sure to fill up fast, so be sure to register to save your seat!

Pets make the best valentines! Celebrate yours by creating a custom pop-art portrait of your best boy or sweetest girl at our **Adult Craft Night: Paint Your Pet** on Monday, Feb. 9 at 6 p.m. Attendees will create an 8"x8" colorful portrait using acrylic paint and paint markers. No drawing or painting experience is needed! Please bring or forward via email an 8"x8" good quality photo (printed on paper) of your pet's head to trace

for this project. If you are emailing your photo for the library to print, please send it to kfrost@agawamlibrary.org by Monday, Feb. 9 at 1 p.m. Come feel all the warm furry love of the Valentine's Day holiday at the library for this craft night. Registration is required as supplies are limited.

Transport yourself to 1900s Paris and revel in the romance of the *Moulin Rouge* at our **Red-Themed Valentine's Day Movie Matinee** on Saturday, Feb. 14 at 10:30 a.m. Tasty brunch items will be served. Please register to attend this event. If music is more your style, join us and jam out to songs you love (or love to hate!) at **Valentine's Day Music Bingo: Sappy Love Songs and Anti-Love Songs**. Compete to win one of our low stakes prizes as you enjoy some forgotten love songs. Regardless of your opinion on Valentine's Day, the musical selections will have something for everyone. This event will take place on Thursday, Feb. 19 at 6:30 p.m. and registration is required.

Do you like games? Boy, does the library have you covered! Our monthly **Game Night** for adults will take place on Wednesday, Feb. 4 at 6:30 p.m. and is excellent for folks who enjoy board games and card games. We'll have games like Settlers of Catan, Ticket to Ride, Munchkin, and more. Have a favorite game you'd like to share? Bring it along. This is a drop-in event for adults ages 18 and older, and light refreshments will be served. Tea & Trivia will take place on Tuesday, Feb. 17 at 6:30 p.m. and Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 2:30 p.m. Come by yourself or with a team and join us for a couple of rounds of

Jeopardy and pub-style trivia; prizes will be awarded to the winning teams. We will use the same questions for both sessions, so register for the time you prefer and join us for some fun!

If you don't have time to stop by the library this month, join us online! We've partnered with Tewksbury Public Library for two virtual events this month that are sure to captivate you. Author Michelle Young will discuss her new book, *The Art Spy: The Extraordinary Untold Tale of WWII Resistance Hero Rose Valland*, on Wednesday, Feb. 11 at 7 p.m. on Zoom. A riveting and stylish saga set in Paris during World War II, *The Art Spy* uncovers the true story of how an unlikely heroine infiltrated the Nazi leadership to save the world's most treasured masterpieces. Explore a piece of history that's a little more recent at **Burglary at the Louvre: How Can Writers Top This?** on Wednesday, Feb. 25 at 7 p.m. on Zoom. In this presentation, mystery authors Connie Berry, Lane Stone, Nina Wachsmann, and M. A. Monnin—known collectively as the Curators of Crime—will examine the public's fascination with the recent burglary of Napoleonic jewels at the Louvre and discuss how as authors they have used the same elements in their books. To attend these events, please visit agawamlibrary.org.

Our Virtual Author Talk Series kicks off on Thursday, Feb. 5 at 7 p.m. with an unforgettable discussion of Vanessa Riley's newest book, *Fire Sword and Sea*. A seafaring journey of self-discovery and reclamation of personal power, *Fire Sword and Sea* is based on the folk story of the female pirate Jacquotte

Delahaye. On Thursday, Feb. 12 at 2 p.m., Dr. Lindsey Stewart will discuss her book *The Conjuring of America: Mojos, Mermaids, Medicine*, and 400 Years of Black Women's Magic. Stewart's book tells the stories of Negro Mammies of slavery; the Voodoo Queens and Blues Women of Reconstruction; and the Granny Midwives and textile weavers of the Jim Crow era. These women, in secrecy and subterfuge, courageously and devotedly continued their practices and worship for centuries and passed down their traditions. Join us to take part in the magic and celebrate the legacy of America's founding Black women! History buffs take note: Smithsonian Curator Emeritus Tom Crouch will present his book *Smithsonian's Gamble: The Smithsonian Institution in American Life, 1836-1906*. A Smithsonian veteran of almost 45 years, Crouch paints a robust picture of a unique American Establishment and its lasting legacies. This event will take place on Tuesday, Feb. 24 at 2 p.m. To register attend these virtual author talks, please call the library or visit library.org/agawamlibrary.

Fend off the cold with a little bit of light exercise at **Chair Yoga** on Wednesday mornings at 9:05 a.m. Led by yoga instructor Heidi Taberman, this drop-in class is perfect for folks of all fitness levels. Do you need help using digital library resources like Libby, Hoopla, or Kanopy? **Book a One-on-One Library Tech Help Appointment** with Librarian Erica LeFebvre to get started. We'll have three 45-minute appointments on Wednesday, Feb. 18 between 5:30 and 8 p.m. as well

as Monday, Feb. 23 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. To book an appointment, please visit agawamlibrary.libcal.com/appointments. Please note that these appointments are specifically for help with library resources, not general tech help. Are you a writer looking to connect with other writers? Join our **Writers Group** hosted by Katherine Anderson on Thursday, Feb. 26 at 6 p.m. This in-person workshop is open to writers of all levels and genres. There will be opportunities for peer and host feedback, finding opportunities for submission to magazines, literary journals, and presses, and more. Please register to attend.

Thank you to the Agawam Center Library Association and the Friends of the Agawam Library for sponsoring select library programs.

Upcoming holiday closings include Monday, Feb. 16 in observance of Presidents' Day. During the winter months, any closings or late openings due to inclement weather will be reported to local TV stations 22 and 40, as well as their websites and the library's social media platforms.

Upcoming events at Senior Center

AGAWAM – Here are some of the upcoming activities and events being held at the Agawam Senior Center.

Join the Agawam Senior Center Book Club

The group's focus is on selecting an expansive list of titles from many genres to allow readers the opportunity to expand reading horizons, and our conversations are engaging and always strive to be considerate and attentive to the views of others. Feel free to stop in during any book meeting for more information or to join us--whether or not you have read the current selection. We meet the 3rd Friday of the month at 10 a.m. in the Garden Room, we would love to have you.

Agawam Senior Center Computer Tech Support To Meet

Wednesday, Jan. 28 from 1 to 2 p.m.

The Agawam Senior Center Computer and Technology Club will meet.

Agawam Day in Florida tradition continues

ST PETERSBURG, FL – The 45nd annual "Agawam Day in Florida" will be held on

Wednesday, March 4, 2026 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Former Agawam residents, old friends, classmates and relatives will meet at Fort

DeSoto National Park, St. Petersburg, FL. for a reunion, picnic, raffles, hugs and to share old memories.

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

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Rotary Club holding Murder Mystery dinner

AGAWAM – The Rotary Club of West Springfield, in conjunction with The Majestic Theater, will host a Murder Mystery Dinner Fundraiser, A Valentine's Murder Mystery, Sunday, Feb. 1 at 5 p.m. at Tansey's Catered Table, 485 Springfield St., Agawam, Mass. The evening includes a sumptuous three-course meal and the Majestic Murder Mystery performance.

The event promises an engaging evening full of intrigue, hilarity, and unscripted moments. Guests

will enjoy a lively, interactive dinner and work together to solve the evening's crime, all while supporting a worthy cause. But beware! The killer is hiding in plain sight somewhere in the room, and if you aren't careful, you may find yourself a suspect...

Last year's event was sold out and interested participants are encouraged to get tickets early for the limited number of seats available. Tickets are \$75 each and can be purchased through the Club's website, www.WestSpringfieldRotaryClub.com

Title sponsor is Teddy Bear Pools & Spas, and there are additional sponsorship opportunities available that include tickets to the event: <https://portal.clubrunner.ca/6035/page/murder-mystery-dinner>

The proceeds from the event will directly benefit the Rotary Club of West Springfield's Scholarship and Community Grants programs. The Club awards grants each year to civic organizations, educational institutions and not-for-

profits that work toward the betterment of West Springfield's quality of life.

The Rotary Club of West Springfield, under the leadership of President Simon Brighenti, meets for lunch at Storowton Tavern on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, and for an evening social on the third Thursday, at various West Side locations.

For more information on the Valentine Murder Mystery, tickets or sponsorships, contact Victoria Larriva at vlarriva@WSBGClub.com

Women empowerment brunch returns March 1

HOLYOKE – At a time when women are balancing rising economic pressure, caregiving responsibilities, and increasing burnout, The Becoming Initiative is bringing women together for something many say they rarely experience. A moment to pause, reconnect, and be supported.

On Sunday, March 1, The Becoming Initiative will host the She Decides Women's Empowerment Brunch at Wyckoff Country Club in Holyoke. The event is expected to serve more than 200 women from across Western Massachusetts and will launch a yearlong series of empowerment and personal development programming.

based training, personal development, and transformational experiences for individuals at all stages of life. Funds raised will directly support workshops, community gatherings, and leadership focused initiatives throughout the year.

Women attending the brunch will participate in guided conversation, storytelling, and moments of reflection designed to encourage personal growth and connection. Organizers say the goal is not just inspiration, but impact that extends long after the event ends.



She Decides was created in response to what organizers describe as a growing need for spaces that support women beyond the workplace. Many women are leading families, contributing to the workforce, and holding communities together while quietly carrying emotional, financial, and personal burdens. The brunch creates a space where women can be seen, supported, and reminded of their value.

“We created She Decides because women are constantly giving to everyone else and rarely have space to be poured into,” said Nicole Polite, Founder and Executive Director of The Becoming Initiative. “This brunch is a reminder that women matter, their stories matter, and when women are supported, entire communities are strengthened.”

Last year's event sold out within two weeks. Attendees shared stories of renewed confidence, meaningful connection, and a sense of clarity they had been missing. The response revealed a clear demand for continued programming focused on growth, leadership, and wellness.

This year's event will serve as a cornerstone fundraiser for The Becoming Initiative, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing skill-

at ed She Decides because women are constantly giving to everyone else and rarely have space to be poured into,” said Nicole Polite, Founder and Executive Director of The Becoming Initiative. “This brunch is a reminder that women matter, their stories matter, and when women are supported, entire communities are strengthened.”

The Becoming Initiative is currently seeking community partners, sponsors, and supporters who want to invest in women and help expand access to these experiences. Sponsorships help offset the cost for women who may not otherwise be able to attend and ensure the organization can continue its programming throughout the year.

Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are now available. For more information about the She Decides Women's Empowerment Brunch or partnership opportunities, visit: <https://www.thebecominginitiative.org/events>

Bill assistance events being held by Eversource

SPRINGFIELD – As many Massachusetts customers experience higher winter energy bills driven by colder weather and seasonal energy use, Eversource is hosting a series of in-person bill help events throughout the month of January to connect customers with programs and payment options designed to help make energy bills more manageable. At these events, Eversource customer care representatives will be available to review bills, answer questions and help customers understand which assistance programs or payment options may be right for them.

These events are part of Eversource's ongoing outreach to ensure customers are aware of the resources available to help manage energy costs, including financial assistance programs, flexible payment plans, and energy efficiency solutions. The goal is to provide customers with clear information and one-on-one support so they can make informed decisions about their energy bills that best fit their individual needs.

“Winter energy bills can be challenging for many customers, especially during periods of sustained cold weather when

energy usage is higher,” said Eversource Senior Vice of Customer Operations and Digital Strategy Jared Lawrence. “We want customers to know that help is available, and these in-person events are an opportunity for us to meet customers in their communities and connect them directly with resources that can make a difference.”

Energy usage typically increases during the winter months as customers rely more heavily on heating systems and other household energy needs. Colder temperatures, longer periods of heating use and short-

er days can lead to higher overall energy consumption, which alone can significantly impact monthly bills, regardless of changes to rates.

“We know higher winter bills can be stressful, and no customer should feel like they're facing that alone,” Lawrence said. “We encourage customers to attend one of our bill help events or reach out to us directly so we can work together on a solution. Our team is here to listen, answer questions and connect customers with options that can help make their bills more manageable.”

Town still in need of snow plow operators

AGAWAM – The Town of Agawam is still seeking independent contractors to assist the town with plow and snow removal operations during the winter.

The town website states the requirements for plow operators. They must have: A minimum eight-foot plow on a personal truck, must be available 24/7, must have at least \$500,000 general liability insurance, must have proof of workers compensation for employees, a W-9 shall be provided to the Town of Agawam, and each drive must submit their legal name, date of birth, and a valid driver's license. The town offers competitive rates and pays promptly.

Full applications with specifications are available on the town website or by going to the Department of Public Works building located at 1000 Suffield St.

Education Association to hold fundraiser

AGAWAM – The Agawam Education Association is having their annual fundraiser to raise funds for scholarships. This year's fundraiser is the AEA Super Bowl Squares and Kickoff Raffle. When you purchase a Super Bowl square (\$25) your purchase includes a raffle ticket for the Kickoff Raffle. The raffle prizes total close to \$3,000 (\$100 cash

prizes, professional sporting events, and we have a loaded locals day too that includes a couple prizes for those who are not local as well, including \$50 cash). The raffle ticket is eligible for prizes each day and runs from Thursday to Sunday for the four weeks leading up to the Super Bowl.

The Super Bowl Squares payout are:

- End of first quarter - \$200
 - End of second quarter - \$200
 - End of third quarter - \$200
 - Final Score - \$400
- For more information or to purchase a square, please contact Kathy at kgoyette-jediny@agawamed.org
- Venmo, check, and cash are accepted.

Irish Night scheduled for Feb. 28

HOLYOKE – The Hibernians of Hampden/Hampshire Counties and Ladies Order invite the public to attend Irish Night in Holyoke 2026 on Feb. 28 at the Log Cabin 500 Easthampton Rd. Holyoke, Mass.

Doors open at 5 p.m. and dinner is at 6:30 p.m.

The night will feature the Keohane and Kenneally Irish-American band and a corned beef and cabbage dinner with ribs. The price is \$50

per person and valet parking services will be available.

For reservations by Feb. 24 call Joe O'Connor at 413-627-7148, or Fran Hennessey at 413-785-5687 or online at eventbrite.com.

Additional entertainment by the Cassin School of Irish Dance and Piper Matt O'Connor. The night is in memory of Hibernian Daniel P. Curran and will benefit the Maurice A. Donahue Memorial Scholarship.

Tansey's Catered Table

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Opinion

Guest Column



SOCIAL SECURITY Matters
By Russell Gloor

I'm divorced; can I get benefits from my ex-husband?

Dear Rusty:

After 16 years of marriage, we were divorced. I have never remarried, but he has. When he starts collecting Social Security (he is 64 now and still working), is it true that I can claim ex-spousal benefits or does that go to the current wife? How would I find this info?

Benefits reach maximum at your full retirement age but are reduced if claimed earlier than your full retirement age. Claiming your benefits as an ex-spouse will also result in you receiving your own SS retirement benefit (reduced if you haven't yet reached FRA).

I suggest you contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 to make a telephone appointment to evaluate whether you are entitled to benefits as an ex-spouse.

Signed:

A Divorced Spouse

Dear Divorced Spouse:

The fact that your ex-husband has remarried has no influence on your ability to collect benefits based on his record. If you are eligible for ex-spouse benefits (because you did not remarry), you can get those benefits regardless of whether his current wife collects benefits on his record. In other words, both you and his current wife can both collect spousal benefits from your ex-husband's earnings record.

Your eligibility for an ex-spouse benefit is determined by comparing your own SS retirement benefit amount at full retirement age (FRA) to his - if your own SS benefit at your FRA is less than 50% of your ex's FRA benefit entitlement, and you were married to your ex for more than 10 years, are not currently married and are at least 62 years old, then you can get a "spousal boost" (an amount added to your own Social Security retirement amount). In fact, if you have been divorced for over two years, you can get an ex-spouse benefit even though he is not yet receiving his own SS retirement benefit.

Be aware, however, if you claim any Social Security benefit (both your own SS retirement amount and your ex-spouse "spousal boost") before you reach your full retirement age, the monthly amount you get will be reduced according to how much before your full retirement age you claim. Spouse and ex-spouse ben-

efits reach maximum at your full retirement age but are reduced if claimed earlier than your full retirement age. Claiming your benefits as an ex-spouse will also result in you receiving your own SS retirement benefit (reduced if you haven't yet reached FRA).

SSA will be able to tell you what your total monthly benefit as an ex-spouse will be when you meet with them, at which point you can decide whether to claim your benefits early or wait until your FRA to achieve your maximum amount as an ex-spouse.

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



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

Guest Column

Winter sowing is a fun experiment

“Winter sowing” always comes up as a hot topic on social media this time of year.

The basic premise of winter sowing is to plant your seeds in mini greenhouses (gallon jugs), place the jugs outside and simply let nature take over. The advantage being that no heat mats or lights are needed. No window sills full of seedlings, either.

While I don't think it is as simple as it sounds, I do think trying it would be a fun experiment.

Read on this week and next to consider some of the pros and possible cons of this seed starting technique.

Years ago I read a blog where a master gardener was encouraging folks to start native perennials in milk jugs outside. The seeds of many of these plants require a period of cold and moist stratification to break seed dormancy.

In simple terms, they need to go through winter in order to sprout. Think of it as nature's safety mechanism; seeds germinate at the right time to survive and thrive!

You may ask, then, why not just sow the seeds outdoors in the garden? In theory it sounds good, but in reality "the wild" is not the best seed bed.

From hungry birds and rodents, to wind and drenching rains, success is hit or miss. Safely inside the milk

jug, but at the same time outside in the elements to freeze and thaw, freeze and thaw, tricky seeds are coaxed into germinating. Success at your fingertips!

Here are the nuts and bolts! Start with clean gallon containers, the see-through kind that water or milk come in. About four inches up, just below the handle, safely cut around the jug, leaving an inch or so on either side of the handle as a "hinge."

You should be able to bend the top back and forth. Make a number of drainage holes in the bottom; three or four per quadrant.

There is a lot of advice out there on how to do that, from drilling holes, to twisting an exacto knife around and around and even using a hot tool to melt a hole in the plastic (really!). I generally like to make holes in reused plastic containers by banging a large nail through the bottom into a piece of scrap lumber placed underneath.

Once the drainage holes are made, fill the bottom of the jug with moist seed starting mix. With the soil in place, sow your seeds.

If the seeds are tiny or even relatively tiny, don't cover them with soil, simply space them out evenly on top and press into the surface.

You may wonder how to deal with tiny seed. I place it in a folded index card and gently tap the card so that the seeds fly out. If you can handle the seed easily, do cover with only a small amount of soil, say an eighth of an inch or so and firm down.

How many seeds to sow is a tricky question. If you want to keep the plants in the jug until they go in the garden, then hope for four plants, maybe six per jug at the most, figuring how big they will be at transplant stage.

For tricky germinators, perhaps double or triple the amount of seed you sow versus how many you desire. If germination is great, you can always transplant some out.

Close the container and seal it with duct tape. Be sure to label the jug with the plant name via a paint pen, really the only writing utensil that won't smear, fade or wash away when exposed to the elements.

Place the jugs in full exposure outdoors and with the cap off, so that heat can escape and small amounts of moisture can penetrate. When the temperature outdoors heats up past 60 degrees, be sure to take the duct tape off and vent your seedlings. Check often and water as needed.

The pros recommend to cover with a blanket if frost threatens or even move heat lovers inside on cold nights so that the seedlings won't freeze. To prevent tip-over by four-legged friends or playful kids, pros also suggest putting the jugs in trays or bins.

As you can see, this method is not maintenance-free, but certainly worthy of a try especially for gardeners who are short on indoor space or in the mood to get their hands dirty earlier in the season than normal! January and February is the perfect time to start seeds that need a cold treatment.

Look for key terms on the seed packet, such as "stratification needed," "sow in the fall," etc. You can also use this technique to sow cold hardy annuals in March - think chard, spinach, kale, snapdragons, bachelor button and the like.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.



by Roberta McQuaid



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must include a name, address, and daytime telephone number for author verification purposes. We do not publish anonymous letters.

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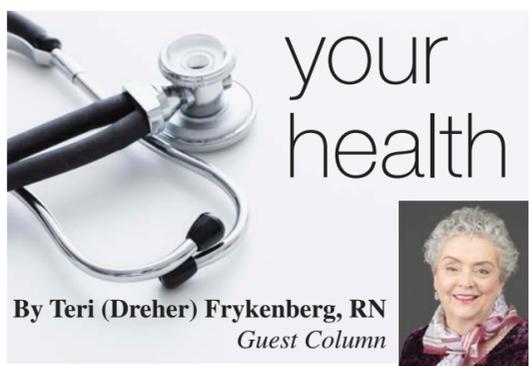
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You can check out your own cognition

Some days, it feels like the neurons just aren't firing. You call one child by another child's name, can't remember where you left your phone and forgot to pick up something at the grocery store.

Such forgetfulness becomes more common as we age, but it isn't necessarily age-related. Lack of sleep and stress can cause stuff



your health

By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

HEALTH | page 5

Agawam Advertiser News welcomes letters to the editor

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 Thursday'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 newspaper

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

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

Opinion



By Julie Midura
Guest Columnist

“You know, honey, we always talk about how we’ll REALLY start living ‘some day.’ Once the kids are grown. Once we have more time and more money. Once we retire. But how do we know that we’ll both be physically capable of doing something so demanding if we wait for ‘some day’ to arrive? How do we know that we will even reach that elusive ‘some day’?”

It was a beautiful August day in 2016, and Tom and I were standing on the summit of Mt. Lafayette in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. We were completing Tom’s lifelong dream of hiking the Franconia Ridge Loop—a majestic 9-mile hike featured on a National Geographic List of the 20 Best Hikes in the World.

On that summer afternoon almost ten years ago, I was trying to convince my husband that we should attempt to hike all of New Hampshire’s 48 tallest peaks. I was 51, and he was 59 at the time. There were numerous reasons not to pursue such a time-consuming and physically challenging endeavor.

One of which, as Tom stated, was because “We’re far too old and there’s no way we can hike up all those mountains in our lifetime.”

It took a bit of persuasion on my part, but he finally agreed to chase after those 48 mountain peaks.

Since that day, Tom and I have not only completed the entire White Mountain 4,000 Footer List once, but twice including climbing every peak during the winter season. And we’ve repeated several of our favorites over a half dozen times. In addition, we’ve backpacked 800 miles on the Appalachian Trail, completing 8 of the 14 states. We have also climbed the second highest peak in the continental United States—14,440’ Mt. Elbert in Colorado—when I was fifty-eight and Tom was sixty-six years old.

The thousands of miles we have walked over the past ten years have not just proven what our bodies and minds are capable of. Every mile has been a journey of adventure, self-discovery, courage, humility, resilience, contentment and gratitude. And every footprint we have left on every woodland trail and every slab of granite has propelled us forward to the next.

Our final hike of 2025 in New Hampshire, just two weeks ago, continued to do the same.

It’s minus 2 degrees when we start up the trail toward the summit of Mt. Jackson at 4:15 a.m. The sky is black and the beams of our headlamps pierce the darkened forest. When we lift our heads upward, our lights illuminate the trees, and they appear like figures standing guard over the landscape. The snow-laden evergreens groan under

A final hike of 2025 - Mt. Jackson Summit



the weight, pressing closer to the ground, seeming to bow to us as we pass. The silence is full, broken only by the crunch of our boots on the hard-packed snow.

When we break treeline, everything changes. We brace ourselves against the onslaught of howling wind. The sheer force pushes our bodies backward. We slam our trekking poles into the hard-packed snow to steady ourselves, while hoping that our spike-clad boots anchor us to the icy granite. The final steep pitch makes my heart tremble. Adrenaline is coursing through my body. I grab onto rocks and pull myself upward, eyes watering, skin pierced with the sting of icy needles. I breathe a sigh of relief when we reach the plateau, and we rush to the leeward side to escape the wind’s torment.

We find a partially sheltered ledge and quickly spread our bright green sleeping bag over our sleep pads atop several feet of snow. We crawl inside of the double-wide down bag and snuggle close together. Based on the weather, we know we can’t remain immobile for long. Movement keeps the

body warm. Stillness allows the cold to penetrate the numerous layers of clothing we are wearing. Today, even the trees are shivering.

We sip hot apple cider in an attempt to warm our insides while waiting for the sun to crest the distant horizon. The cold kisses our cheeks and the wind fills our ears. We inhale the frigid mountain air and watch plumes of vapor rise as we exhale. We remain snuggled in our lofty sleeping bag on this snowy perch for over an hour, unwilling to leave in spite of the cold settling into our bones. For we don’t want to miss ONE. SINGLE. MINUTE. of this unforgettable moment that is unfolding before us.

The earth itself seems to be holding its breath, waiting for the show to begin. With eyes focused eastward, we

watch the black of night turn into the blazing red of dawn. The stars above are being replaced with an inferno of fiery reds and blazing oranges—like molten lava spreading as the horizon slowly burns.

And there it is. The shimmering golden sphere we have been waiting for, spreading its golden light down the mountainside and awakening the earth from its slumber. The brilliant rays stretch from the heavens and dance upon the earth, giving life to everything they touch.

This experience is just one of the many that will burn in our hearts and memories for as long as there is breath in our lungs. An experience that we may never have witnessed had we not decided to chase a dream ten years ago. Had we waited until we retired. Had we waited for ‘some day’ to arrive.

I implore you to not allow your age, fitness level, current circumstances, past failures or ANYTHING ELSE dictate what you are capable of! I encourage you to chase the dream, seize the opportunity and never live regretting what could have been if only you had taken the chance. We have but one wild and crazy life. TODAY is the day to go out and LIVE it.

Tom and I have lived life to the absolute fullest over the past 10 years. Adventuring on weekends and vacations from work. But for one of us, at least, life is opening up to even more possibilities and opportunities. I’m thrilled to announce that after dedicating fifty years of his life to his career, Tom completed his final day as a working man on the last day of 2025. See you in the wild places, my friends.

HEALTH ■ from page 4

teak out of our brains, too.

Memory lapses like these aren’t necessarily a sign of cognitive decline, either. They are generally manageable and can be overcome with strategies such as sending yourself text reminders, making to-do lists and maintaining a calendar.

That said, cognitive decline is a reality for millions of people around the world. In 2022, researchers at Columbia University found that almost 10% of U.S. adults ages 65 and older have dementia, while another 22% have mild cognitive impairment. That’s practically a third of our senior population.

In one of my columns a few years ago, I called dementia the “other pandemic” because, for many people who had mild cognitive impairment before COVID, it blossomed into something more dramatic during our periods of isolation.

At your annual Medicare wellness exam, your healthcare provider will screen you for cognitive difficulties by having you try to repeat back several random words and asking you to draw a clock showing a particular time. (With the number of young people today who can’t read a clock, they’ll have to come up with another test at some point!)

The Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE), an 11-question standardized test that evaluates orientation, memory, attention, language and visual-spatial abilities, might be used for the Medicare assessment because it takes only five to 10 minutes.

If your provider feels your cognition needs further evaluation, they may refer you to a specialist who will perform the MoCA, or Montreal Cognitive Assessment. It takes

only 20 to 30 minutes, and has long been validated as an effective tool for early detection of mild cognitive impairment in hundreds of studies. Its sensitivity for detecting cognitive impairment is estimated at 90%, and it is considered much more effective than the MMSE.

The MoCA is designed to assess:

- Short-term memory
- Visual-spatial abilities
- Executive functions, which help us manage actions, emotions and thoughts
- Attention, concentration and working memory
- Language
- Orientation to time and place

The test has to be administered and scored by a trained clinician. Any medical professional can get the training, which takes only an hour and gives clinicians more confidence in administering the test and explaining the results to patients. Training and certification are free for students, faculty members, academic researchers and public health-care institutions.

Here are some of the activities the MoCA asks of us:

- Naming certain animals
- Counting backwards from 100 by sevens
- Saying as many words as possible that start with a particular letter in one minute
- Copying a simple drawing
- And, of course, drawing a clock and remembering a series of random words

Evaluating age-related cognitive decline isn’t the only use for the MoCA. People of any age who have suffered head trauma are often given the assessment to look out for immediate or delayed symptoms of cognitive damage. Many times, traumatic brain injury (TBI) is missed or misdiagnosed, which can leave a person with long-

term cognitive issues.

Other conditions that might affect cognition are cancer treatment, Parkinson’s, depression, heart failure, brain tumor, sleep disorders and substance abuse disorders.

Now, though, you don’t have to wait for a doctor’s appointment to get a general assessment of your cognitive abilities or those of a loved one. The neurologist who developed the MoCA, Dr. Ziad Nasreddine, last year created XpressO, a quick and fun digital self-assessment designed for anyone to use on their own desktop computer, tablet or smartphone. (Laptop screens aren’t large enough.)

Once all the tasks are completed, you will receive a clear and simple report stating low or elevated risk of cognitive decline. You can monitor your cognition over time and share the results with your health-care provider.

XpressO requires registration and creation of a password. Learn more at MoCA-cognition.com, or you can download the XpressO app from the Apple and Google Play app stores.

Dementia and cognitive decline, already a reality for millions, are a source of fear and anxiety for millions of others. Using this simple tool might put your mind at rest, or it may signal that you need to be talking to your doctor.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, is a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate and founder of www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. Teri offers a free phone consultation to Turley Newspaper readers as well as to nurses interested in becoming advocates. Reach her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com.

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- CLUES ACROSS**

 1. Paddles
 5. Sunscreen rating
 8. Very fast airplane
 11. Immune responses
 13. “Partner” to feather
 14. New England river
 15. Longest river in New Guinea
 16. Midway between east and southeast
 17. Israeli politician
 18. Back bones
 20. Consumed
 21. One you can rely on
 22. Dressed up gaudily
 25. Representatives
 30. Dog breed
 31. Pitching statistic
 32. Manpower
 33. S. Korean entertainer
 38. Outsourcing firm
 41. Viceroy of Egypt

under Turkish rule

 43. One who removes antlers from a flower
 45. Potluck dish
 48. Discount
 49. Airborne (abbr.)
 50. Cavalry sword
 55. Basics
 56. Hollywood director
 57. Afflicted in mind or body
 59. Horsley and Majors are two
 60. Midway between northeast and east
 61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
 62. Malaysian isthmus
 63. Fall back
 64. Cheek

CLUES DOWN

 1. Former CIA

2. Baseball’s best pitchers
 3. __ Nui, Easter Island
 4. Invests in little enterprises
 5. Constant
 6. Hobby
 7. A place to store food
 8. Short-tail marten
 9. Burn with a hot liquid
 10. Left his heart in San Francisco
 12. Swedish krona
 14. Legendary actor
 19. French cleric
 23. Former measure of length for textiles
 24. Opaque glassy substance
 25. Residue of burned item
 26. A place to unwind
 27. Japanese honorific
 28. Terminus

29. Fails to make a shot
 34. Journalist Tarbell
 35. College hoops tournament
 36. Monetary unit of Macao
 37. Of she
 39. Spoke ill of
 40. Elements
 41. Kilocalorie (abbr.)
 42. Shades
 44. Poem of fourteen lines
 45. Pole used in Scottish sport
 46. Hollyhocks genus
 47. Street name for marijuana
 48. Polio vaccine developer
 51. Swiss river
 52. Prejudice
 53. Actor Idris
 54. Confederate soldiers
 58. Criticize

CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE 8

Chanda Care celebrates five years of community impact

AGAWAM — Chanda Care, a Western Massachusetts-based home care, education, and care coordination organization, is celebrating five years of service to individuals and families navigating aging, illness, and complex care needs.

Founded in 2021 by registered nurse, educator, and case manager Chantal Bernard, Chanda Care was established to address persistent gaps in care coordination, caregiver education, and family advocacy across the healthcare continuum. The organization welcomed its first client in February

2021, and has since grown into a trusted, community-based provider rooted in dignity, presence, and clinical expertise.

Over the past five years, Chanda Care has:

- Served hundreds of individuals and families across Western Massachusetts
- Built a multidisciplinary team of caregivers, nurses, and care leaders
- Earned repeated national recognition as Employer of Choice and Provider of Choice
- Launched Chanda Care Academy, an education and

compliance platform supporting caregivers, nursing students, and families

- Secured state funding to establish a Registered Apprenticeship Program, supporting workforce development and retention
- Expanded partnerships with ASAP programs and the VA.
- Founded Chanda's House, a nonprofit initiative focused on dignified end-of-life care, education, and access

In 2024, Bernard completed the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses Program, strengthening

the organization's strategic foundation while remaining deeply rooted in its mission. During this time, she also launched Real Talk, a series of community education sessions offering families practical guidance, emotional support, and honest conversations around caregiving, illness, and end-of-life planning.

Looking ahead, Chanda Care will expand its community impact in 2026 through the growth of the Chanda's House Scholarship Program, ensuring families can access compassionate end-of-life support

regardless of financial barriers.

"Five years later, our commitment remains the same," said Bernard. "To close gaps in healthcare while keeping care dignified. Every caregiver supported and every family served reinforces what's possible when care is led with presence and intention."

Chanda Care's five-year milestone reflects not only organizational growth, but the power of community-centered care rooted in humanity, trust, and collaboration.



DPW hosts used holiday light collection

AGAWAM – Frustrated with broken holiday lights, or just have a bunch that no longer suits your needs? No matter what the reason, resist the urge to throw old holiday lights in the curbside trash or recycling collection cart. Holiday light strings are known as "tangles" in the recycling industry. Tangles are things like plastic bags, ropes, cords, hoses, wires, and light strings that jam sorting machinery by wrapping around the equipment, which is dangerous for workers.

Light strings may be delivered to the Department of Public Works front office from Dec. 1 to Jan. 16. This program is for light strings only: incandescent, LED and "icicle" light strings with wires and attached bulbs. Boxes, bags, and packaging must be removed before placing lights in the recycling container. Alternative options for recycling light strings would include mail back programs such as HolidayLEDs.com or Christmas-light-source.com

Wonderland Paint Party fundraiser to benefit Captain Leonard House

AGAWAM – A Winter Aurora Borealis Wonderland Paint Party fundraiser to benefit Agawam's Community House will take place on Friday, Jan. 23 at the historic Captain Charles Leonard House, 663 Main Street, Agawam, Mass. from 5:30 to 9 p.m.

Following the step-by-step directions of your art guide to learn acrylic painting techniques, attendees will paint a beautiful winter wonderland on canvas while sipping and snacking with friends.



The Winter Aurora Borealis.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Tickets are just \$40 per person, which includes all materials needed to create your masterpiece, with proceeds benefiting the historic Captain Charles Leonard House.

Space is limited! Reserve your seat today at <https://www.facebook.com/share/1CAHu4UfzE/>

Built in 1805 as a stage tavern to service travelers on the Hartford/Boston/Albany route, the Captain Charles Leonard House is

considered Agawam's finest Federal-era building. The house was restored by Mrs. Minerva Davis, who established a Board of Trustees to oversee the operation of the house as Agawam's Community House, the role it has served since 1939.

The Captain Charles Leonard House was featured in/photographed for The White Pine Series, Vol. XI, No. 4 (1925); recorded by the Historic American

Buildings Survey (1934); and featured in Some Old Homes of the Lower Connecticut Valley (1988).

The Captain Charles Leonard House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

The Captain Charles Leonard House is available for holiday parties, business functions and social events. For rental information, please call 413-786-9421. Please follow us on Facebook.

ACC holding special Magic Show Jan. 24

AGAWAM – The Agawam Congregational Church invites the community to a very special Magic Show on Saturday, Jan. 24 at 3 p.m. The show is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children and teenagers. The show is for people of all ages, not just children.

Their guest Magician is David Reed-Brown, of Simsbury, CT, who gives people hope through the art of Magic, especially in tough times. Along with the astounding, fun magical wonders, he shares meaningful stories that inspire and touch the heart. He is well-known in the region having performed thousands of shows, including 50+ for the Big E, First Night Hartford (twice), many shows

for companies, community organizations, weddings, all-night graduation parties and private events. He has also "appeared" at Jeff McBride's Wonderground in Las Vegas.

Reed-Brown has been an Instructor at McBrides Magic & Mystery School in Las Vegas for over 8 years, where faculty train many of the magicians you see on TV, online and in theaters around the world. So, come create amazing memories for a lifetime with great people, and (adults) connect with your inner 11-year-old again. Agawam Congregational Church is located at 745 Main St in Agawam. The event is designed for people of all ages.

COUNCILOR ■ from page 1

to enter into a contract; are not related by blood would which bar marriage in Massachusetts; and have registered their partnership in accordance with the new chapter or have a registered valid domestic partnership in another jurisdiction.

The ordinance has some kin to common law marriages, which are not recognized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. However, Hendrickson's proposal does not require the relationship between the individuals to be in an

established relationships or co-habitat for any given period of time.

One key aspect of the new law would be Chapter 62.5, the right of domestic partnership. One of the subsections says that the Town of Agawam shall afford persons in domestic partnerships all the same right and privileges afforded to those who are married, subject to certain limitations. Those limitations include the imposition of liability for legal or health and medical expenses. While it cannot be forced under the limitations, rights of marriage

would allow a domestic partner to be included on a partner's health insurance because that is a privilege afforded by marriage.

Hendrickson's proposal includes a severability section, allowing a court, by order, to invalidate sections of the chapter while leaving others in full effect and force.

This new ordinance was introduced as new business earlier this week and will likely go to the Legislative Sub-committee for evaluation before being voted on by the full council as early as the Feb. 2 meeting.

PLANS ■ from page 1

tract, citing it's a 'competitive market.' He then added that the current estimated price of the project is still uncertain, but did convey "it's going in the range of hundreds of millions of dollars" and that this facility would offer fresh employment opportunities, which would include construction and full-time technician jobs coming to Agawam.

Allen then admitted that Longroad is holding the element of safety to the highest degree, which then shifted the conversation and pre-

sentation on the overall potential of additional tax revenues for the town, something that Mayor Johnson elaborated on.

"When this facility is online and operating, it will be the No. 2 taxpayer in Agawam, No. 1 is Eversource by a wide-margin, currently No. 2 is Six Flags, No. 3 is Berkshire Power, and No. 4 is Hood. This (BESS) will be the 2nd highest taxpayer, and I'm hoping the city council will entertain a payment-in-lieu-of-taxes agreement so we will have a guaranteed and dedicated revenue stream from this facility," said the mayor. "And as Chad (Allen) indicated earlier, this is proposed to

come online in 2029, which is the same year that the bond payments will become due for the new high school, so while this won't pay for the entire cost because it's a bigger bill, it's going to make a huge dent in what the bond cost will be for the high school, and its impact on the tax rate."

As of this moment, many contractual, permitting, and planning milestones must be completed before the Agawam Energy Center project is ready to begin construction. The developer revealed construction is expected to start in 2027, with project operations slated to begin in 2029.

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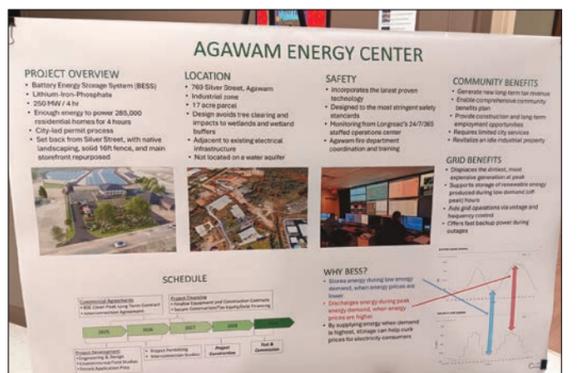


Additional info, including safety and insight into the project and proposals.

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A deep overview of the project. TURLEY PHOTOS BY BRENDAN ROONEY



The site plan for the property, which is on the former site of Lucia Lumber on Silver St.



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SPORTS

HOCKEY

Brownies pick up first win of season

AGAWAM – On Saturday, Jan. 10, Agawam ice hockey had its rematch with Amherst Regional, which co-ops with Pathfinder Tech.

The Brownies were able to pick up a 3-1 win, their first of the season. Anthony Barbari-

ni, Casey Thomas, and Braden Parrelli scored the goals for Agawam with Nick Brown coming up with two assists. Amherst's lone goal came from Sawyer Ferro. Agawam is 1-9 this year with Amherst now 5-6-1.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Brady Klinakis possesses the puck.



Anthony Barbarini emerges from behind the goal with the puck.



Brady Blanchette slides to his left to try and block a loose puck.



Zayden Maurer holds the puck, waiting to pass.



Casey Thomas looks to send a wrister toward the goal.



Andrew Holton dodges a pair of defenders.

BASKETBALL

Offense falters for Agawam girls

AGAWAM – Last Thursday night, Agawam girls basketball was defeated by Springfield International Charter 37-21.

Isabella Laprise scored seven points for the

Brownies.

Agawam is just 2-8 on the season and next plays at Drury on Friday, Jan. 23 at 7 p.m.

The Brownies are next home on Monday, Jan. 26 against Holyoke at 7 p.m.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
Sophia Laprise tries to get an inbound pass around an opponent.



Bella Santaniello maneuvers around a pick.



Olivia Izzo makes a pass on the run



Isabella Laprise heads toward the arc.



Samantha Izzo crosses the midcourt.



Alanna Rose passes out of the paint.

Brownies compete at Duals

SOUTHWICK – Agawam High School wrestling sent a contingent to neighboring Southwick Regional to compete in a series of duals meets. The Brownies, which have an expansive roster, send multiple contingents to events to get many on the roster an opportunity to wrestle matches. After taking on Chicopee High, the Brownies will travel to nearby West Springfield on Wednesday, Jan. 28 at 7 p.m.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Aiden Monaghan goes for the takedown.



Joseph Papadakis holds the top position.



Kamari Codrington gets ready to lock up.



Lincoln Despard attempts to turn his opponent over.

Registration open for Quabbin Valley

SOUTH HADLEY – On Sunday, Jan. 11, the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, an over-28 recreational league, held its first meeting of 2026 to prepare for the upcoming season.

At the meeting it was determined registration for players will open up on Sunday, Feb. 1.

For the 2026 season, the cost will be \$215 and will include a 16th game added to the regular season schedule.

During the 2025 season, the league experimented with playing on Mother's Day Saturday as well as a weeknight game to allow players an opportunity to play under the lights. While the night games were very successful, the Mother's Day Saturday games were rained out.

Those elements will return along with a 16th game with an opponent to be determined as the league's board explores possibilities for interleague matchups with another league in the region.

For returning players to the league, the deadline is Mar. 22 at 12 noon to be registered for the 2026 season in order to be guaranteed a roster spot. There will be open practices for all players but specifically targeted at new players scheduled for March 29 and April 4 at times and locations to be announced. The draft is currently scheduled to take place on April 4 following that practice.

The season is currently slated to start on Sunday, April 19 and following the success of the six-team fall league last year, the league will also have a fall league in September and October this season.

The registration link will be live on Feb. 1 at www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org. Players must register and then pay the league dues via Venmo or contact the league leadership if an alternate form of payment is needed.

Aside from the weeknight and Mother's Day games, other games take place Sundays at 10 a.m. outside of Mother's Day, Memorial Day and July 4 weekends. Playoffs will be in August.

Railers pick up overtime win over Portland Pirates

PORTLAND, ME — The Worcester Railers HC (16-15-2-1) fell to the Portland Pirates (15-10-5-2) in overtime on Saturday, January 17th, in front of a crowd of 6,076 with a final score of 3-2 at the Cross Insurance Arena. The Railers will take on the Pirates next on home ice on Sunday, January 18th at 3:05 p.m.

Portland nabbed the first goal of the night just 2:08 into the first off a goal from defenseman Andrew Nielsen (1-0-1). Nielsen's goal was the only one in the first period. Worcester answered the 1-0 lead from Portland with a goal from Jesse Pulkkinen (1-0-1) at 0:33 into the second to tie the game. Portland took

back the one-goal lead halfway through the second, this time from Mitch Deelstra (1-0-1), Worcester once again evened the score with a goal from Drew Callin (1-0-1). A final goal from Max Andreev (1-0-1), at 3:27 in overtime secured the Pirates' 3-2 victory.

Worcester kicked off the night shorthanded just 16 seconds after puck drop. An early penalty against Lincoln Hatten for high-sticking put Portland on its first power play of the game, which forced Worcester to fight the first two minutes of play for the night down a man. With just eight seconds remaining on Hatten's call, Portland defenseman Andrew Nielsen (5th) grabbed the only goal

of the period for either team, which gave the Pirates a 1-0 lead to close the first twenty. Shots for the period with 11-4 in favor of Portland.

Worcester didn't wait long to tie the game in the second. Jesse Pulkkinen (3rd) picked up his 5th point of the season with a goal at 0:33. Portland went back on the power play soon after the score on a hooking call on Anthony Callin. Worcester had their first chance at the man-advantage about five minutes into the period, as Anthony Callin was tripped up by Max Andreev. Portland re-gained their one-goal lead once more around the halfway mark of the period, scored by Mitch Deelstra (2nd) at

9:35. Neither the Railers nor the Pirates could break past the blue line for the remainder of the second, which left the Railers down by one for a second time in the evening. Portland outshot Worcester nine to seven. Penalties for the period were one for Worcester and two for Portland.

The Railers came out fighting in the third and tallied their highest shot total for any period of the night. A roughing call on Loke Johansson put Worcester on their third power play just over seven and a half minutes into play for the third. Unable to capitalize on their previous two power play chances, Drew Callin (10th)

drove the puck home at 8:28 to even the score once more for the Railers. A late-game goal from Anthony Callin had Worcester celebrating an early win; however, the goal was waved off for goaltender interference as Callin fell into the net of Brad Arvanitis. The game once again was 2-2 and went into overtime for the second consecutive night. In the end, the Pirates would take the win in overtime with a final score of 3-2, the last lamp lit by Max Andreev (7th) on a shot from atop the circles to beat Gahagen in net for Worcester. Final shots were 27-25 in favor of Portland. Final penalties were five for Portland and four for Worcester.

Public Notices

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Division
Docket No.
HD26P0031EA
Estate of:
Carmen G. Jacques
Date of Death:
November 19, 2025
INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE
To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Daniel Jacques of Hatfield, MA**
a Will has been admitted to informal probate.
Daniel Jacques of Hatfield, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.
The estate is being adminis-

tered 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 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.
01/22/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Division
Docket No.
HD23P0839EA
Estate of:
Joan Marie Wollmershauser
Date of Death: July 31, 2022
INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE
To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Michelle J Martin of Feeding Hills, MA.**
Michelle J Martin of Feeding Hills, 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 Uni-

form 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 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.
01/22/2026

Thunderbirds offense dries up in 4-1 loss

BRIDGEPORT, Conn. - The Springfield Thunderbirds (13-18-4-2) continued to have a tough time locating offense, falling 4-1 to the Bridgeport Islanders (16-17-2-1) on Saturday night inside Total Mortgage Arena.

A bad break for T-Birds netminder Vadim Zherenko resulted in Bridgeport's game-opening tally at 6:37 of the opening period, as Zherenko lost his balance and fell in his blue paint, allowing Daylan Kuefler to carry the puck around the net and wrap it past the fallen goaltender to make it 1-0 Bridgeport.

Aside from that unfortunate break, the T-Birds and Islanders played a mostly defensive-minded first period, as Zherenko's nine saves and Henrik Tikkanen's eight stops in the Bridgeport crease accounted for much of the action on the scoresheet.

Matthew Peca quickly got his troops back on track, as the T-Birds captain slipped a wrister through Tikkanen just 49

seconds into period two, tying the score, 1-1, and extending his point streak to five consecutive games.

Matt Luff also extended his season-long point streak to seven games with the primary assist on Springfield's first marker of the evening.

However, that potential momentum-changer was quickly washed out when Cam Berg connected on a wrister from the left circle just 2:08 later, restoring a one-goal Bridgeport lead, 2-1.

Shots and chances continued to come at a premium for both teams, as the clubs combined for only 43 shots all evening, including just 25 in the final 40 minutes of play.

The T-Birds never did receive a power play in this one, and the club's last-minute efforts with Zherenko on the bench proved fruitless, as Adam Beckman and Eetu Luukas each connected on empty-netters to give Bridgeport the final goals of the night.



Agawam Advertiser News
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Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place. The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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MassHire announces February job expo

SPRINGFIELD – Hundreds of people are expected to attend the Feb. 3 Job Expo at the Basketball Hall of Fame. Forty to fifty companies are expected to attend the event, which runs from 4 to 7 p.m. They will be hiring to fill hundreds of openings. Job seekers will have opportunities available in many different industries including: health care, manufacturing, social services, education and banking. The Job Expo is held in Center Court and is open to the public. This provides an increasing-

ly rare opportunity for applicants to meet recruiters face to face.

The turnout is expected to mirror a growing trend of increasing numbers of job seekers attending recruiting events. Kevin Lynn, Executive Director of MassHire Springfield Career Center says the job expo continues to be a draw. “Our October Job Expo had 617 job seekers show-up to meet with 54 employers. This was the largest group of job seekers since before the start of COVID in 2020. Local companies

continue to hire with many struggling to find the right candidates.”

Job Expos give people the chance to make positive impressions on prospective employers while at the same time having the opportunity to learn about career paths and corporate culture. This helps job seekers determine which organizations are the best fit for them. Recruiters find face to face events useful in screening candidates and selling their opportunities to prospective applicants. The ability to make

these connections is why job expos remain popular with businesses.

Located at 95 Liberty Street, MassHire Springfield Career Center served over 11,000 job seekers and 1,600 business last fiscal year. We provide people with job search assistance and access to skills training. Our business services include no cost job postings and recruiting events. A list of companies and positions available at the job expo is attached. An updated list can be found at MassHireSpringfield.org.

Suffield Players holding playwriting workshops

SUFFIELD, CT – The Suffield Players are pleased to announce Drafting the Drama, an eight-week, in-person playwriting workshop running March 3 through April 21 taught by theatre artist and educator Matt Bessette.

Designed for both emerging and experienced writers, Drafting the Drama is an intensive, hands-on course that explores the craft of playwriting from concept to page. Each class is structured to open new creative horizons while introducing practical, advanced, and nuanced techniques used by professional playwrights. Participants will build confidence in their writing voice while developing original work in a supportive, collaborative environment.

Bessette returns to The Suffield Players to lead a second round of classes, guiding participants through a focused playwriting workshop designed for writers at all levels of experience.

A unique feature of the workshop is its connection

to The Suffield Players’ acting curriculum. Selected scripts developed during Drafting the Drama will be used in the Stepping into the Spotlight acting class that immediately follows the workshop. At the conclusion of that class, students will perform the selected scripts for a live audience, offering playwrights the opportunity to see their work fully realized on stage.

Who Should Enroll:

- Aspiring playwrights exploring dramatic writing for the first time
- Experienced writers looking to refine their craft
- Actors, directors, and theatre-makers interested in original storytelling
- Anyone interested in developing scripts for the stage in a structured, encouraging environment

Enrollment is now open. Full details, tuition information, and registration are available through The Suffield Players website: www.suffieldplayers.org. Space is limited to ensure an interactive classroom experience.

Stanley Park history program to explore park’s origins and lasting legacy

WESTFIELD – Stanley Park of Westfield in collaboration with the Westfield Athenaeum invites the community to step back in time during a special Stanley Park History Program on Thursday, Feb. 19, from 3 to 5 p.m. The program will be held at the Westfield Women’s Club, 28 Court Street, Westfield, MA.

Local historian Robert Brown will lead an engaging discussion on the origins of Stanley Park, tracing its beginnings in 1949 and highlighting the people, vision, and preservation efforts that shaped the park into the cherished community space it is today.

Brown’s dedication to uncovering and sharing Westfield’s history earned him a Westfield Preservation Award from the Westfield Historical Commission in 2023.

Attendees will also

enjoy a screening of the 8-minute documentary, Stanley Park: Rooted in the Past, Growing for the Future, which captures the park’s history, mission, and enduring impact.

Stanley Park staff will be on site to answer questions about the park, upcoming programs, and ways to get involved during the upcoming season.

Light refreshments will be served.

This free program is open to the public and offers a meaningful opportunity for longtime supporters and new visitors alike to deepen their connection to Stanley Park.

For questions or additional information, please contact the Development Office at 413-568-9312 ext. 108 or email development@stanleypark.org.

Schools & Youth

COLLEGE NEWS

Connery achieves fall 2025 Dean’s List at Nichols College

DUDLEY – Owen Connery of Feeding Hills, MA, has achieved Dean’s List honors for the fall 2025 semester at Nichols College.

Dean’s List recognizes those students who achieve high grades during a single semester. To be included on the Dean’s List, a student must have a minimum grade point average of 3.5 for at least 12 undergraduate credit-hours and must have received no grades below B- during the semester.

Local students earn President’s List honors at Nichols College

DUDLEY – Nichols College is proud to recognize the academic accomplishments of students on the fall 2025 President’s List.

President’s List recognizes those students who achieve high grades during a single semester. Students whose semester grade point average is 3.85 or higher for at least 12 undergraduate credit-hours and no grades below B- will receive President’s List honors.

The following local students have achieved President’s List honors:

Isabella Fleury of Agawam, MA
Riley Jorgensen of Agawam, MA

Kogan named to Assumption University’s Fall Dean’s List

WORCESTER – Assumption University has announced that Milana Kogan, of Feeding Hills, Class of 2028, has been named to the University’s Dean’s List for the fall 2025 semester. Students named to the Dean’s List must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 for a five-class, 15-credit semester to be included on the prestigious list, which is announced at the completion of the fall and spring semesters.

“Earning the right to be named to the Assumption University’s Dean’s List is an extraordinary accomplishment and we congratulate those students who demonstrated exemplary academic excellence this semester,” said Assumption University President Greg Weiner, Ph.D. “These students have demonstrated a deep commitment to the pursuit of truth in the company of friends that lies at the heart of the Catholic liberal education Assumption provides.”

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Holyoke Community College art gallery exhibit imagines radical Valley future

HOLYOKE – A new exhibition at Holyoke Community College’s Taber Art Gallery asks visitors to imagine a future Pioneer Valley 100 years after the fall of capitalism.

“River Valley Radical Futures” opens Tuesday, Jan. 20, and runs until Thursday, March 12. The gallery will host a closing talk from project lead and curator Alix Gerber and book launch on Thursday, March 12, from 5 to 7 p.m.

The show features the work of eight area artists and has its origins in the Making Radical Futures Lab at Smith College in Northampton. Gerber is a post-doc fellow and associate director of Smith’s Design Thinking Initiative.

“The lab uses participatory and speculative design practices to explore collaborative ways of imagining futures without capitalism,” Gerber said in a statement about the show. “Worker co-operatives, mutual aid networks, and other com-



Artist Michael Madeiros sets up his contribution to the “River Valley Radical Futures” exhibit at Holyoke Community College.

munity groups came together through a series of workshops throughout the Pioneer Valley to imagine how their values and current work might lead to future, alternative economic systems.”

Those sessions led to the creation of an illustrated map of the Connecticut River

Valley 100 years beyond the fall of capitalism.

In “River Valley Radical Futures,” the map is brought to life by paintings and sculptures and other artwork – “artifacts excavated from the future we imagined,” says Gerber.

Gallery visitors will see



Creature masks from artist Sunny Allis are part of the “River Valley Radical Futures” exhibit at HCC’s Taber Art Gallery, running Jan. 20-March 12.

body extensions and creature masks, cow brushes and bells made from local materials, a floating house design, a tool sharing station, a secret-sharing mural, a flood system made from local clay, and an apothecary, among other pieces.

The exhibition includes

the work of artists Sunny Allis, David von Dufving, Andrea Hairston, Mary Kate Cleary, Bo Kim, Sharon Leshner (a.k.a. Sharona Color), Michael Madeiros, and Laura Torracco.

“This is an exciting project that opens up the art-making process from what is usually

a single artist materializing their thoughts alone in the studio into a collaborative effort between artists, educators, community workers, facilitators and organizers,” said gallery director Rachel Rushing. “By collaborating across disciplines and experiences the workshop participants were able to imagine the kind of future their work could make possible.”

“When visiting the Taber, you’ll see artwork that has begun the process of bringing those ideas to life,” Rushing said. “Imagination is at the core of this exhibition, and I hope visitors will be inspired and energized to continue imagining what kind of future we all hope to create, together.”

The Taber Art Gallery, located off the lobby of the HCC Library on the second floor of the HCC Donahue Building, is free and open to the public Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. during regular school sessions.

‘Faces of Grief’ exhibit at STCC gives voice to love, loss and healing

SPRINGFIELD – Photography students at Springfield Technical Community College are telling the story of grief through images on display at an exhibition at the Carberry Fine Arts Gallery.

Running Jan. 20 through Feb. 6, the exhibition offers the community a space to witness, honor and reflect on the deeply personal yet universally shared experience of grieving. “Faces of Grief” is a collaborative photography exhibition presented by STCC, Cooley Dickinson VNA & Hospice, and The Garden: A Center for Grieving Children and Teens.

STCC invites the public to attend a reception on Satur-

day, Jan. 31, 2026, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the gallery, located on the STCC campus.

“Faces of Grief” invites viewers into the intimate world of loss and remembrance. Under the guidance of Professor Sondra Peron, STCC darkroom photography students captured portraits of grieving individuals holding, wearing or displaying objects that connect them to loved ones who have passed away. The students used analog, or film, photography as well as digital to capture 26 portraits of The Garden members and STCC community members. Each portrait was developed as a gelatin silver print and gifted to the participant fol-

lowing the exhibition.

“Grief is often a silent experience,” said Shelly Bathe Lenn, Bereavement Coordinator at Cooley Dickinson VNA & Hospice. “This project offers a powerful way to honor those who have died and to open up conversations that help us feel less alone.”

Lenn, who has led grief support groups across Western Massachusetts since 2002, uses creative rituals and dialogue to help individuals navigate the complexities of mourning. Her work with The Garden and Cooley Dickinson VNA & Hospice continues to foster healing spaces for children, teens, and adults.

For Peron, the exhibition

represents both an artistic and human opportunity. “This exhibit invites the public to reflect on a subject that is difficult but universal,” Peron said. “I hope visitors leave feeling a deeper sense of compassion, for others and for themselves.”

Mary Lou Vredenburg, Dean of Liberal and Professional Studies at STCC, said the project also plays an important role in student learning.

“Our photography students are not just developing technical skills,” Vredenburg said. “They are learning how to approach people with empathy, how to listen and how to translate emotion into vi-

sual storytelling. Experiences like this prepare them to become thoughtful artists and compassionate professionals.”

Julia Salazar, a fine arts major at STCC, recalled the day she took photos. “It was a very emotional day,” Salazar said. “One man had lost his young son. And then there was a boy who lost his biological dad. I felt very emotional taking their photos.”

Photography student Tina Scott said the child who lost his father wore his dad’s boxing robe. “That really touched me,” Scott said. “We had people from all walks of life and with all different types of losses. It was an honor to be able

to do this for them.” STCC Business Professor Diane Sabato participated in the photo shoot as a subject.

“I chose to participate because I thought it would be cathartic as well as a good way to honor and recognize my husband,” Sabato said. “It was really emotional, but the students were very thoughtful as they took the photos. They made it a moving and memorable experience for me.”

The Faces of Grief exhibit aims to destigmatize grief and transform discomfort into connection. All are welcome to attend the reception and view the portraits that reflect love, memory and resilience.