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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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Ava Levesque named Agawam Colleen

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM – Ava Levesque was named Agawam's new colleen at a coronation event held last Saturday night at St. Anne's Country Club.

Levesque is the 2026 Colleen and her court includes Samantha Machos, Hannah Newsome, Summer Smith, Madelynn Szemela and Zoie Leopardi. All six young ladies entered the colleen pageant this year and were included in this year's court. The number is up from four candidates who entered the contest last year.

According to information provided by the Agawam St. Patrick's Committee, Levesque is a college student at Quinnipiac University and is in the School of Nursing.

She is a graduate of Agawam High School. At Quinnipiac, she is the Treasurer elect for the Nurses Association, and shadows in the Pediatric Procedures Unit at Baystate



The 2026 Agawam Colleen and court were named last Saturday night. Pictures are Court members Hannah Newsome, Summer Smith, 2025 Colleen Julia Nicosia, 2026 Colleen Ava Levesque, and court members Zoie Leopardi, Samantha Machos, and Madelynn Szemela.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

and shadows in the Pediatric Procedures Unit at Baystate

On the Spring of 2025, she studied abroad at the Universidad de Sevilla in Spain. Ava currently works at a Place to

Nourish your Health as a receptionist. She currently volunteers with the Walk to End Alzheimer's and with the Mas-

sachusetts Veteran's Memorial Cemetery.

Smith, in addition to winning a spot on the court,

also won the William G. Pfau award for her winning essay.

COLLEEN | page 6

Pouring the next step



Agawam High School Principal James Blain announced concrete pouring in the first phase of construction will be taking place. In an update for students he said, construction crews will begin staging for a very large concrete pour on Wednesday or Thursday (Feb. 11 or 12) of this week. Because of the number of cranes and concrete trucks that are needed the back entrance to the construction site will be the access point. The graphic shows the route trucks will take to the construction area. They are aware of our higher traffic times before and after school.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

New candidate emerges for state representative seat

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – A former Select Board member from neighboring Southwick has announced a run at the state representative seat for the Third Hampden District.

Last Friday, Jason Perron issued a press release declaring he was looking to take the House seat currently held by State Rep. Nicholas Boldyga. Perron said he will be running as an independent and will be focused on "people over party, affordability, government transparency, fair funding for Western Massachusetts, and practical solutions that put residents first."

Perron is a Air Force veteran, and has made a career in law enforcement.

Perron is trying to buck

the trend of party politics, especially in a Democratic-heavy state legislature. Boldyga is one of just a handful of Republicans that are in the house.

"The people of this district deserve representation that puts people over party, results over rhetoric, and problem-solving over ideology," Perron said. "Too often, decisions made at the State House feel disconnected from the real lives of the people they affect. I'm running to change that."

According to information he provided in a press release, Perron brings nearly three decades of experience in public service, including



Jason Perron

service as a union representative and negotiator, as well as three years on the Southwick Selectboard. He said those roles shaped his approach to leadership — listening first, working respectfully with others, and standing firm when something is clearly the right thing to do.

"When I served on the Select Board, I made decisions based on input from the community and on what I believed was fair and right," Perron said. "Standing my ground and doing what was right in negotiations wasn't always pleasant or comfort-

CANDIDATE | page 10

Residents react strongly against state senate bills

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – At last Monday night's Agawam City Council meeting, a group of residents spoke out opposing two bills in the state senate that are believed to be the stepping stones to a "mileage tax," which would potentially charge residents driving that is considered excessive in the interest of addressing environmental concerns.

Senate bill 2246 seeks to require MassDOT's transportation plans to provide a

reasonable pathway to compliance with the emissions limits for the transportation sector. The bill would also require MassDOT to set goals for reducing the number of statewide driving miles, which would be considered when EEA sets greenhouse gas emissions limits and sub-limits. Finally, the bill would establish an interagency coordinating council—similar to the existing coordinating council for EV charging infrastructure—to come up with a whole-of-government plan to reduce vehicle miles traveled

and increase access to transportation options other than personal vehicles.

Part of the reason State Sen. Cynthia Stone Creem has proposed the bill, is because of the dwindling effectiveness of the gas tax due to more energy efficient vehicles, reducing gasoline usage, and the emergence of electric vehicles.

S.2404 proposes looking for long-term alternatives or supplements to the motor vehicle fuel tax. It would potentially establish a task force to look at a vehicle mileage user

fee and assess and evaluate a possible mileage-based revenue collection for roads and highways as an alternative to the current system of taxing highway uses through fuel taxes.

The proposal is also intended to promote more use of public transportation as well.

Opponents of the bills believe the state is trying to tax and infringe on people's right to "free movement."

The majority of the Agawam residents

BILLS | page 10

Adventures in babysitting



Real Care Babies are a part of the Child Development Course at AHS. Students practiced care techniques for the babies in class and will take home to babies to care for them for three consecutive nights. The Real Care babies must be attended to for various reasons (feeding, changing, burping, and general care.) Students' responses to the babies can be seen when the simulation is done. The lessons and activities are a great way to provide students with a glimpse of real world child care skills.

SUBMITTED PHOTO



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Tax work-off program returning this year

The Town of Agawam is accepting applications for the 2026 Senior Citizen/Veteran Property Tax Work-Off Program from Feb. 23 to Mar. 10. This initiative allows eligible seniors, age 60+ and veterans to earn credit toward their property tax bills by working in the Senior Center or Veterans Office. "We are committed to supporting our

senior citizens and veterans through this meaningful program," said Mayor Christopher Johnson. "This initiative not only assists our residents in managing their property taxes but also fosters a strong sense of community involvement and civic engagement." Eligible tasks may include administrative duties, cemetery headstone restoration,

and other municipal assignments. Applications must be picked up at the Council on Aging/Senior Center, located at 954 Main Street in Agawam. A lottery will be conducted on March 11, 2026, if applications exceed available spots. If the senior/veteran declines participation based

on placement then another senior/veteran will be chosen in their place until positions are filled or applications are exhausted which ever comes first. For questions or to submit applications, contact Cindy Sullivan, Executive Director of the Council on Aging, at 413-732-2835 or csullivan@agawam.ma.us.

Senior Center hosting Murder Mystery show

AGAWAM — The Friends of Agawam Senior Center will host a Murder Mystery Show and Dinner Fundraiser on Tuesday, Mar. 24, from 5 to 8:30 p.m. at the Agawam Senior Center. The event is open to the public.

The evening will feature the interactive murder mystery performance One Slew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, presented by The Comical Mystery Tour, a professional theatre troupe based in Greenfield.

The storyline follows Dr. Frigmond Zoid, who claims to have developed a miracle cure capable of transforming people who believe they are someone they are not into their "true" selves. While the treatment may seem promising, complications arise—es-

pecially when some patients would rather remain superheroes than return to normal life. Guests will enjoy an evening of humor, intrigue, and audience participation as the mystery unfolds.

Dinner will be catered by Partners Restaurant and includes a choice of roasted chicken or pasta and meatballs, along with salad, sides, and dessert.

Tickets are \$50 per person and must be purchased in advance. Tickets are available at the Agawam Senior Center or by calling 413-786-8010 and leaving a message. No tickets will be available at the door. Seating is limited.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the programs and activities of the Agawam Senior Center.



Senior Center to offer CPR, AED training

AGAWAM — The Agawam Senior Center is extremely excited to offer this potentially 'life saving class' to our staff and any senior interested in joining us. On Friday, Feb. 20 from 1 to 3 p.m. in the Veterans Hall we will be offering CPR and AED training with Marsha Chappel from Baystate Hospital.

Marsha is the certified AED and CPR trainer at

Baystate Hospital and has kindly offered her training to the Agawam Senior Center. The cost is a \$20 donation due on the day of the class, all monies collected on that day will be donated to the American Heart Association.

If you are interested in joining this class, Please call Kristina at 413.726.2836 to reserve your spot. Spaces will be limited to 25.

Workshop of Wonders free kids program hosted by First Congregational

WEST SPRINGFIELD — First Church will again be offering a free kids program during the upcoming February school vacation! Open to all children and youth ages 3 and up, the program will run Feb. 17 to 19 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Breakfast and lunch are included. Kids are invited to join in storytelling, crafts, music, recreation, science and fun.

Youth in grades 6 - 12 are able to receive community service hours when they volunteer. Sixth and seventh graders are "Lead-

ers-in-Training" and those in grades 8 - 12 can serve as Group or Rotation leaders. Those who are new will receive a brief orientation. There will also be a thank-you gift at the end of the week in gratitude for the service and care they provide the younger participants.

First Congregational Church is located at 108 Park Street in West Springfield. For more information, please visit www.firstchurchws.org; email Diana Forfa at drforfa@hotmail.com or call 413-739-6608.



FHCC Cupboard open house Feb. 14

FEEDING Hills — Feeding Hills Congregational Church invites the community to join us for a Church Cupboard Open House on Feb. 14 at 9 a.m. Stop by and visit to see the Cupboard, learn about what we do, drop off a donation, sign up for a future food drive and enjoy refreshments!

A year ago, the Church decided to open the Church Cupboard, a place where anyone in need could come once a month to receive supplemental food. The congregation hoped that it would become a true community endeavor. Thanks to the support of many local organiza-

tions and individuals, it has become just that. The Cupboard serves more than 50 households, made up of 108 individuals, 33 of whom are children. 66% of those served reside in either Agawam or Feeding Hills. Please reach out and support the following organizations, as they truly make our community a great place to live and work: The Agawam Rotary Club, the Agawam Lions Club, Hope Community Church, the REALTOR® Association of Pioneer Valley, The Agawam Garden Club, the Hampden County 4-H Fair Association, Roots Soccer League, Agawam Soccer Association, the

Agawam Public Library, the Parish Cupboard, ACE Precision, Banana Composting, the Peace Valley Foundation, and the Department of Veterans, along with countless individuals. To date, more than 4,550 food or self-care items have been distributed to those in need. Call 786-5061 for more information.

Please celebrate with us on Feb. 14, as we continue to love and serve our neighbors.

Garden Club scholarship available

AGAWAM — Applications are now available for the Agawam Garden Club 2026 scholarship.

To qualify for the scholarship students must be a graduating senior of Agawam High School or a college student who graduated from Agawam High School and is planning to attend an institution of higher learning in the Fall.

Applicants must be majoring in or planning on majoring in one of the

following: botany, environmental engineering, environmental science, earths systems, forest management, natural resources, plant soil and insect science, sustainable agriculture, sustainable horticulture or food and farming, turf grass science and management, landscape design and management technology, clean energy, technology studies: waste water or other environmental related

studies. The recipient will be awarded a \$1,000 scholarship at the clubs annual May meeting.

Completed applications along with transcripts and references must be submitted to Denise Carmody, 40 Primrose Lane, Agawam MA 01001 by Apr. 1.

Applications are available through Agawam High School or can be found on our website at agawamgardenclub.com.

Chamber holding mayoral breakfast

AGAWAM — The VIP Mayoral Breakfast will be held on Mar. 4 from 7:30 to 9 a.m. at Tansey's Catered Table.

The event is put on by the West of the River Chamber of Commerce. The chamber believes the breakfast ought to be a celebration of flavors and a fun way to start the day with the mayors of Agawam and West Springfield.

The event will feature updates from both mayors and questions can be submitted to robin@westoftheriverchamber.com for a Q&A part of the event.

Go to the West of the River's website to register for the breakfast.

Exhibit from Rick's Place at the APL

AGAWAM — Agawam Public Library is honored to once again welcome pieces from Rick's Place in the main floor gallery walls and cases. The exhibit is titled "Colors of Grief: Shades of Love and Loss."

Originally created in recognition of Children's Grief Awareness Month and displayed at the William Blizard Gallery at Springfield College, this exhibit continues its journey by highlighting the ways love endures beyond loss. Through artwork created by children, teens, and adults participating in Rick's Place grief support programs, the display explores themes of love, remembrance, connection, and the ongoing bonds we carry with those who have died.

February is often associated with love and relationships, and this exhibit invites viewers to consider love in its many forms - including the love that remains after a death. The artwork reflects how grief is not only about what was lost, but also about what continues: memories, traditions, and meaningful connections that shape our lives moving forward.

The exhibit will also feature a curated selection of children's and adult grief-related books, offering visitors additional opportunities for reflection, learning, and support.

Rick's Place is a nonprofit organization based in Wilbraham that provides free peer grief support programs for children, teens, and families grieving the

death of a parent, caregiver, or sibling. Programs are offered at no cost and create space for connection, understanding, and hope. More information is available at ricksplace.org or call (413) 279-2010.

Visitors are welcomed to explore these art exhibits throughout February during the regular hours of the library.

The library will be closed Feb. 16 for Presidents Day. Any questions about the exhibits can be routed to the Information Desk at 413-789-1550 x4. Please contact Adult Services Library Associate, Erica LeFebvre at (413) 789-1550 x8858 or elefebvre@agawamlibrary.org if you are interested in displaying artwork at the library.

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- Hampden County Registry of Deeds: Book 20566, Page 409 •

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COLLEGE NEWS

Salve Regina University announces Fall 2025 Dean's List

NEWPORT, RI – The following students were named to the Dean's List during the fall 2025 academic semester at Salve Regina University. To qualify for the Dean's List, students must earn a semester grade point average of 3.6 for full-time students completing at least 12 graded credits, or a semester grade point average of 3.8 for part-time students completing at least six credits.

- Hailey Goulet of Feeding Hills
- Colby Mikuszewski of Agawam
- Madison Oyler of Agawam

Durand named to Dean's List at Plymouth State University

PLYMOUTH, NH – Ally Durand of Agawam, MA, has been named to the Plymouth State University Dean's List for the Fall 2025 semester. To be named to the Dean's List, a student must achieve a grade point average between 3.5 and 3.69 for the Fall 2025 term, be a matriculated student with at least 12 credits, at least nine of which must confer grade points at the time the list is finalized. Durand is majoring in Psychology at Plymouth State.

Local students named to WNEU Fall 2025 President's List

SPRINGFIELD – Western New England University (WNE) takes immense pride in recognizing the outstanding academic achievements of nearly 600 students who have been named to the President's List for the Fall 2025 semester. Students are named to the President's List for achieving a semester grade point average of 3.80 or higher.

Athena Trench of Agawam has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Vincent Martin of Feeding Hills has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Brooke Rising of Feeding Hills has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Livia Gavelis of Agawam has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Nolan Chamberland of Agawam has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Colin Smith of Agawam has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Ryan Stairs of Feeding Hills has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Tessa Ebreo of Agawam has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Frank Decaro of Feeding Hills has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Emily Livchin of Agawam has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Ilya Shlemanov of Feeding Hills has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Brianna Manes of Feeding Hills has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

Michael Sibilia of Feeding Hills has been named to Western New England University's President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

WNEU announces Fall Dean's List

SPRINGFIELD – Western New England University is proud to announce the outstanding academic achievements of nearly 800 students named to the Fall 2025 semester Dean's List including:

- Antonio Larocque of Agawam, MA
- Evan Danek of Agawam, MA
- Nathan Labonte of Agawam, MA
- Chris Johnson of Feeding Hills, MA
- Alexandra Seibert of Agawam, MA
- Antoine Poulin of Agawam, MA
- Sophia Longo of Agawam, MA
- Kaan Alkan of Agawam, MA
- Lauren La of Agawam, MA
- Trey Theriaque of Agawam, MA
- Dennis Nesen of Feeding Hills, MA
- Lucas Ritson of Feeding Hills, MA
- Alexandra Fillion of Agawam, MA
- Christina Gioscia of Agawam, MA
- Jordan Nuzzolilli of Feeding Hills, MA
- Camden Lanier of Agawam, MA
- April Rider of Feeding Hills, MA
- Ava Fitzgerald of Feeding Hills, MA
- Victoria Cuello of Agawam, MA
- Michael Elias of Agawam, MA

Mudrenko named to WPI Fall 2025 Dean's List

WORCESTER – Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) has announced that Feeding Hills, resident Maximilian Mudrenko, a member of the class of 2029 majoring in Mechanical Engineering, was named to the university's Dean's List for academic excellence for the fall 2025 semester.

Local students make AIC Fall 2025 Dean's List

SPRINGFIELD – American International College (AIC) in Springfield, MA, is proud to announce that 489 students have earned a place on the Dean's List for the fall 2025 semester. These full-time students have attained GPAs ranging from 3.3 to 4.0. AIC applauds the dedication and achievements of these enterprising students.

- Joe Liquori of Feeding Hills
- Mia Wood of Agawam

APL fun activities offers for kids, teens



AGAWAM – Our Winter Reading Challenge has begun, but it's not too late to join and earn raffle tickets to enter to win prizes! The Winter Reading Challenge goes through Feb. 21. The last day to enter to try to win prizes is Saturday, Feb. 21. Track your reading, and earn your raffle tickets at agawamlibrary.beanstack.org. We are also challenging the community to log a combined total of 1,500 hours of reading. So far we've logged a cumulative 154 hours. We need everyone to work together to meet this goal.

During the winter months, any closings or late openings will be reported to local TV stations 22 and 40, as well as their websites. Inclement weather closings or delays will also be posted on our social media platforms. If you're unsure, call ahead at 413-789-1550 ext. 3.

Below is an alphabetical list of programs and activities for February. Some activities require registration. To register go to agawamlibrary.org or call 413-789-1550 ext. 3.

Art and Stories - For ages 3 – 5
Tuesday, Feb. 17 at 9:30 a.m. - Drop-in.

Join us for a short story time followed by an art project. We will explore simple art concepts and experiment with materials. Please wear clothing that can get messy!

Baby Story Time - For birth – 18 mo.
Thurs. Feb. 19 at 9:30 a.m. - Drop-in.

Join us as we learn a little American Sign Language, read stories, sing, & play together.

Chip Challenge - For grades 3-4
Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 6 p.m. - Registration is required

Which chip reigns supreme? Come participate in a chip taste test challenge to determine the best flavor.

Chip Challenge - For grades 5-6
Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 7 p.m. - Registration is required

Which chip reigns supreme? Come participate in a chip taste test challenge to determine the best flavor!

Family Take and Make Crafts - For all ages
First Day of the Week and Thursdays - While supplies last - Drop-in and pick up.

A new Take and Make craft will be available the first day of each week and again on Thursdays. Corgi Heart Balloon Craft Feb. 17 and 19: Chinese Paper Lanterns Feb. 23 and 26: Movable Horse Puppet

Grow, Play, and Learn - This program is provided by Pathways for Parents. Wednesdays & Fridays Ages 0-2 at 9:30 am Ages 3-5 at 10:30 am - Drop-in.

Stories, songs and skill building, led by an Early Childhood Developmental trained staff member, guiding caregivers in strengthening interactions with their child.

Music with Mr. Liam - All Ages
Saturday, Feb. 21 at 9:30 a.m. - Registration is required

Join us for an energetic show filled with drums, the ukulele, puppets, and comedy as Mr. Liam (Liam Hurley) plays old favorites & silly parodies. This program is provided by Pathways for Parents.

Open Lego Building - For grades 1-4
Tuesday, Feb. 24 at 4:30 p.m. - Registration is required

Show off your Lego building skills! Use Legos to build something awesome. Creations will be put on display in the Children's Room.

Pre-K Pals - For ages 2 - 5
Mondays in February at 11 a.m. - Registration is required

There will be no class on Monday, Feb. 16. Each week, we will focus on an area of development and provide fun activities to support your child to learn through play. This program is provided by Pathways for Parents.

Special Saturday Drop-In Craft: Snail Craft - For All Ages
Saturday, Feb. 28 All Day - While supplies last - Drop-in & pick up.

Kids can build the snail's body and decorate its purple shell with brightly colored hearts.

Tea Party Story Time - For grades K-2
Wednesday, Feb. 25 at 6 p.m. - Registration is required

Come dressed to impress for our tea party! We'll have stories, songs, a craft and light refreshments! (Rescheduled from January)

Teen After-School Drop-In - For grades 9-12
Tuesday, Feb. 24 from 2 to 3 p.m.

Stop by the library after school and visit the Activity Room. Play our Nintendo

Switch, try out the air hockey table, eat snacks, or just hang out! No registration necessary. There is no Drop-In on Feb. 17

Teen Dungeons and Dragons - For grades 7-12
Thursdays, Feb. 12, 6 to 8 p.m., Activity Room Grades 7-12 Registration Required

Stretch your creativity as you journey through a magical world full of beauty and danger! Join Dungeon Master Anna for 4 sessions of dice-rolling, roleplaying, and imaginative adventuring. No D&D experience? No problem. This is a beginner friendly program. Feel free to bring your own (level 3) character sheet with you to the session, or use of the pre-rolled versions that will be available when we meet. Register once for all 4 sessions.

Teen Polar Bear Scavenger Hunt - For grades 7-12
Monday, Feb. 2 - Saturday, Feb. 14 Grades 7-12

Complete the scavenger hunt in the Teen Space and enter a raffle for a chance to win a cozy throw blanket.

Teen Take and Make Craft - For grades 7-12
Available now.

Grades 7-12 Stop by the Teen Space to pick up a Take and Make Craft kit. They'll be available until we run out of supplies. No registration necessary

Teen Trivia Thursdays - For grades 7-12
February 12, and 26 from 2 to 3 p.m.

Visit the Teen Space and answer a trivia question to get a small prize. There is no Trivia on Feb. 19.

For more information about any of these programs, or to register, go to agawamlibrary.org, or call 413-789-1550 ext. 3. We hope to see you soon at the library.

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 Drewnowski call/text 860-462-7273 or email -hdrew2452@gmail.com.

AHS Class of 1970 planning fall reunion

AGAWAM – Agawam High School Class of 1970 will be holding its class reunion in the fall. We are looking for our classmates. Please contact one of the committee members listed below with your name and email address. Thank you

and hope to see you all soon. Gale Sullivan: GaleP.Sullivan@verizon.net Holly Cloran: PohnerHolly@gmail.com Scott Macey: mace1459@comcast.net Gail Donais: GCDonais@cox.net Shirley Porter: ShirleyPorter525@gmail.com

Smith Scholarship applications now being accepted

WESTFIELD – The Horace Smith Fund will be awarding \$317,000 in scholarships and fellowships to residents of Hampden County, who have also graduated from an eligible high school or private school. This year 21 scholarships, four fellowships and one William R. Rooney Award for students with special needs will be presented to recipients at the June 18 Awards Night ceremony at Storowton Carriage House

in West Springfield. Scholarships are offered not only to graduating high school seniors but also to students already in college or those wishing to return to college. Scholarships of \$12,000 are distributed as \$3,000 annually and renewable each year until graduation. Fellowship awards of \$15,000 are distributed as \$7,500 annually and renewable for one additional year to students pursuing a full-

time graduate degree. Students must maintain at least a B average to renew.

Recipients are selected on a variety of criteria, including academic records, merit, and financial need. Of great importance is a personal written account of why the student feels deserving of financial assistance. Applicants must submit their transcripts and, if applicable, college entrance exam scores or graduate degree specific

tests, and three letters of recommendation.

Completed applications must be received either electronically or be mailed to The Horace Smith Fund at 16 Union Avenue, Suite 2K, Westfield, MA 01085 no later than March 15, 2026. Applications are available at local high school guidance offices, college financial aid offices, and on-line at www.HoraceSmithFund.org or by phoning (413) 739-4222.

Public Auction

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17TH at 11:00 A.M.

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★ (16) UNIT ★
TWO STORY
APARTMENT BUILDING
"CLOSE PROXIMITY TO ALL AMENITIES"

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Public Auction

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18TH at 11:00 A.M.

MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE

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SINGLE STORY
APARTMENT BUILDING
WITH ON-SITE PARKING FOR ±10 VEHICLES

49 North Street AGAWAM, MASSACHUSETTS
To Be Sold On The Premises

Features:

- (8) Unit Apartment Building • ±13,939 S/F (0.32 Acres) Of Land •
- (6) One Bedroom Units w/ Bedroom, Living Room, Kitchen & Bath •
- (2) Two Bedroom Units w/ (2) Bedrooms, Living Room, Kitchen & Bath •
- All Units w/ Electric Heat • Slab Foundation • Wood Shingle Exterior •
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Opinion

Letters to the Editor

Councilor misunderstands senate bill

Dear Editor:

I am writing regarding the recent vote of the Town Council in favor of Councilor George Bitzas' resolution to oppose two Massachusetts Senate bills, S. 2404 and S. 2246, which he stated "propose the implementation of mileage-based taxes."

These two pieces of legislation have very different objectives, and neither of them propose the implementation of taxes. In fact, the words "mileage" and "tax" do not even appear in Senate 2246.

Senate 2404 is titled "An Act to explore alternative funding sources to ensure safe and reliable transportation." This bill would address declining transportation revenue by establishing a pilot program to study a vehicle mileage tax as an alternative to the current fuel tax.

Massachusetts' fuel tax revenue is primarily used to fund the construction and maintenance of state highways, bridges, and local roads. At the time of its inception in 1929, there was a direct correlation between automobile fuel consumption and automobile road usage, so it was a fair way to raise revenue - the more you use the roads, the more you pay for their upkeep. But today, raising revenue by taxing fuel is becoming a losing proposition.

As drivers move to electric-powered vehicles (EVs), less fuel is sold and less tax revenue is collected. The Commonwealth currently has over 140,000 registered EVs; well over 35,000 were added in 2024 alone. Since they do not burn fuel, every one of these vehicles is using the roads without paying for them. Literally, a free ride (the Mass. Pike and a few Boston-area tolled facilities excepted).

Mr. Bitzas' argument that a mileage tax would unfairly burden people "...regardless of income level, geographic necessity, or lack of transportation alternatives." simply does not hold up. Such people are already "burdened" by the fuel tax. The proposal at issue is exchanging an unfair method of raising revenue for a fair one. I cannot understand why anyone would be against such a study.

Bill Schoenborn

Support appreciated for backing resolution

Dear Editor,

I would like to publicly thank my colleagues on the Agawam City Council who voted in support of my resolutions opposing Senate Bill No. 2246 and Senate Bill No. 2404, which propose the imposition of mileage-based taxes in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

I extend my sincere appreciation to City Council President Anthony Russo, Vice President Anthony Suffriti, and Councilors Edward Borgatti, Cecilia Calabrese, Peter McNair, Dino Mercadante, and Robert Rossi for standing with the residents of Agawam and Western Massachusetts.

Their support reflects a shared understanding that mileage-based taxes would

place an unfair and disproportionate financial burden on residents who rely heavily on personal vehicles for work, medical care, family responsibilities, religious obligations, and daily necessities. In communities like ours, where public transportation options are limited, driving is not a choice—it is a necessity.

By supporting these resolutions, my fellow councilors demonstrated thoughtful leadership and a strong commitment to protecting our residents from policies that would increase the cost of living and penalize those who must travel longer distances simply to maintain their livelihoods and family connections.

George Bitzas



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Guest Column

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters
By Russell Gloor

Why is my Social Security Retirement benefit so small?

Dear Rusty:

Can you help me understand?

I have paid into Social Security since I started working in 1978. I did have a lot of tax deductions, but I don't understand why I only receive \$350 a month from Social Security.

Signed: Befuddled Senior

1-800-772-1213 to request an "Earnings Statement" be sent to you. That statement will show your lifetime earnings by year, the 35 highest of which were used to calculate your PIA (your Social Security benefit at your FRA). Generally, your Social Security FRA benefit will be about 40% or less of your average indexed monthly earnings.

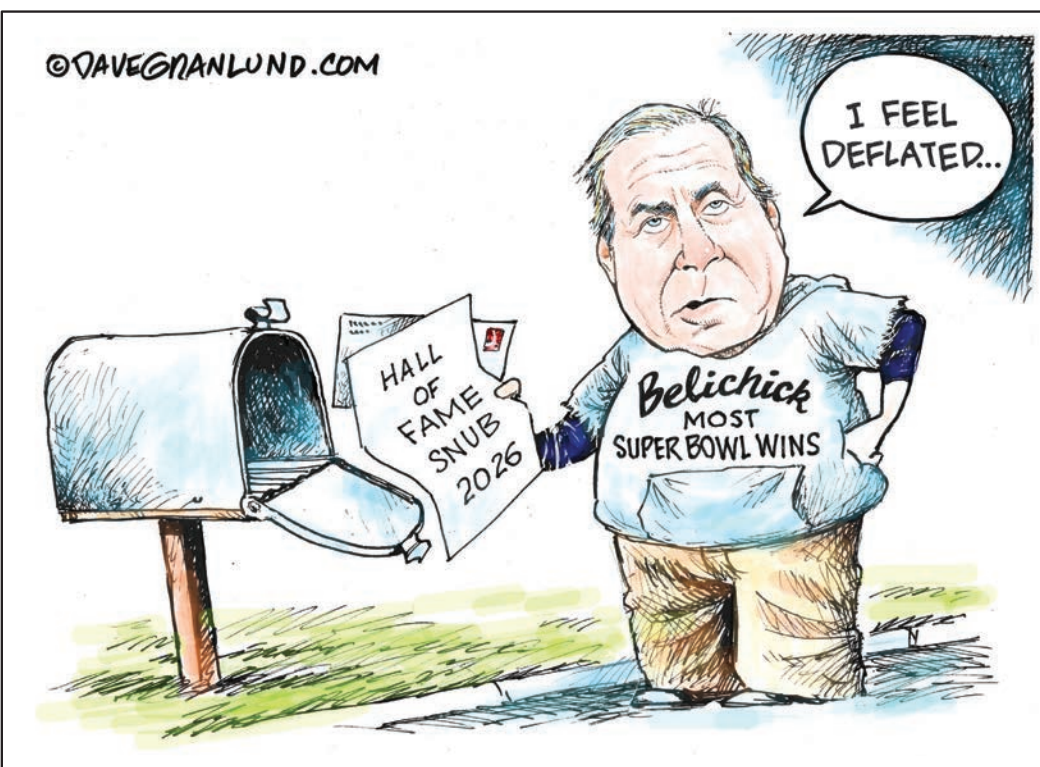
So, to recap, your SS retirement benefit isn't based on your contributions to the program; it's based on your average monthly lifetime earnings. If you had less than 35 years contributing to the program, SS would still use 35 years in the benefit formula by using zero dollars in earnings for some number of years, which would result in a smaller AIME.

Thus, if you claimed before your full retirement age of 67, your SS benefit was reduced because you claimed early. And if you had less than 35 years of SS-covered employment, your AIME was less, resulting in a smaller PIA. And that is likely why your monthly Social Security retirement benefit is low.

One other thought to consider: if you are married and your spouse's monthly SS benefit is considerably more than yours (e.g., more than twice as much as yours), you may want to explore your options for spouse benefits.

I hope this explains how your SS benefit is calculated, but if you still question your monthly SS retirement amount, I suggest you first obtain your "Earnings Statement" to review the lifetime earnings SS has on file for you. If there are any discrepancies in your Social Security's earnings record, there are correction remedies available to you. If that is the case, please feel free to contact us again for more information.

The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental



Guest Column

Onions continued

This morning, after reading last week's column, my mom commented, "Boy, I didn't realize onions are so challenging to grow."

Oh no, I truly hope that the column did not convey that message. I've been growing onions for years, and find them no more challenging than any other vegetable that you start indoors.

I hope I didn't discourage anyone. In fact, I hope just the opposite happened, whereby everyone purchased some seed to give

growing onions a whirl. Read on to learn more from where we left off last week.

Growing on
How does one achieve lots of top growth so that by seasons' end a big bulb will result? Provide sufficient moisture and nitrogen, and lots of it, but only early in the gardening season.

Amend a 100 square foot area with a bushel of aged manure or finished compost prior to planting, then top dress when plants are six-eight inches high and again for the last time three weeks later. Fish emulsion is a great foliar fertilizer for this purpose.

Because onions have limited top growth and are relatively shallow rooted, it makes it hard for them to compete with more aggressive

GARDEN | page 5

On Dec. 20, compilers at the Athol Christmas Bird Count recorded a total of 58 species including a Gadwall, a first time for this species during a Christmas count.

Male Gadwall have grayish-brown heads, sometimes showing cinnamon on the forehead and faint purplish iridescence on the crown. Females resemble female mallards, but they have a thinner, darker bill.

Gadwall nest in tall vegetation near water and show a preference for nesting on islands. Their choice of nesting location gives them some protection from predators. Female Gadwall produce an egg a day and lay a clutch of seven to 12 eggs. To meet their demand for protein during this stressful time, female Gadwall eat more invertebrates than males during this period in addition to using reserves of nutrients they've stored in their bodies during the winter. Their winter habitat is

in my BACKYARD
By Ellenor Downer

Male gadwall

fresh and brackish wetlands with abundant aquatic vegetation on which they primarily forage. Gadwall often snatch food from diving ducks as they surface. Gadwall number have increased

in North America since the 1980s. This is partly because of conservation of their habitat, wetlands and adjacent uplands.

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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Guest Column



your health

By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

We seem to love Valentine's Day. Americans are expected to spend \$27.7 billion on Valentine's Day this year, a tad more than last year, according to Capital One Shopping. The statistic I find most interesting is that 34% of that spending - \$9.5 billion - will be for gifts that are ultimately unwanted by their recipients. So today, I will propose some Valentine's Day ideas that cost nothing and may well be more meaningful than candy, flowers or sappy cards. Have a heart, and try one of these "gifts" for yourself or a loved one.

Volunteer: Volunteering contributes to your community and to your own well-being. Research has found that giving of yourself reduces stress and blood pressure; promotes physical activity; helps cultivate emotional well-being; and promotes mindfulness and an attitude of gratitude. You get as much as you give, in other words. Find opportunities near you at idealist.org or search "volunteer opportunities near me" on your web browser. Listen: Research shows that two out of every five people who have had a major cardiac episode experience symptoms of clinical depression, according to Northwestern University Medicine. The American Heart Association says 33% of patients who have had a heart attack experience depression. The combination of depression and cardiac disease can lead to poor outcomes. If a friend or loved one is diagnosed with heart disease or has a heart attack, one of the kindest things you can do is listen carefully to them. If you detect signs of depression, you can suggest - gently - that they consider being screened by their doctor. Learn hands-only CPR: Especially since the pandemic, people are hesitant to share germs with a stranger, and I can't blame them. The good news is that compression-only CPR - or hands-only CPR - is the preferred form of cardiopulmonary resuscitation. While someone dials 911, bystanders can perform quick, strong compressions in the center of the chest to the rhythm of "Stayin' Alive," the BeeGees song, until first responders can arrive. If started immediately,

Have a heart: Patient advocate offers tips for Valentine's Day

hands-only CPR has been shown to double or even triple a person's chance of survival. CPR classes are widely offered by the Red Cross and American Heart Association, as well as at YMCAs and recreation centers. Take part in a clinical trial: This is a different form of volunteerism. Clinical trials offer an opportunity to help researchers find better ways of preventing and treating diseases, improving health for all. Without clinical trial volunteers, many of the medicines and scientific discoveries we enjoy today wouldn't exist. At any given time, there are tens of thousands clinical trials taking place around the country and virtually. WGC CenterWatch (centerwatch.com) lets you browse study topics and find clinical trials near you. Celebrate friendship: I've written before about the importance of social relationships, and friendships in particular, in keeping our spirits up, our hearts full and our brains working.

So whether or not you have a special someone to celebrate Valentine's Day with this year, take time for alternate observances, such as Galentine's Day or its gender-neutral variation, Palentine's Day. They fall, technically, on February 13 - but you can pick any day in February to celebrate friendships, check up on each other's health and well-being, share healthful recipes and swap health and fitness tips. Maybe share a glass of wine, too. Thank a nurse: Nursing is my life's work, formerly as a critical care nurse and now as a patient advocate who trains nurses to become advocates. I know how critical nursing is to good patient outcomes. According to the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, though, more than 138,000 nurses have left the workforce since 2022 and almost 40% intend to leave by 2029. Health-care consumers may not be able to do much about working conditions, pay and administrative problems, but we can help to make nurses' lives better. When

you're in the hospital or doctor's office, thank your nurses for their time and care. You can also show your appreciation by nominating a nurse for the DAISY Award, a program that celebrates and recognizes nurses by collecting nominations from patients, families and co-workers. Learn more at daisyfoundation.org. Valentine's Day began as a saint's feast day and now celebrates all forms of relationships. Make it yours. Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, R.N., a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. A Monson, MA resident, she is the author of "How to Be a Healthcare Advocate for Yourself & Your Loved Ones" and her new book, "Advocating Well: Strategies for Finding Strength and Understanding in Health Care," available at Amazon.com. Contact her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com to set up a free phone consultation.

necessary and watering can be cut back some. Harvesting In early fall your onion tops will begin to yellow and bend at the necks. As mentioned earlier, reduced daylight has signaled the plant to go into dormancy. When half have bent, bend the rest and allow them to remain in the garden just a few more days. If no rain is in the forecast, pull them up and lay them on edge in place, turning on occasion. This will begin the curing process. Should rain threaten, they can easily be protected with a tarp or moved under cover. After three days to a week of sunshine it is time to move them to an airy, dry location such as a shed to cure for an additional two-three weeks. Should this time frame include lots of rain or humidity,

GARDEN ■ from page 4

sive plants for moisture and nutrients. For that reason, be sure to address enemy #1: weeds! I have found that a hand held circle hoe is great for getting into the narrow space between plants as well as within the rows. Perform this task once or twice a week and you will be weed-free all summer. You can also apply grass clippings or chopped up leaves as mulch. It will reduce weeds and conserve moisture, and, as it breaks down add valuable organic matter to the soil. As the summer solstice draws near, the need for nitrogen drops as the bulb switches from top growth to bulbing up. From this point on, no additional fertilizer is

sometimes a household fan can help the drying process along. Dry onions will definitely be the best for long term storage. Storage You have a good idea that your onions are ready for storage when the necks have withered away and the outer skin is dry and starts to slip. Nineteenth century gardeners would have braided and hung them in the root cellar, where cool and dry conditions would, fingers crossed, keep them fit for use as needed into the spring months. Onion braids have modern day appeal- they look pretty and it is easy to simply tug the perfect size onion from the braid as you need it. The key to success is to attach twine or string to at least one of the braiding strands - this

will give your braid strength, not to mention a way of hanging it up. We can also store onions in mesh bags or old hosiery in a household location that remains close to freezing and relatively dry. My unheated mudroom works great. Here simply cut the tops to one inch prior to bagging up. When you are going through them to cut, or braid, be sure to separate out those with double bulbs, as well as those whose necks remain thick; neither will be good keepers and should be used first. This is also a great time to think about good traits and the prospect of saving some of your best onions for seed production. Save the seeds Saving the seeds of your open-pollinated, non-hybrid onions is the next frontier

for allium aficionados. In the north, we employ what is called the "bulb to seed" method. Our bulbs are harvested normally and stored over the winter, and when the ground is ready for planting, three or four of your best onions are replanted three inches apart. Soon a flower stalk will form. It can get quite tall (three-five feet!) so place a stake for support early on and tie it off as you need to. After the flower head has formed be on watch for the black seeds to ripen and loosen up- you want to catch them before they shatter. This can be accomplished by clipping a few sections of the head at a time. Dry in an airy spot for a few days before storing in paper envelopes in a cool, dry location for use the follow-

ing spring. Be advised that to avoid cross pollination, only one variety of onion can be in flower at a time; it is fine, however, to have first year onions in the garden. Onion seeds are viable for one-two years. Now that you know the ins and outs of onion culture, embrace the challenge and try growing onions from seed this year. Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 34 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.

returned to the same nesting box in my front yard. Quizzically, Sunshine leaned slightly forward. He was amazingly close." "It was beautiful, glorious to see his blue rust colored body outlined by a background of white snow still clinging to frozen lilacs and tall trees. The sight of this sent ripples of love, that became currents of joy, to course through me." "I felt a smile stretch a mile wide across my whole being. It was like being visited by a long absent friend. Within minutes this made me get up and fill another feeder with dried mealworms because bluebirds aren't seed eaters like many of the other birds that seek nourishment here. Like my breath, the mealworms disappeared into a well of silence. A contented peaceful silence that then took flight." Evening grosbeaks A Cummington resident sent a photo of evening grosbeaks at her feeder. She said they are part of a flock that come to visit the feeders often. People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005. The Palmer office has a new phone system and I will be getting an extension where messages may be left. I will publish the number as soon as it is set up.

BIRDS ■ from page 4

The oldest known Gadwall was a male, and at least 19 years, 6 months old. He was banded in Saskatchewan in 1962 and shot during hunting season in Louisiana in 1981. Christmas Bird Count The National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Counts take place within a 22-day period, there are many state count circles and volunteers must be available. Despite snowy weather, compiler Jon Skinner said of the Groton-Ayer count on Dec. 14, "I was surprised that we were able to scratch our way to 81 species in such snowy conditions. It has to be a testament to the relentless nature of both our team and the birds." Two new species were added 13 black vultures soaring over Lancaster and a killdeer at Devens. Some of the other highlights were evening grosbeak in both Harvard and Groton, red crossbills in Townsend, Lapland longspur at Fitchburg Airport and in Ayer, chestnut-collared longspur at Fitchburg Airport, American kestrel in Groton, two Baltimore orioles in Groton, eastern Phoebe in Shirley, redpoll in Lancaster and a long-eared owl in Devens. Species seen three days before or after the actual count date and noted as such were chipping sparrow, brown-headed cowbird, Peregrine falcon and sandhill crane.



Bluebird

I received an email on Jan. 26 from Jeffrey Landry. He had a visit from a bluebird on Friday, Jan. 23. He thought it was either the male parent or one of its offspring from a previous summer. He said, "For several years I have called him, 'Sunshine' and he arrived at my feeder on a bright beautiful winter's afternoon and this uncalled for visit was icing on my day's cake." He offered to share this bluebird story. He said, "I was sitting on my meditation cushion yesterday watching my breath emerge from a deep silence and then gently return back into it. There was no counting, no manipulation, only watching, only flow. After some time had passed, I opened my eyes because I felt I was being closely watched." "I have a bird feeder right outside of my window and sure enough a male bluebird or one of his offspring from a previous summer, was perched and staring directly at me. Two summers ago I named the parent bluebird, 'Sunshine' and last May he

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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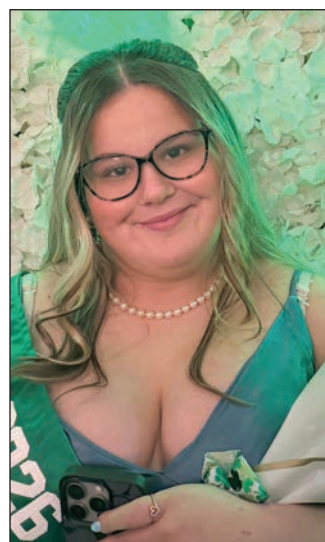
- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Brezed through
 - 5. Consumer protection agency
 - 8. Criminal syndicate
 - 11. Moves back from
 - 13. Satisfaction
 - 14. Feel concern or interest
 - 15. Monetary units
 - 16. Congressman (abbr.)
 - 17. Israeli city
 - 18. Restaurants
 - 20. 2,000 lbs.
 - 21. Grandmother
 - 22. North, South and Central
 - 25. In an early way
 - 30. Foes
 - 31. Social networking platform
 - 32. Early term for basketball player
 - 33. Another name for
- CLUES DOWN**
- 27. Records electric currents generated by the brain
 - 28. Woman (French)
 - 29. Short route aircraft
 - 34. Pitching statistic
 - 35. Pointed end of a pen
 - 36. Popular sports league
 - 37. Body part
 - 39. Inoffensive
 - 40. Yellowish cotton cloth
 - 41. Feline
 - 42. Does not tell the truth
 - 44. Seduced
 - 45. Spiritual leader
 - 46. Abba __, Israeli politician
 - 47. Repair
 - 48. Olive genus
 - 51. Swiss river
 - 52. Prejudice
 - 53. C. European river
 - 54. Keep under control
 - 58. Father

SECURITY ■ from page 4
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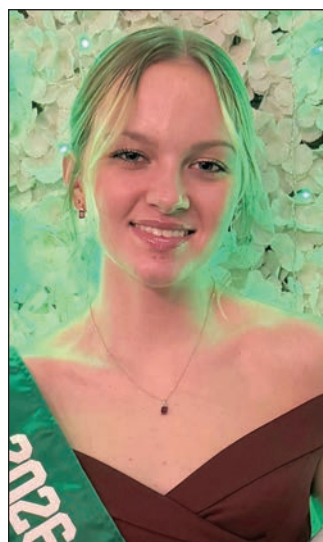
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Ava Levesque



Court member
Zoie Leopardi



Court member
Samantha Machos



Court member
Hannah Newsome



Court member
Summer Smith



Court member
Madelynn Szemela

COLLEEN ■ from page 1

She is currently attending Our Lady of the Elms College and is a graduate of University of Florida as a psychology and Pre-Med major. She is a graduate of Agawam High School. During her time at the University, she has taken a variety of behavioral and psychology classes. She is a four-time Scholastic All American, a member of the USA National Team, and a member of the

2022 FINA World Championships. Summer works as an Ocular Technician at New England Retina Consultants with hopes to be a Retinal Surgeon.

Newsome is still attending Agawam High School and is a senior. She is part of multiple National Honor Societies, and is a captain of the varsity swimming and diving team. She recently represented Agawam at the Massachusetts Celebration of National Girls and Women in Sports Day

2025. She works at the Springfield Country Club as a Head Lifeguard and Swim Coach. After high school, Hannah plans on attending a four year university or college and swim at the collegiate level.

Szemela is currently a senior at St. Mary's High School where she is taking College Prep courses, is an Honor Roll Student and is dual enrolled at Elms College. After high school, Maddie plans on obtaining a degree in animal

science with ambition to own her own business in Equine Rehabilitation Therapy. Maddie is part of the Varsity Basketball Team and is a competitive Equestrian Rider. She has worked with the Epilepsy foundation and has been an Irish Step Dancer.

Machos is a senior at Agawam High School where she is taking honors courses in History, Chemistry and AP Language. After high school, Sam plans on majoring in

criminology and psychology with a dream of going into the FBI. She received the 2025 Certificate of Excellence in Forensics. She is a member of the Peer Leadership club, Chiefs and Honor Roll.

Leopardi is currently a student at Westfield High School taking courses in Anatomy, Physiology, Math, English and History. After high school, Zoie plans on working towards her nursing degree to become a nurse in the NICU or Pediat-

rics. She is a varsity cheerleading team member and won the Winter 2024 Award for most improved cheerleader. She currently works at McDonalds and has volunteered with Wreaths Across America and open pantries.

Over the next several weeks, the court will be attending multiple events leading up to the Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade, where they will represent the town atop a float.

Irish Night on 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.

The Hibernians wish a Happy St. Patrick's Day to all.

Women artists wanted for muesum exhibit

HOLYOKE – Wistariahurst Museum is seeking artist submissions for the Fourth Annual Women's History Month juried art showcase for the month of March. This year, the theme is women's labor and community.

"Liberty and Labor" is an exhibit that corresponds with Massachusetts' 250th anniversary and Liberty and the Learning initiative. This exhibit urges artists to consider the efforts women have made throughout history through labor and commu-

nity building. Historically, Women's labor has been undervalued and overlooked. Oftentimes, the work women have done in areas such as homemaking, community building, and parenting, has not even been viewed as work. "Liberty and Labor" aims to highlight these efforts, and others, that showcase the hard work and dedication of women throughout history.

All mediums are welcome for submission. Submissions are open to anyone

who identifies as a woman and non-binary artists of any age. Artists are welcome to submit 3-4 pieces, with high-quality images. Artists can submit their work through the online submission form linked below. Submissions are being accepted through Feb. 10.

Wistariahurst is an artist-friendly space that encourages creativity and supports the growth of this region's artists. All questions are welcome and encouraged. Up to five artists will

be selected as featured artists and will be awarded a \$100 stipend. This program is funded in part by a grant from the Holyoke Local Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

Submissions are accepted through the submission form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLS-fj4Hj4eiW0EXmRZnC-d_23WGA8WQAW-6otMFLYCFXzH5BUNew/view-form?usp=publish-editor

Holyoke Community College announces Black History Month events

HOLYOKE — Holyoke Community College is celebrating Black History Month in February with a series of events highlighting this year's national theme: "A Century of Black History Commemorations."

Black History Month events at HCC will continue on Wednesday, Feb. 18, with a Harambee Celebration from 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

in the HCC Campus Center. Harambee is a Swahili word that means "pull together" or "unite." It's a celebratory event that honors the contributions and achievements of Black people. HCC's event will feature food, music, as well as an open mic session.

On Thursday, Feb. 19, HCC's ALANA, El Centro, and SAMP programs will host a free screening of the

2017 Academy-Award winning movie Moonlight beginning a 1:30 p.m. in Room 301 of the Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development. Moonlight, which won three Oscars including Best Picture, follows a young African American man as he grapples with his identity, sexuality, and burgeoning adulthood.

On Tuesday, Feb. 22,

HCC's ALANA Men in Motion program is setting up an on-campus barbershop that will combine free professional haircuts for students with honest dialogue about being success in college and beyond as a man of color in today's society. "Cuts, Confidence, and Collee" runs from 1-4 p.m. in Room 233 of the Frost Building. The haircuts are being provided

by Jose Dones, owner of the ParlorFaded Company barbershop in Holyoke.

HCC will close out its Black History Month calendar on Wednesday, Feb. 25, from 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., with "Lift Our Voices," a presentation by Vanessa Ford, associate director of the Community Music School of Springfield, who will discuss defining oneself and

owning your story. In addition, HCC's Marieb Adult Learner Success Center will host Black History Month-themed book readings, accompanied by milk and cookies, in the Parent Learning Center (Frost 269) for student parents and their children, on Wednesday, Feb. 11, at 10 a.m., and Monday, Feb. 23, at 11 a.m.

HCC and NEPM co-hosting Feb. 18 free lunchtime talk on philanthropy

HOLYOKE – Holyoke attorney Gina Barry, a 1994 graduate of Holyoke Community College and an estate planning specialist, will present "Pro Tips for Savvy Philanthropy" during a complimentary lunch at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute on Wednesday, Feb. 18.

The lunch, part of a series of "Inspired Giving" events hosted by Holyoke Community College, will run from noon to 1:30 p.m. at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, 164 Race St., Holyoke. The lunch is free and open to the public, but advanced registration is required as seats are limited.

The event is being co-hosted by New England

Public Media, the local affiliate of National Public Radio, which saw its federal funding eliminated last year. NEPM Executive Editor Elizabeth Román, a 2003 graduate of HCC, will speak about the impact of community journalism and her journey from HCC to her current role.

HCC President George Timmons will provide welcome remarks.

Barry, chair of the Estate Planning and Elder Law Department of Bacon Wilson, P.C., will break down what donors should know about the shifting tax landscape.

"Many people I talk to aren't aware that recent changes to the tax code might affect their tax returns this

year," said John Sieracki, HCC leadership gift officer. "Combining forces with NEPM during these challenging financial times has been a great way to get the message out to our supporters."

Lunch will be prepared and served by students in HCC's culinary arts program.

Parking is available on site and along Race Street.

If the college is closed Feb. 18 due to inclement weather, the program will be moved online, and registrants will be emailed a Zoom link.

To register, please go to hcc.edu/inspired or contact John Sieracki, HCC leadership gift officer, at 413-687-0322 / jsieracki@hcc.edu.

HCC '26-'27 scholarship season open

HOLYOKE — The Holyoke Community College Foundation is now accepting scholarship applications for the 2026-2027 academic year.

The application deadline is Friday, March 13, 2026.

Last year, the HCC Foundation awarded 410 scholarships worth about \$364,000 to 379 incoming, current, and transferring HCC students. Some students received multiple scholarship awards. The average scholarship award is typically around \$900.

Students must be currently enrolled at HCC or have been accepted for the upcoming academic year to be eligible for scholarships.

Applicants only need

to fill out a single online form to be automatically matched with the scholarships they are most qualified to receive. There are scholarships for new students, current students and students transferring to other institutions, scholarships based on financial need, scholarships for students in specific majors, scholarships for residents of certain communities, and scholarships that recognize academic achievement.

To view scholarship opportunities and begin the application process, please go to: www.hcc.edu/scholarships.

The HCC Scholarship Resource Center, on the first floor of the Donahue Building (Room 158), is

open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., to help current and incoming students navigate the process of applying for scholarships.

The HCC Foundation is a 501(c)(3) that works to advance the college's mission, vision, and values. Founded in 1968 as the Friends of Holyoke Community College, in response to a devastating fire that forced the college to rebuild on a new campus, the Foundation now manages assets of more than \$20 million, the largest community college foundation endowment in Massachusetts.

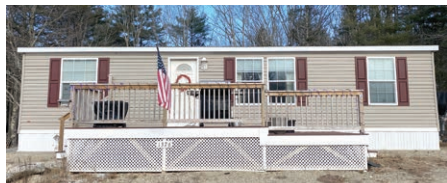
Questions should be directed to the HCC Foundation office at 413-552-2182, or by email to scholarships@hcc.edu.



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SPORTS

Playoff chances could come down to wins or points

CHICOPEE – It's been a tough go recently for the Agawam High School boys basketball team. The Brownies have lost five straight games, including last Monday evening at Chicopee Comprehensive 68-60. In the matchup, Agawam actually led before a Comp comeback gave the Colts a nine-point lead at halftime.

Agawam played stronger in the second half, but could not keep up as Brody Fay scored his 1,000th point late in the game for the Colts, who now have 15 wins for the season and are a lock for both the Western Mass. and state tournaments. The Brownies are 7-10 with one game left in the regular sea-

son. It is not known if Agawam makes the Western Mass. tournament, but it will come down to either winning their final three games and scoring a tournament berth with a .500 record.

Agawam is also ranked No. 33 in Division 2, and could still squeeze into the top 32 even if they are below .500. Comp meanwhile is going strong heading for the tournaments. Fay scored 28 points to lead the Colts while Elijah Kleps scored 14 and Xavier Kleps had 12 points. Agawam was led by their own 1,000-point scorer, Trevor Moynihan with 21 points. Brody Sheehan had 15 points and Gavin Cruz had 11 points.



Dylan Jorgensen sends a pass across the court.



Caeden Roeder heads into the offensive end of the court.



Trevor Moynihan tries to get around an opponent.

Brody Sheehan takes a fade-away jump shot.



Yusuf Ebrahim sends a long pass away.

Brownies offense breaks out against Holyoke

AGAWAM – Last Tuesday evening, Agawam High School girls basketball had one of its best performances of the year in a 51-28 win over visiting Holyoke.

Isabella Laprise led the Brownies with a 15-point night while Sophia Laprise had 13 points and Carly Calabrese chipped in 12 points. Holyoke's Kyra Lippman had nine points while Genesis Rivera turned in seven points.

Agawam is 6-11 while Holyoke fell to 4-13.



Above, Samantha Izzo goes for the layup. Left, Sophia Laprise makes her way down the court.



Maya Gingeruha hits the free throw line.



Madison Georgina heads for the corner.



Phoenix Bond passes out of the paint.



Carly Calabrese takes a free throw.

A new look coming for Western Mass. hockey tournament this year

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WEST SPRINGFIELD – The 2026 Western Massachusetts high school hockey tournament is scheduled to take place from Feb. 16-19.

Six of the seven Berry Division teams will qualify for the Class A tournament.

The Berry Division teams, who are looking to qualify for the Class A tournament, are Westfield, East Longmead-

ow, Greenfield, Minnechaug Regional, Longmeadow, Ludlow, and West Springfield.

The Westfield Bombers are the two-time defending Class A champions. They defeated the Greenfield Green Wave, 7-3, in last year's championship match.

All six of the teams in the Fay-Wright Division will be competing in this year's Class B tournament.

Those six teams are Easthampton, McCann Tech,

Amherst, Taconic, Agawam, and Chicopee High School.

Agawam defeated Taconic, 6-1, in last year's Class B championship match.

The top two teams in Class A & B will automatically advance into the semifinals.

Prior to playing the semifinal round, the top-seeded team in Class A will be facing the second-seeded team in Class B. The top-seeded team in Class B will also play the second-seeded Class A team.

Those games will boost the team's state power rankings.

The other four teams in each of the classes will be playing in the quarterfinals on February 16.

The higher-seeded teams will be hosting the quarterfinal matches.

Any of the quarterfinal games played at the Olympia Ice Center in West Springfield will be held during the daytime. The game times

on rink 1 will be 11am and 1:30pm. The games on rink 2 will be at noontime and 2:30pm.

The losers of the quarterfinals will be playing non-playoff games against each other.

The Class A semifinals are scheduled to be played at Olympia on Feb.17. The start times for those two games will be 11am and 1:30pm.

The Class B semifinals are scheduled for Olympia on Feb.18. The start times for

those two games will also be 11am and 1:30pm.

Both Western Mass. finals will be played on rink 1 at Olympia on Feb.19.

The Class B finals will be held at 5:30 p.m. followed by the Class A final at 8 pm.

The tickets prices for the semifinals and finals are \$8. Tickets are available through GoFan Only.

There is not a different price for students or senior citizens.

Worcester Railers fall to Trois-Rivières Lions in overtime

TROIS-RIVIÈRES, QC — The Worcester Railers HC (21-17-4-1, 47 pts) fell in overtime to the Trois-Rivières Lions (18-20-1-3, 40 pts) in front of a crowd of 2,793 on Saturday, February 7th, with a final score of 2-3 at the Colisée Vidéotron. The Railers will play Trois-Rivières next in Worcester on Friday, February 13th, with a 7:05 p.m. puck drop.

The Lions nabbed the first goal for the afternoon, as Anthony Beauregard (1-0-1) took advantage of the heavy traffic in front of the Railers net. Worcester answered

Trois-Rivières' goal in the third period with two back-to-back goals from Anthony Callin (1-0-1) to tie the game and Ryan Miotto (1-0-1) to take the lead (2-1). Egor Goriunov (1-0-1) claimed the second Lions goal with a slapshot to re-tie the game. This tally pushed the game into overtime. The final goal of the afternoon came from Lions' captain Morgan Adams-Moisan (1-0-1) for a final score of 3-2 in favor of Trois-Rivières.

Trois-Rivières secured the initial lead of the afternoon at 16:47 in the first.

While Worcester saw a power play turned 5-on-3 chance in the midst of the period, the two-and-a-half-minute advantage would go unfulfilled. Worcester then went on the penalty kill and successfully barred the Lions from capitalizing. As the game neared the 17-minute mark, Trois-Rivières bested the Railers amidst ongoing traffic along Parker Gahagen's crease. While Gahagen remained tied up on one side of the net, Anthony Beauregard (9th) played an opportune rebound off of a Railers' skate to score. Shots

on goal were 11-8 in favor of Trois-Rivières. The Railers went 0-for-2 on the power play, while the Lions went 0-for-1.

The Lions held on to their 1-0 lead from the first through the second twenty minutes of action. The Railers received the only power play of the period at the 19-minute mark, as Trois-Rivières' Cédric Deruisseaux headed to the box for slashing. Worcester outshot Trois-Rivières 11-10, while the Lions added another infraction to their count for a total of three.

Worcester's scoreless streak ended in the third period. Anthony Callin (15th) broke the clean slate with a breakaway goal at 4:54. Callin charged the Lions' net, where Lavallière could not stop the momentum and pushed himself over the goal line. Just thirty-nine seconds later, Ryan Miotto (10th) capitalized on an attempted clear of the Lions' net by Charles Martin. Martin pushed the puck with a backhanded pass into the awaiting Miotto for another Railers goal. The Lions tied the match with a one-timer

from Egor Goriunov (2nd) at 16:44. The tally pushed the game into overtime, the third appearance for the Railers in their past four games. Trois-Rivières ended up with the 3-2 OT win, the final goal a tip on the doorstep from captain Morgan Adams-Moisan (8th), the initial shot from Darick Louis-Jean. Final shots were 39 for Trois-Rivières and 25 for Worcester. The Railers and the Lions each earned one penalty in the third, which brought final totals up to two for Worcester and four for Trois-Rivières.

T-Birds suffer loss to Marlies

TORONTO, ON - The Springfield Thunderbirds (16-24-4-2) fell by a final score of 5-1 to the Toronto Marlies (23-15-4-3) on Saturday inside Coca-Cola Coliseum in what proved to be one of the nastiest games of the season.

Simmering tensions boiled over from the opening drop of the puck on this night, a result of an altercation in the clubs' prior meeting on Jan. 23. In that contest, Marshall Rifai of the Marlies fought Springfield's Simon Robertsson and threw multiple punches at a vulnerable Robertsson when he was lying prone on the ice. Robertsson has yet to play in a game since.

On this day, Steve Ott chose to start Kale Kessy for the opening puck drop, and Kessy immediately dropped the mitts with Rifai, which lit the fuse for three separate fights between the foes in the opening 15 seconds, resulting in 37 combined penalty minutes, plus a game misconduct to Toronto defenseman Blake Smith.

Once the dust from the



altercations subsided, the Marlies quickly threw their own punches on the score-sheet, beginning with Vinni Lettieri snapping a shot past Vadim Zherenko on the blocker side just 1:12 into the contest, giving Toronto the 1-0 advantage on a 4-on-4 goal.

Springfield's power play had a tough go to begin the night, failing to connect on a three-minute power play from the remnants of Smith's penalty time. Despite outshooting Toronto 15-5 in the period, the T-Birds' deficit grew as Logan Shaw and Michael Pezzetta each beat Zherenko just 1:22 apart, and with just over five minutes left in the first, it was 3-0, and Georgi Romanov was summoned to replace Zherenko in the

net. Romanov more than did his part as the game moved to the second, as Romanov denied 14 Toronto offerings in the period and helped Springfield kill off a Marlie power play in the process.

After nearly 120 minutes without a goal, former Marlie Calle Rosen finally got Springfield on the scoresheet with just 10 seconds left in the period, as he sneaked down the left wing and slammed a shot through Artur Akhtyamov on Springfield's 26th shot of the night to make it a 3-1 game into intermission.

However, the T-Birds did not have any offensive juice left in the tank in the third, and Romanov finally relented a power-play goal to Luke Haymes past the midpoint of the third, which restored Toronto's three-goal advantage, 4-1. Romanov finished his terrific night in relief with 26 saves on 27 shots. Bo Groulx would add an empty-netter with the T-Birds skating 5-on-4 with the extra skater to round out the scoring.

She Decides Women Empowerment Brunch scheduled for 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.

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.

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-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.

"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."

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>.

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Public Notices

AGAWAM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St., Agawam, MA, on **Monday, February 23, 2026 at 6:30PM** for all parties interested in the request of Arkadzi Tsimoshak, who is seeking a Special Permit in accordance with the Town of Agawam's Chapter 114-5 and Chapter 180-55 (35) to allow the petitioner to seek a Class II auto sales license at the premises identified as 371 South Westfield Street.

Doreen A. Prouty, Chairperson
Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals
02/05, 02/12/2026

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103**

**Docket No. HD21P2105PM
In the matter of:
John Macedonia
of Agawam, 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 **Fourth** account(s) of **Susan A McCoy of Springfield, MA** 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 **03/06/2026**. 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. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: January 30, 2026
Rosemary A. Saccamoni
Register of Probate
02/12/2026

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD26P0206EA
Estate of:
Louise Rita Wagner
Also known as:
Louise R Wagner
Date of Death: 04/09/2010
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION**

To all interested persons:

A Petition for **Final Probate of will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Jane M Seaver of Feeding Hills, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that **Jane M Seaver of Feeding Hills, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/03/2026**. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and

objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE

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

WITNESS, Hon. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: February 04, 2026
Rosemary A Saccamoni,
Register of Probate
02/12/2026

Obituary Policy

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place. The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$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.

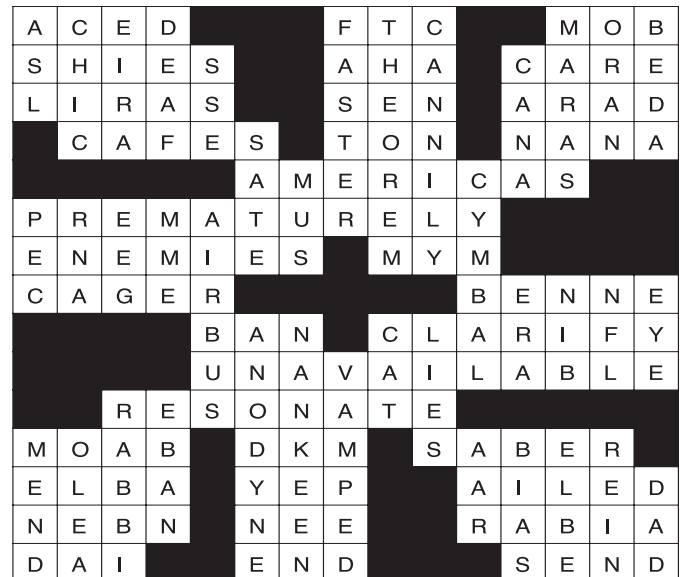
Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

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29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
33 Base Price \$32.50	34 Base Price \$33.00	35 Base Price \$33.50	36 Base Price \$34.00
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More activities and programs available 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.

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.

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 award-

ed 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.

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.

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.org.

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 Appoint-**

ment 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 op-

portunities 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.

Stanley Park history program to explore the 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 preser-

vation 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.

BILLS ■ from page 1

wam City Council passed a resolution to inform the state legislature it is opposed to the two bills.

It drew interest from the public, which spoke prior to council discussion on the resolution.

"What gets everyone's attention (in these bills) is reducing miles traveled," said resident Douglas Reed. "It's biased toward Western Mass. It's such a slippery slope. I understand there is a concern about emissions. It's going to cripple people in Western Mass. There are people who travel as far as Boston (for their job). It's a burden. It's a big burden."

Denis Dorsoshenko said he is a father of four, and is a self-employed construction

worker traveling 80 miles per day on average.

"I drive an average 17,000 miles a year," he said. "I pay on that mileage whether I am in Massachusetts or Connecticut. It's an infringement on our rights. It's paying to move around."

Doroshenko went through the numerous taxes and fees residents already pay, including tolls, excise tax, and gas taxes, saying residents pay enough.

More speakers expressed similar concerns. No one spoke from the public spoke in favor of the senate bills at the meeting, but one resident Bill Shoenborn, submitted a letter to the editor saying the senate bills should pass (see the letter on page 4).

Councilor Peter McNair believes the potential of the

proposal is biased toward the other side of the state.

Councilor Thomas Hendrickson opposed the city council resolution to condemn the senate bills.

He said the senate bills have worthy goals, to reduce emissions.

"I drive across the state a lot," he said. "Every time I do, I wish we could take 100 cars off the road and replace it with one train or one bus. These are the types of goals we are looking at doing."

He, like Shoenborn, said one of the senate bills only establishes a study and is meant to come up with an alternative for people who are driving electric vehicles, and doing wear and tear to state roads and highways, but do not have to contribute because they are not paying any fuel taxes.

The resolution passed 8-2 with Hendrickson and Councilor Christine Rickmon opposing it.

According to the state's website, S.2246 is currently referred to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. S.2404 is currently referred to the committee on Transportation.

CANDIDATE ■ from page 1

able, but leadership means making difficult choices and seeing them through."

During his time on the Select Board, Perron led the effort to establish Southwick's municipal aggregation program — an initiative he pursued after researching why neighboring towns were able to secure lower electric rates for residents. He also brought forth proposed zoning and policy changes to support responsible economic development and strengthen local finances. Perron also authored Southwick's town flag policy to prevent constitutional and civil rights conflicts while keeping the town's practices clear, lawful, and consistent.

Perron said he decided to run because he believes too many people have become accustomed to watching government fall short, complaining about it, and then doing nothing to change it.

"I'm not the type of person who can sit back, complain, and do nothing — and I said that when I

ran for the Southwick Select Board," Perron said. "I heard so many people say they weren't getting what they needed or wanted, but at the same time, almost nobody was willing to take the initiative to step up, do the work, and actually run. When the last election cycle went by and there was only one candidate, that was the moment I really started thinking seriously about whether I should do this — whether I should run and see if I could do better."

Perron said his campaign is focused on restoring trust in government, reducing cost-of-living pressures, and fighting for fair funding for Western Massachusetts.

"Massachusetts has become one of the most expensive places in the country to live," Perron said. "Families are getting squeezed from every direction — energy, housing, healthcare, taxes, and everyday costs. We need a representative who understands what it's like to live here, work here, raise a family here, and fight for this region to get its fair share."

Perron said he is running as an Independent because he believes a state representative should answer first and foremost to the people of the district — and should be willing to work with anyone, regardless of party, to deliver results for Western Massachusetts.

"I'm running as an Independent because I answer to the people of this district," Perron said. "And I'll work with anyone — Republican, Democrat, or Independent — if it helps our towns and our region."

Perron concluded by emphasizing that his campaign is not about personalities — but about the people of the district and the work that needs to be done.

"I'm not running against anyone," Perron said. "I'm running for the people of this district. And if you honor me with your vote, I'll serve with honesty, independence, and purpose."

Perron has to collect signatures in order to get on the ballot officially. Nomination papers were scheduled to come out earlier this week.



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