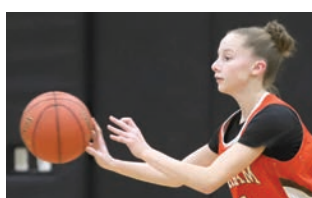




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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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Luke LaBorde seeks donations for Eagle Scout project

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – Luke LaBorde is going for the rank of Eagle Scout in the next couple of months, and is leading his troop on a project to raise awareness and collect supplies for at-risk or homeless veterans.

His great-grandfather a Korean War conflict veteran, LaBorde said his grandfather made the suggestion to him to do an Eagle Scout project that helps out local veterans.

LaBorde said he has teamed up with Soldier On, an organization that helps local veterans with housing, and has a facility located on S. Westfield St. in Agawam.

"I met with them and presented my project to them," LaBorde said. "They were supportive and are going to help get our care packages out to veterans who need them."

LaBorde said at first, his project was about collecting shoes, but morphed into seeking to create full care packages with needed supplies for homeless veterans.

"We thought the care packages would work better," LaBorde said.

Last Sunday, LaBorde led some members of Scout Troop 82 in a donation drive outside Stop & Shop on Springfield St. in Feeding Hills.

LaBorde and the scouts presented a poster board to store-goers showing what the project was, and many leaving the store left monetary donations, which he will use to buy supplies he needs to make the care packages.

Coming up this weekend, LaBorde and the scouts will



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Members of Troop 82, led by Eagle Scout-hopeful Luke LaBorde, hold a donation drive last Sunday at Stop & Shop. The goal of the donation drive is build care packages for at-risk and homeless veterans.

hold two donations drives. The first will be on Saturday, Feb. 21 outside of Geissler's Supermarket on Suffield St. On Sunday, Feb. 22, he will be back outside of Stop & Shop. Both drives will go from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

"This is a great project for him to lead the scouts on," said Troop Leader Mark McLaughlin. "It will definitely be appreciated by the veterans in the community."

Anyone who is able to make donations this coming weekend are asked to bring them out to the donations drives this weekend.

Among the supplies needed, any kind of clothing, and

hygiene products such as toothbrushes, toothpaste, razors, deodorant, mouthwash, wash clothes, soap, hand warmers, and dental floss.

Once collected over the next few weeks, LaBorde will purchase more supplies with the monetary donations and construct as many care packages as he can. He will bring them to Leeds, and some of them will be distributed in Agawam to veterans in need locally.

Following the completion of the project, LaBorde will make a presentation to the scout board for consideration of his Eagle Scout rank, which he must complete by



May, when he turns 18-years-old.

If you are unable to make it to the donation drives this weekend, but would still

like to assist in LaBorde and Troop 82's efforts, you can contact LaBorde at 413-222-4519 or by email at lukelaborde30@gmail.com.

Incumbent announces re-election campaign

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – With the release of nomination papers last week came an expected announcement from State Rep. Nicholas Boldyga that he will indeed seek re-election for another term in the state House of Representatives.

Boldyga is one of a small handful of Republican legislators in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and he has overcome Democratic challengers multiple times, though he was unopposed two years ago.

This year, to make up for that, he will face not one, but likely two challengers.

Democrat and current Agawam City Councilor Thomas Hendrickson and independent former Southwick Select Board member Jason Perron have both made announcements in the previous few weeks looking to challenge for Boldyga's seat which he has held since the beginning of 2010.

Boldyga continues to seek an end to wasteful spending and says he is running to promote transparency and common-sense policy.

"It has been an honor to serve as state representative," Boldyga said in an announcement made on social media. "I am running because too many families, seniors, and small businesses are being priced out of Massachusetts

BOLDYGA | page 10

Swimmers break record



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Members of the Agawam High School 400 freestyle relay recently broke a record. AHS Principal James Blain recently congratulated Donna Carrier, Vincy Cheung, Hannah Newsome, and Angie Prividnyuk for an incredible performance and a brand-new school record. What an exciting and well-deserved achievement for this amazing team. They completed the event at 3:54.74.

Battery Energy facility enters site plan approval stage

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – On Thursday, Feb. 19, the Agawam Planning Board will hear a site plan proposal for the recently named "Agawam Energy Center."

Longroad Energy is the company that is working to establish a battery energy storage system in town. The BESS are allowed by right thanks to state law despite heavy resistance from residents in many towns and cities who are afraid of the harsh environmental impacts if there is a leak or some type of a fire resulting from the facilities.

Mayor Christopher Johnson held information sessions with Longroad last month, working to inform the public on the realities of BESS along with the current intentions of Longroad Energy.

Longroad noted during the information sessions that while they have the ability to locate a facility in Agawam, thanks to ordinances installed by the Agawam City Council about a year ago,



TURLEY PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Representatives from Longroad Energy present their plans for a battery energy storage system in Agawam.

and BESS facility that looks to locate in town must adhere to some of the highest safety standards and in the entire country, one of their representatives said.

Residents were able to view the plans for the facility at length as well as ask questions of project managers.

Johnson held two information sessions at the Agawam Senior Center to accomplish this, with city councilors and other town officials available to interact with residents who have questions and concerns.

"This was something that was approved at the state

level," Johnson. "There is nothing that can be done to prevent them from coming in."

Johnson also advised residents, who packed the dining hall at the senior center, that Agawam is not the only

PLAN | page 10



Abigail Adams next historical presentation

AGAWAM – The Agawam Historical Association's commemoration of the United States Semiquincentennial continues on Thursday, Mar. 19, when the public is invited to the Captain Charles Leonard House, 663 Main Street, Agawam for the association's Spring Meeting. At 6:30 p.m., actress Sheryl Faye will perform her new multimedia live show "Abigail Adams – Liberty & Legacy," and bring Adams' words, wit, and wisdom vividly to life for modern audiences.

Blending live performance, immersive multimedia, original music and visual design, Liberty and Legacy reintroduces Abigail Adams not simply as a founder's wife, but as a fearless political thinker, advocate for women's rights, and moral compass during the American Revolution and the birth of a nation. Through Adams' own letters and writings—paired with contemporary staging and technology—the show invites audiences to experience her enduring relevance in conversations about liberty, equality, leadership, and civic responsibility. This event is free and open to the public.

Other semiquincentennial events planned by the Agawam Historical Association include the dedication of Agawam's Liberty Tree at the Thomas Smith House on Apr. 19; presentation of George Baker's "Meet John Adams — A Lively and Revolu-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Agawam Historical Association will hold a presentation featuring the history of Abigail Adams.

lutionary Conversation with America's Second President" on May 28; US Semiquincentennial Observance & Celebration at the Thomas Smith House on July 4; "The Noble Train Arrives" Henry Knox 250th commemoration and demonstration with live oxen from Fort Ticonderoga on Aug. 1; Sept. 12 presentation by master stone carver and gravestone conservator Randall Nelson about his work carving replicas of badly deteriorated gravestones of Revolutionary War veterans as replacements for the original stones; and presentation of "Who Made the Gravestones in Agawam's Old

Burying Grounds" which will also mention grave-stones of Revolutionary War veterans buried in Agawam, by Bob Drinkwater, on Oct. 15. Eighteenth century encampments and living history demonstrations by the 25th Continental Regiment will be featured at the Thomas Smith House on July 4, and Oct. 10.

Information about these, and other Agawam Historical Association events planned for 2026, can be found at agawamhistory.org and the Agawam Historical Association's

Instagram and Facebook pages.

The private non-profit, all-volunteer Agawam Historical Association preserves and presents Agawam and Feeding Hills history, and provides educational opportunities at its quarterly meetings. The association archives and displays artifacts pertaining to the Town of Agawam and its Fire Department in the Marilyn P. Curry History Room and Chief Russell "Rusty" Jenks Apparatus Room, both located in the Agawam Historical & Fire House Museum, housed in the former Elm Street Fire Station at 35 Elm Street in Agawam Center. The association owns, and has preserved, the ca. 1757 Thomas Smith House, at 251 North West Street in Feeding Hills, in largely original, unrestored condition; the property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2005. The association also offers an annual scholarship to an Agawam high school senior pursuing higher education in a history-related field. For more information, please visit agawamhistory.org or follow the Agawam Historical Association on Instagram and Facebook. Volunteers and new members are always welcome.



Abigail Adams

Applications now available for Garden Club scholarship

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.

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. GaleP Sullivan: GaleP.Sullivan@verizon.net Holly Cloran: PohnerHolly@gmail.com Scott MacEyre: mace1459@comcast.net Gail Donais: GCDonais@cox.net Shirley Porter: ShirleyPorter525@gmail.com



Original HPS receiver appointed new Secretary of Education for the Commonwealth

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

HOLYOKE – In a bit of a full circle moment, as the city is preparing to name its first superintendent since re-taking local control of the Holyoke Public Schools, the original appointed state receiver has come back into the limelight.

On Wednesday morning, Gov. Maura Healey, who is currently running for her second term, named Dr. Steven Zrike as the new Secretary of Education for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Zrike guided the Holyoke Public Schools through the formative years of receivership. He was the first receiver/superintendent in Holyoke and led the district unilaterally after the state took control due to underperforming test scores and graduation rates.

Zrike led the district through the implementation of a turnaround plan and worked to increase graduation rates, reconfigure the school district, and increase overall achievement.

Zrike served the district for five years before departing

the district. He led the turnaround of 11 chronically underperforming schools, improved academic outcomes, increased the graduation rate, and reduced chronic absenteeism. He also served as Superintendent of Schools in Wakefield, Massachusetts, Chief of Elementary Schools for the Pilsen-Little Village Network in the Chicago Public Schools and Principal of both the William Ohrenberger Elementary School and John Philbrick Elementary School in Boston. He began his career as a fifth-grade teacher in Massachusetts' Andover Public School District.

He was most recently the superintendent of schools in Salem.

Now, he will be the foremost authority on education in Massachusetts with his new appointment.

According to a press release from the governor's office, Current Secretary of Education Patrick Tutwiler



Dr. Steven Zrike

will be stepping down from his position on Friday, Feb. 13 to assume the role of President and Chief Executive Officer of Walker Therapeutic & Educational Programs.

"Dr. Zrike has a proven track record of improving learning for thousands of students across our state and the country. From his time as a fifth-grade teacher, to principal and onto Superintendent, he has changed lives and inspired those he works with. We congratulate him on this new role and can't wait to work together to make sure every student has a high-quality education from early childhood through college and career," said Healey. "I'm grateful for Secretary Tutwiler's leadership as Secretary of Education and his lifetime of service to the students of Massachusetts. Together, we created nation-leading graduation standards, enrolled thousands more students in early college, added thousands of child

care seats, expanded early literacy tutoring and made historic increases to college financial aid. But what I'll remember most about Secretary Tutwiler is his unfailing positivity and the absolute joy on the faces of students across the state any time he walks into the room. We wish him the very best in his next steps."

"I am pleased to welcome Stephen as our next Secretary of Education. As a former Mayor of Salem, I know firsthand what a strong partner he is for our students, teachers and parents, and I am confident his leadership will strengthen education across our state and build on the great work from the last three years under Secretary Tutwiler's leadership," said Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll. "It's been a pleasure to work with Secretary Tutwiler, and I am beyond grateful for his commitment to the students across Massachusetts. He will be missed, but I wish him the very best in his next steps, and I know he will continue to positively shape the futures of the students of Massachusetts for years to come."

Zrike was elated to take on the appointment made by the governor.

"I'm deeply grateful to Governor Healey and Lieutenant Governor Driscoll for the opportunity to serve as Secretary of Education," said Dr. Zrike. "I look forward to continuing to work alongside students, parents and educators across the state to ensure every student has the support and opportunities they need to succeed. I will miss working with Salem's students, educators, and families; the lessons they have taught me over the past six years will be central to how I lead as Secretary."

Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care Amy Kershaw will serve as Interim Secretary until Dr. Zrike assumes his position in March.

Since 2020, Dr. Zrike has served as Superintendent of Schools for Salem Public Schools, where he led academic recovery efforts, strengthened educator support, expanded student-centered programming, and deepened partnerships with families and the broader com-

munity. He oversaw significant gains in MCAS achievement, expanded full-day pre-kindergarten, reduced chronic absenteeism to below pre-pandemic levels, and strengthened dual language and early college programming.

Dr. Zrike holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in history from Dartmouth College and a master's degree and a doctorate in education from the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. He is Cuban-American and speaks Spanish. He lives in Andover with his wife, who is an elementary school special education teacher in the Andover Public Schools, and his children who attend public schools.

The Executive Office of Education oversees and coordinates the work of the Department of Early Education and Care, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (K-12), the Department of Higher Education and the state's 29 public colleges and universities to align programs, policies and resources across the entire public education system.

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Progress continues



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Work continues at Agawam High School despite the cold and heavier than usual winter weather the past couple of months. The topping off ceremony was held last month where the final beam was placed on the new construction. Interior work continues at the site with work to continue all year long. The first phase of construction is supposed to be completed early next year.

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.

Chamber holding mayoral breakfast

AGAWAM – The VIP Mayoral Breakfast will be held on March 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



Mayor Christopher Johnson

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.

Irish Night 2026 set to take place 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.

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 per-

son 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.

Tax work-off program returning

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 conduct-

ed 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

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—especially 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 Senior Center.

United States Navy Concert Band coming to Symphony Hall March 1

SPRINGFIELD – The U. S. Navy Concert Band is bringing their Northeast Tour to Springfield Symphony Hall on Sunday, March 1 at 2 p.m.

The free concert, presented by the Spirit of Springfield and sponsored by Yellowstone Landscape, is celebrating the 250th anniversary of the United States with a family-friendly concert. It features a broad selection of musical works, from American classics to contemporary pieces. Selections include works from John Philip Sousa’s “Washington Post March,” The Wizard of Oz’s “Somewhere Over the Rainbow,” Aaron Copland’s “Buck-

aroo Holiday,” John Williams’ “Liberty Fanfare,” “America the Beautiful,” “Armed Forces on Parade,” and so much more!

“Touring the nation and performing concerts means connecting with communities and telling the great stories of our Sailors working around the globe to keep us safe and free,” stated Captain Robert “Seph” Coats, commanding officer of the U.S. Navy Band.

The U. S. Navy Band consists of 50 talented musicians and vocalists, plus a highly-skilled production team. They are accomplished musicians. Almost all of the

Sailors in the band have undergraduate degrees in music and most have graduate degrees. Their last Springfield concert was in 2016.

“It is an honor to host the U. S. Navy’s premier band in Springfield Symphony Hall,” said Spirit of Springfield President Judy Matt. “The performers love the acoustics, historic architecture, and the enthusiastic audience.”

Tickets are available at Pride Stores, Springfield Visitor Center at 1319 Main Street, and the Security Desk at One Financial Plaza at 1350 Main Street in Springfield. They can also be obtained by mailing a self-addressed

stamped envelope to the Spirit of Springfield at 1350 Main Street, Suite 1004, Springfield, MA 01103. Those without tickets can still attend. They will be seated 10 minutes before the start of the performance.

Free parking for the concert will be available in the I-91 South Garage courtesy of the Springfield Parking Authority.

In addition to Yellowstone Landscape, the free concert is supported by PIP Printing, Pride Stores, Comcast, MassLive, Rock 102, The Republican, Western Mass News, NAI Plotkin, Springfield Business Improvement

District, Springfield Parking Authority, and Springfield Symphony Hall.

For more information, visit spiritofspringfield.org or call 413-733-3800.



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Opinion

Guest Column



SOCIAL SECURITY Matters
By Russell Gloor

I'm still working; Why didn't my benefit amount increase

Dear Rusty:

I have been working somewhat consistently since commencing my Social Security benefit income. I've been collecting since my full benefit age of 66, approximately. I'm now 81 and customarily, in about October of each calendar year, Social Security notifies me of additional benefits from my additional work. Not this year.

I earned some \$18,000-\$19,000 in 2025. SS advised I did not meet some 35-year formula. I thought that formula just applied to the original benefit calculation. Otherwise, one seems cheated given the SS taxes paid on income received after applying for benefits without any consideration for that income. Please advise me.

Signed: Feeling Cheated

Dear Feeling Cheated:

For Your Information, your Social Security benefit is always based on the highest 35 years of your lifetime earnings with your early years' earnings automatically adjusted for inflation. And that formula continues even after you start receiving benefits. Social Security will look at your earnings each year to see if your recent earnings are among your highest. If so, they will automatically recalculate your benefit to give you a higher amount and pay you retroactively to the first of that year.

Apparently, in past years, your more recent earnings were among the highest over your lifetime, which is why you received those notifications in the fall of each previous year saying your benefit was adjusted based upon recent earnings. That you didn't get a similar notification this year, means that your earnings in 2024 were not among the highest over your lifetime, so no adjustment to your monthly benefit was appropriate.

Now, to clarify, those annual notices you received in the past always referred

to the preceding year – that is, if you received a notice in October 2024 of a higher SS benefit, that was a result of your 2023 earnings. If you got no such notice in October of 2025, that means that your 2024 income was not among the highest over your lifetime. And your 2025 earnings of \$18,000 - \$19,000 will likely not be among your lifetime highest either, so you probably won't get a notice next year either.

It's important to understand that your contributions to Social Security, i.e., the SS payroll taxes you pay while working, are not put into a separate account for you - rather, they are used to help pay benefits to all beneficiaries.

In other words, just contributing to SS with payroll tax from your work earnings doesn't necessarily mean you get a higher benefit. Your SS benefit is always based upon the 35 years in which you earned the most, including recent years if you continue to work. So, you weren't "cheated" that is simply how the program works your SS benefit is always based on your highest 35 years of work earnings, including recent years, with earnings from the early years adjusted for inflation.

The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

Guest Column

What are shallots, anyway?

Shortly after the two part column on growing onions, I received a question about shallots.

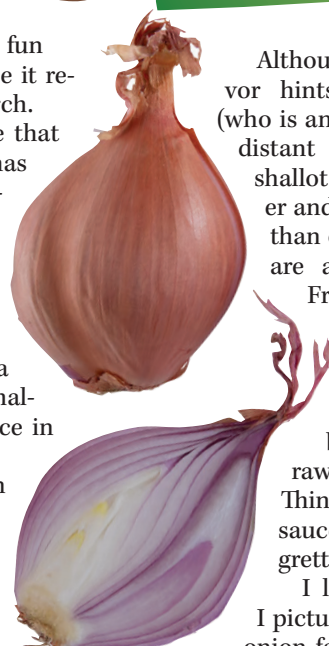
My friend was looking through a seed catalog and wanted to know the ins and outs of growing them. This topic was a fun one for me because it required some research.

Can you believe that the Garden Lady has never grown shallots before? There is an explanation why, with part of the reason being that I am not what you'd consider a fancy cook, and shallots have their place in fine dining.

The other reason is that admittedly I never understood the point of shallots – aren't they just small onions? Why would you buy something special for a recipe if you had a good old fashioned onion in the pantry?

As all the cooks in the audience gasp, let me qualify that statement with the fact that now I know better.

Shallots are slightly different plants from onions scientifically. Whereas the onion goes by the name *Allium cepa*, shallots are what you would call a cousin, with the Latin name *Allium cepa* ag. *Aggregatum*.



Although the flavor hints of garlic (who is another more distant cousin), shallots are sweeter and more mild than onions, and are a staple in French and Asian cuisine where they can be used raw or cooked. Think delicate sauces or vinaigrettes.

I laugh when I picture all of the onion family members sitting around at a party. You'd have the gregarious onion, the boisterous garlic and then the cultured shallot, wearing a beret and speaking with a French accent.

I'm not sure why my mind went there, but it was a fun digression.

In terms of culture, shallots are similar to onions in that they can be grown from both sets or seeds. Seeds would be started indoors anytime now through March. Transplants or sets are best planted in the garden as soon as the ground can be worked, usually early April.

Although shallots mature smaller than onions, spacing should still be four-six inches apart so that they can size up to their full potential. They are shallow rooted, so supplemental watering is a must.

When foliage reaches 12 inches, apply a mulch around the base of each plant to help conserve moisture and cut down on weed competition. Until that point, cultivate carefully by hand or pull individual weeds as they pop up. Like onions, scallions be-

gin to "bulb up" around the time of the summer equinox. Top dressing with fertilizer at that time is a smart idea.

As summer draws to a close, shallots will exhibit similar die back as onions, whereby the tops begin to fall over, indicating they are ready for harvest. If the weather cooperates, sun cure on the ground or garden path for a few days, then move indoors to a spot with good air movement to finish the curing process.

Once necks have shrunk and dried, cut the tops off to about one inch above the bulb and store in mesh bags as close as you can to the freezing mark with ample humidity. One interesting fact I learned from Fedco Seeds (www.fedcoseeds.com) is that if you don't have a room that cold, humidity can be adjusted to make up the difference for proper storage.

For example, best case scenario dictates that shallots need 34 degrees at 66 percent humidity. Say the coldest you can get your storage spot is 55 degrees, well then they would like 45 percent humidity. The closest you can get it to add up to 100 the better.

I wonder if this theory holds true for other crops in storage. My squash and pumpkin aren't the happiest this year, so maybe I will look into how to manipulate the environment to avoid some of the shriveling I am seeing. Anyhow, I hope you had a few chuckles reading this column and that you might feel inclined to give shallots, that cultured onion cousin, a try this gardening season.

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.



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

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Agawam Advertiser News welcomes letters to the editor

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

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

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper

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

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

Schools & Youth

GSHFH Pickleball Tournament returns to benefit Habitat for Humanity

By Brandice J. O'Brien
Marketing and Communications
Manager, Greater Springfield
Habitat for Humanity

WESTFIELD – It's back and it's on! Get your team together and register for Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity's (GSHFH) Pickleball Tournament on Sunday, March 29. The all-day event held at The Picklr in Westfield is sure to serve up kitchen-legal levels of fun.

That's right, we're down with the lingo and we mean this Habitat fundraiser will be all good. How could it not? The round-robin-style event features two-player teams. Play time will be divided into timed sections by skill level to ensure everyone gets worthwhile matchups and court time.

"The game itself is a fun way to get your body moving and is not as intimidating as tennis," said Olga Calligos, GSHFH Homeowner Services manager, who played her first match at last year's tournament. "Players are super welcoming to newbies who don't know what they're doing. It's definitely a community that looks out for one another. I'm still slowly learning the rules, though, because when I played, I just knew I had to hit the ball but not to hit it out of bounds."

We'll start the day at 8 a.m. with beginners on the courts, roll into intermediate play, and finish strong with advanced matches. Tickets are \$50 per person and pre-registration is required. Snacks will be available and bragging rights are up for grabs. Plus, raffle tickets and merchandise are on hand for purchase.

"Pickleball has a way of bringing people together across ages and experience

levels," said Bree D'Amours, a member of GSHFH's Board of Directors who's also part of the planning committee. "I love the idea of being a part of an event that's genuinely fun while still promoting Habitat in a meaningful way. If people leave feeling energized, informed, and more connected to Habitat's network, then we've done well."

Greater Springfield Habitat's first pickleball tournament held in July 2025, attracted nearly 50 people, including children and Springfield Thunderbirds mascot Boomer. Among the raffle prizes were a tabletop charcoal grill, gift baskets, pickleball swag, and Funko POP dolls.

"I had some fun and met some great people," said Andy Szalai via a Facebook comment after last year's tournament. "I'm looking forward to this being a tradition."

GSHFH is a housing ministry dedicated to strengthening communities by empowering low-income families to change their lives and the lives of future generations through homeownership and home repair opportunities. This is accomplished by working in partnership with diverse people, from all walks of life, to build and repair simple, decent, affordable housing. Habitat's mission to provide homeownership opportunities to low-income families is unique as it requires partner families to work alongside the community that is reaching out to help them. GSHFH has helped roughly 100 local families realize their dream of homeownership over the last 39 years.

For more information or to register, visit habitat.org/pickleball.



Participants from Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity's first-ever Pickleball Tournament pose after the action on July 20, 2025, at The Picklr in Westfield.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS



Expert players participate in a volley during Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity's first-ever Pickleball Tournament at the Picklr last year.



Kids prove pickleball is an all-ages game at Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity's tournament.

"Falling back" to a season of change

It's not just the leaves that change in autumn. We do, too.

Our bodies naturally change with the seasons, as the hours of sunlight, temperatures and humidity fluctuate. In our fast-paced modern world, we are tempted to ignore these seasonal signals, enabled as we are by artificial lighting, indoor climate control and the year-round availability of many foods. (Strawberries in January? Really?)

Let's look at some of the ways our bodies adjust to fall, and a few ways you can perhaps enhance wellbeing by paying attention to them.

Sleep disruptions

The hours of sunlight gradually become fewer after the summer equinox, and then there's the jarring change when we turn our clocks back in November. The politicians have haggled for years whether "falling back" is still necessary, as it requires students to get up while it's still dark, and sunset comes ever earlier.

The effects on our bodies are profound. With less exposure to natural light, we sleep more, which can affect mood, focus, memory and energy. Later sunrises might make it harder to get out of bed in the morning, and daytime drowsiness becomes more frequent.

Less physical activity

Chilly mornings and earlier darkness may make us less likely to get that morning or evening walk in. We sit and watch football, eating nachos and drinking beer, rather than get outside ourselves. All of this can lead to weight gain, which also affects mood.

More frequent illnesses

As we are indoors more, we are exposed to more vi-

your health

By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

ruses, bacteria and allergens, and that's why flu, COVID, colds and allergies come on more frequently. Drier air also has an impact, as it dries up our nasal mucous, which is designed to trap viruses, and lets those viruses in more easily. Drier noses may also bring on more nosebleeds.

Other changes

Researchers have found that people lose more hair in the autumn than in spring or summer, probably having to do with hormonal fluctuations.

Those hormones may also go to work on the libido – more babies are conceived in November and December than at any other time of the year, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. One theory is that sperm quality is better in winter, but of course we're also spending longer nights in bed.

Anxiety can be heightened, associated with the rigors of schoolwork and planning for the upcoming holidays.

And, of course, dry skin becomes more of a problem in the fall, when indoor humidity drops.

A few tips:

Get more sunlight: More exposure to sunlight increases Vitamin D, serotonin and

dopamine (the feel-good brain chemicals). In particular, morning sunlight helps our bodies sync our circadian rhythms with the season, which in turn helps us sleep better at night. It can also counteract the effects of the blue light emanating from our computers, tablets and phones.

Put your senses to work: Feel the colder air on your cheeks, listen to the leaves crunching under your feet and smell the changes in the air. Smell the crisp air, and perhaps experiment with some aromatherapy scents indoors – eucalyptus, cardamom, lavender – to elevate mood and tamp down anxiety.

Take care of your skin: Amp up your use of moisturizers, turn off the dehumidifier and avoid long, hot showers and baths. Treating your skin kindly now will help as we head into the even drier winter months.

Try some "fall foods": Eating vitamin-rich vegetables now will help you fight off winter illnesses. Good choices include squashes (pumpkin, butternut, acorn and the like); green leafy spinach and arugula; and cruciferous veggies like kale, broccoli and

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- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Cut quickly
 - 5. A way to state clearly
 - 11. River in NE Scotland
 - 14. Expansive
 - 15. Lacking social polish
 - 16. Amount of time
 - 17. Frame
 - 19. Automobile
 - 20. Toadstools
 - 21. High school dances
 - 22. Utilize
 - 23. Experimented with
 - 25. One-sided
 - 27. Acquisitive
 - 31. Potted plants
 - 34. Everyone has one
 - 35. Kalahari Desert lake
 - 38. Unidentified flying object
 - 39. People 65 and over
 - 41. Small amount
 - 42. Daughter of Acrisius
 - 44. Ornamental box
 - 45. Government agents
 - 46. Uncertain
 - 49. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
 - 51. Treeless plains
 - 55. One's sense of self-importance
 - 56. Consumer advocate
 - 60. Type of lounger
 - 61. Body part
 - 62. Can be persuaded
 - 64. Woman (French)
 - 65. Rody and willing to be taught
 - 66. Arab ruler title
 - 67. Unhappy
 - 68. Gradually went away
 - 69. Able to think clearly
- CLUES DOWN**
- 1. Brushed
 - 2. Small water spirit (Germ.)
 - 3. Heroes
 - 4. Monetary units
 - 5. Some don't want to share theirs
 - 6. Free-swimming invertebrate
 - 7. Litigates
 - 8. Outer
 - 9. Parallelograms
 - 10. Uneasy feelings
 - 11. Cross
 - 12. A way to remove
 - 13. Pages can be dog_
 - 18. Ukrainian city
 - 24. A citizen of Denmark
 - 26. Month
 - 28. Hindu queens
 - 29. Group of chemicals
 - 30. Rider of Rohan
 - 31. Wet dirt
 - 32. Southwestern Russia city
 - 33. Observed
 - 36. Angry
 - 37. Drivers' licenses
 - 39. Musical composition
 - 40. Auction
 - 43. They _
 - 45. Women
 - 47. Be filled with love for
 - 48. Thick-soled sock
 - 49. Appears
 - 50. Old World lizard
 - 52. The leading performer
 - 53. Protein
 - 54. "Gunga Din" script writer
 - 57. Art __, around 1920
 - 58. __ Blyton, children's author
 - 59. Abnormal breathing
 - 63. A place to rest

More activities to come 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.

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.

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.

Join us to take part in the magic and celebrate the legacy of America's founding Black women! History buffs take note: Smithsonian Curator Emeritus Tom Crouch will present his book *Smithsonian's Gamble: The Smithsonian Institution in American Life, 1836-1906*. A Smithsonian veteran of almost 45 years, Crouch paints a robust picture of a unique American Establishment and its lasting legacies. This event will take place on Tuesday, Feb. 24 at 2 p.m. To register attend these virtual author talks, please call the library or visit library.org/agawamlibrary.

Fend off the cold with a little bit of light exercise at Chair Yoga on Wednesday mornings at 9:05 a.m. Led by yoga instructor Heidi Taberman, this drop-in class is perfect for folks of all fitness levels. Do you need help using digital library resources like Libby, Hoopla, or Kanopy? Book a One-on-One Library Tech

Help Appointment with Librarian Erica LeFebvre to get started. We'll have three 45-minute appointments on Monday, Feb. 23 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. To book an appointment, please visit agawamlibrary.libcal.com/appointments. Please note that these appointments are specifically for help with library resources, not general tech help. Are you a writer looking to connect with other writers? Join our Writers Group hosted by Katherine Anderson on Thursday, Feb. 26 at 6 p.m. This in-person workshop is open to writers of all levels and genres. There will be opportunities for peer and host feedback, finding opportunities for submission to magazines, literary journals, and presses, and more. Please register to attend.

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

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.

Programs and activities for kids, teens at the Agawam Library

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.

Baby Story Time - For birth - 18 mo.

Thurs. February 19 at 9:30 a.m. - Drop-in.

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

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. 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

This program is provided by Pathways for Parents.

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!

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

This program is provided by Pathways for Parents.

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.

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.

Stroller Strides with FIT-4MOM - For parents & their child ages 1 month - 10 years old

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 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 26 from 2 to 3 p.m.,

Visit the Teen Space and answer a trivia question to get a small prize.

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.

Celebrates Civic Learning Week

HOLYOKE – From March 9 to 15, thousands of schools and organizations across the nation will celebrate Civic Learning Week, an annual nonpartisan awareness week bringing together students, educators, policymakers, and leaders in the public and private sectors to highlight and further energize the movement for civic education in states and communities across the nation.

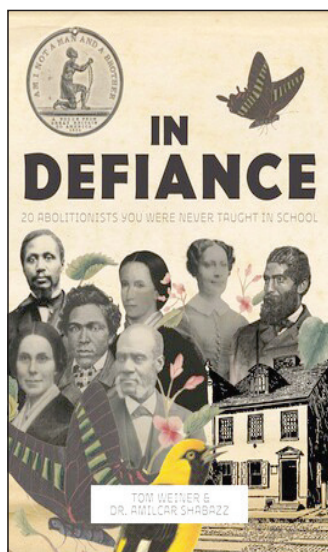
Civic education is essential to ensuring each and every person across this country is equipped with the necessary tools to engage as members of our self-governing society. As we look ahead to the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 2026, we have an unparalleled opportunity to shine

a light on the importance of civic education and the way in which it can sustain and strengthen our "many voices, one nation" for the next 250 years and beyond.

"Wistariahurst Museum is excited to participate in Civic Learning Week, bringing several events to the museum along with sharing information on how to get involved with your local community," says Emily Munsell, Wistariahurst Office Assistant.

We know that the best civic learning happens both in and outside of the classroom, and is a lifelong endeavor touching every facet of society. In order to underscore the need to prioritize civic learning across the country, Civic Learning Week highlights

the civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions that provide the foundation for an informed and engaged populace, sustaining and strengthening constitutional democracy in the United States.



Learn about little-known abolitionists

HOLYOKE – On Saturday, Feb. 28 at 11 a.m. at Holyoke Public Library, join us for an hour of inspiring stories of commitment, courage, and resistance. Speakers Tom Weiner and Dr. Amilcar Shabazz will share from their recent book, *In Defiance: 20 Abolitionists you were never taught in school*, which uncovers stories of individuals who risked their lives in the struggle to end enslavement. The event is free and open to the public and will be held in

the Community Room. After their talk, the authors will be available for questions and book signing.

Authors Tom Weiner and Dr. Amilcar Shabazz will offer an engaging discussion of their recent book, *In Defiance*, which uncovers the stories of 20 individuals who risked their lives to fight enslavement and serves as a compelling call for justice and the preservation of history.

The talk focuses on the lives and words of a few of these individuals, highlighting their courage, activism, and unwavering commit-

ment to freedom. Amid ongoing efforts to erase history, these stories serve as a powerful corrective—meant to challenge, inspire, and ignite action.

Tom Weiner is a Northampton-based writer, educator, and anti-racist activist, and Dr. Amilcar Shabazz is professor of History and Africana Studies at UMass/Amherst and former president of the National Council for Black Studies.

Sponsored by the Holyoke History Room.

Recommended for middle school through adult. Light refreshments will be served.

Agawam Day in Florida continues

ST PETERSBURG, FL – The 45th 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.

Scholarship applications 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 as-

sistance. 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.

Becoming Initiative hosts She Decides Women Empowerment Brunch 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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SPORTS



Sophia Laprise keeps the ball away from an opponent.

Golden Eagles pull away from Brownies

AGAWAM – Last Wednesday night, the Agawam High School girls basketball team entered the Western Massachusetts Class A Tournament and were in a tough matchup with top-ranked Central High School. Agawam struggled on offense through the matchup and could not match Central's speed. Central would pull away with a strong second half and defeat the Brownies 83-29. Agawam got eight points in the matchup from Alanna Rose while Sophia Laprise had seven points.



Olivia Izzo makes a pass.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Isabella Laprise looks up the court.



Alanna Rose goes up for the rebound.



Bella Santaniello runs into trouble with a pair of defenders.



Madison Georgina tries to pass out of the corner.

Brownies hockey fall in overtime to Pacers

HOLYOKE – Last Saturday, Agawam fell to Chicopee hockey in overtime at Fitzpatrick Rink 4-3. Agawam was trailing 3-2 in the third period when they managed the tying goal. The game went to overtime and then Chicopee managed to grab a goal in overtime to give the Pacers their second win of the season. Agawam is 2-14 while Chicopee went 2-12-2. Agawam's goals were scored by Jackson Bates, Andy Holton, and Nick Brown. Chicopee got a hat trick by Aidan Nadeau and Braydon LaDuke had a single goal. Anthony Bonafilia had three assists.

Agawam drops quarterfinal matchup to Central

AGAWAM – Last Wednesday evening in the second game of a doubleheader that started with a girls match-up, Agawam boys basketball

was defeated by Central High School 82-66.

Agawam was in the game throughout, but Central stayed ahead throughout

most of the matchup. Trevor Moynihan led Agawam with 19 points, including a pair of three-pointers.

Dylan Jorgensen had 15

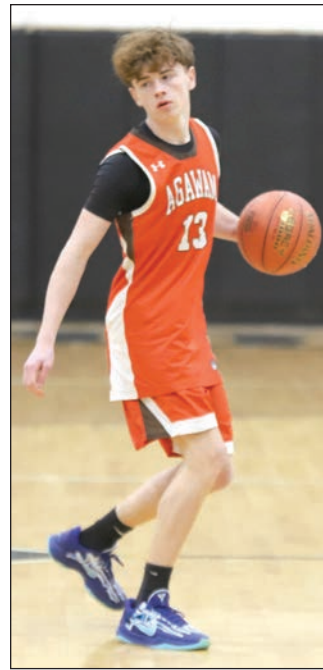
points, and Caeden Roeder had 10 points. Agawam will make the state playoffs, with seeds coming out this weekend.



Dylan Jorgensen tries to control the ball.



Gavin Cruz gets ready to shoot.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
Caeden Roeder tries to avoid the opposition. Right, Matthew Letellier tries to grab a rebound.



Brody Sheehan sends a pass away.



Agawam sets up on defense.

Springfield Thunderbirds outslug Iowa Wild on road

DES MOINES, IA - The Springfield Thunderbirds (18-24-4-2) once again posted a prolific offensive showing, outpacing the Iowa Wild (13-28-4-1) for a roller-coaster 8-6 victory on Saturday night inside Casey's Center in Des Moines.

The opening 20 minutes were a roller coaster of emotions for both teams and their fans. Operating a man down in the opening minutes, the T-Birds still managed to break the ice, as Otto Stenberg beat Cal Petersen with a wristler from the left circle at 1:20 of the period, making it 1-0.

Normally a very disciplined team, Springfield succumbed to another penalty two minutes later, and Iowa made them pay as Tyler Pitlick jabbed a backhand rebound over Georgi Romanov

to tie the game, 1-1, at 3:53.

Springfield quickly countered at 6:36, as Quinton Burns flipped a wristler that glanced off Zach Dean's blade, skipping through Petersen to make it a 2-1 game in the T-Birds' favor. Jakub Stancl followed up 3:10 later with his second goal in as many days, finishing off a 2-on-1 pass from Hugh McGing to extend Springfield's lead to 3-1.

Like an evening ago, though, the Wild refused to go away, and Pitlick cashed in on his second of the period off a 2-on-1 setup by Hunter Haight to make it a 3-2 game at 15:14.

The one-goal deficit was short-lived for the Wild, as Thomas Bordeleau stripped the puck from an Iowa defender and rifled home a perfect shot past Petersen's



blocker at 15:43 to make it 4-2. The goal was Bordeleau's first in a T-Birds uniform.

With just precious seconds remaining in the period, the Wild again responded in kind, as Nic Aube-Kubel set up Jack Peart in the left circle for a buzzer-beating tally in the midst of a delayed Springfield penalty, sending Iowa into the break trailing by just a goal at

4-3.

Yet, despite the potential momentum changer from Peart, Springfield quickly responded to begin the middle frame, as Chris Wagner went to a knee to guide a power play feed from Matt Luff in behind Petersen at 1:32 of the second, making it 5-3.

The T-Birds' defense stabilized after the chaos of the

first, and the offense continued its confident weekend, as Theo Lindstein cashed in for the second time in two games, punching a shot through Petersen's glove side at 9:15 off another Luff assist to push the lead to 6-3.

Springfield's power play added to their tally when Michael Buchinger whistled a shot through the legs of William Rousseau, who entered the net in place of Petersen to begin the third. Buchinger's fifth of the season gave the T-Birds a 7-3 advantage.

Even facing a huge deficit, the Wild continued to scratch and claw. A pair of Springfield penalties opened the door for Iowa, and the home side took full advantage as Dylan Gambrell cashed in on a rebound to the right of Romanov at 8:04 to make it 7-4.

David Jiricek followed with a slap shot from the blue line that caromed in behind Romanov at 12:47, and the Springfield lead shrank to 7-5.

Things got even hairier for the T-Birds when Caedan Bankier got to his own rebound at 16:32 to beat Romanov along the near side, and Iowa incredibly got the lead shaved down to a single goal, 7-6.

In the end, though, Iowa's miraculous comeback attempt came up one tally short, as Luff delivered a much-needed empty net goal with 26 seconds remaining to seal the win. Luff and Stancl each finished their evenings with a goal and two assists, and Springfield's eight goals from eight different players set a club record for most goals in a game on the road.

Railers fall at home against Lions

WORCESTER - Worcester suffered a 4-1 loss to the defending Kelly Cup champions Sunday afternoon. The Railers earned just one point of a possible six for the series. They went into the weekend with 12 of a possible 14 points in their seven previous games.

They netted only three goals for the weekend and have 12 in their last seven games. Their power play betrayed them Sunday as they were just one for seven. That included a wasted four-minute man advantage on a high sticking double minor to Mathias Laferriere at 7:02 of the second period.

Worcester put only three shots in the direction of the net in those four minutes.

It was 1-1 going into the third period but the Railers could not beat Hunter Jones,

who stopped 29 shots for the game. With the victory, Jones became the first opposing goaltender to beat Worcester in every game of a 3 in 3 series.

The Railers had five power plays in the first period and scored on one of them.

Lincoln Hatten got his 12th goal of the season at 17:03. It was his fifth on the power play and first of any kind since Jan. 24. Jesse Pulkkinen set up Anthony Repaci at the right point and the captain put a shot on net.

There was traffic, a good thing for Hatten, and he popped a rebound home from in close.

After the Railers failed to take advantage of their power play time early in the second period, Trois-Rivieres began to dominate the ac-

tion. The Lions finally tied it at 12:15 on Joe Dunlap's goal. He scored on a rebound from the bottom of the left circle.

In the third period, Trois-Rivieres took a 2-1 lead at 2:17, then made it 3-1 at 8:44. Both were doorstep goals. Isaac Duford had the first one, Cedric Desruisseaux the next one.

Morgan Moisan-Adams, who had a killer series, got the fourth visitors goal at 10:54 on a penalty shot after being hauled down on a breakaway.

While the Lions arrived in town as a sixth place team, not resembling the ECHL defending champion, they are an entirely different team with Jones in goal. Trois-Rivieres improved to 13-5-0 with him as the goaltender of record. The Lions are 21-20-4 overall.

Registration now underway for QVBL

SOUTH HADLEY - Registration has opened for the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, an over-28 recreational league, held its first meeting of 2026 to prepare for the upcoming season.

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

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

Those elements will return along with a 16th game with an opponent to be determine as the league's

board explores possibilities for interleague matchups with another league in the region.

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

The season is currently slated to start on Sunday, April 19 and following the success of the six-team fall

league last year, the league will also have a fall league in September and October this season.

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

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

This is the 30th season for the league and league officials are looking to celebrate the anniversary with a couple of events.



Public Notices

Town of Agawam Legal Notice

The Agawam Planning Board will hold a public hearing on Thursday, March 5, 2026 at 6:10pm and the Agawam City Council will hold a public hearing on Monday, March 16, 2026 at 7:00pm, both in the Veterans Hall at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. The purpose of these hearings will be to hear the petition of Dikan & Ashlaban for a zone change request for 515 & 533 Mill Street from Business B & Agricultural to Residence A-2. City Council's public hearing will be livestreamed on the Town of Agawam's website at www.agawam.ma.us and will also be televised on Cable Access Channel 15 or Channel 1074. Copies of the proposed zone change can be obtained from the Planning Department between the hours of 7:30am and 3:30pm at the Agawam DPW, 1000 Suffield Street, Agawam, MA or by emailing the Office of the City Clerk for an electronic copy at vgioscia@agawam.ma.us

By Order Of:
Violet Baldwin, Chair
Agawam Planning Board
Anthony Russo, President
Agawam City Council
02/19, 02/26/2026

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. HD03P185476TP1

In the matter of:
Hortense H. Bergeron
Date of Death: 01/01/1900
CITATION ON PETITION FOR ALLOWANCE OF ACCOUNT

To all interested persons:
A Petition has been filed by: Bank of America, N.A. of Springfield, MA Philip J Ryan of SAINT PETERSBURG, FL requesting allowance of the 31st through 36th account(s) as Trustee and any other relief as requested in the Petition.

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 03/13/2026.

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 date, action may be

taken without further notice to you.

Witness, Hon. Claudine T. Stouemire, First Justice of this Court.

Date: February 06, 2026
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate

2/19/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Division Docket No. HD26P0273EA

Estate of:
Barbara Joan Capponcelli
Also Known As:
Barbara J. Capponcelli
Date of Death:
October 12, 2025

INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner Bruce A. Capponcelli of Brookline, VT a Will has been admitted to informal probate.

Bruce A. Capponcelli of Brookline, VT has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve without surety on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory

and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.
02/19/2026

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. HD26P0275EA

Estate of:
Michael Anthony Lim
Also known as:
Michael A Lim
Date of Death: 08/18/2025

CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for Formal Ad-

judication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Kieran M Lim of West Springfield, 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 Kieran M Lim of West Springfield, 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 03/09/2026. 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. Stouemire, First Justice of this Court.

Date: February 09, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate

02/19/2026

AGAWAM PLANNING BOARD LEGAL NOTICE

The Agawam Planning Board will hold a public hearing on Thursday, March 5, 2026 at 6:00 PM at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam. The purpose of this hearing will be to hear the petition of Calabrese Construction, LLC for a Definitive Subdivision Plan for property at Old River Street, 27 Walnut Street, & 17 High Street

By Order of
Vi Baldwin, Chairperson
Agawam Planning Board
02/19, 02/26/2026

Agawam Advertiser News

OBITUARY POLICY

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

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

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The Town of North Brookfield is looking for a **PART-TIME PROGRAM ASSISTANT** for the Senior Center. Please submit a resume with a letter of interest to the **Selectmen's Office, 215 North Main St., North Brookfield, MA 01535**; or by email to: selectmen@northbrookfield.net.

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13	14	15	16
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25 Base Price \$28.50	26 Base Price \$29.00	27 Base Price \$29.50	28 Base Price \$30.00
29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
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AGAWAM ENERGY CENTER

PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Battery Energy Storage System (BESS)
- Lithium-Iron-Phosphate
- 250 MW / 4 hr
- Enough energy to power 285,000 residential homes for 4 hours
- City-led permit process
- Set back from Silver Street, with native landscaping, solid 16ft fence, and main storefront repurposed

LOCATION




- 769 Silver Street, Agawam
- Industrial zone
- 17 acre parcel
- Design avoids tree clearing and impacts to wetlands and wetland buffers
- Adjacent to existing electrical infrastructure
- Not located on a water aquifer

SAFETY

- Incorporates the latest proven technology
- Designed to the most stringent safety standards
- Monitoring from Longroad's 24/7/365 staffed operations center
- Agawam fire department coordination and training

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- Generate new long-term tax revenue
- Enable comprehensive community benefits plan
- Provide construction and long-term employment opportunities
- Requires limited city services
- Revitalize an idle industrial property

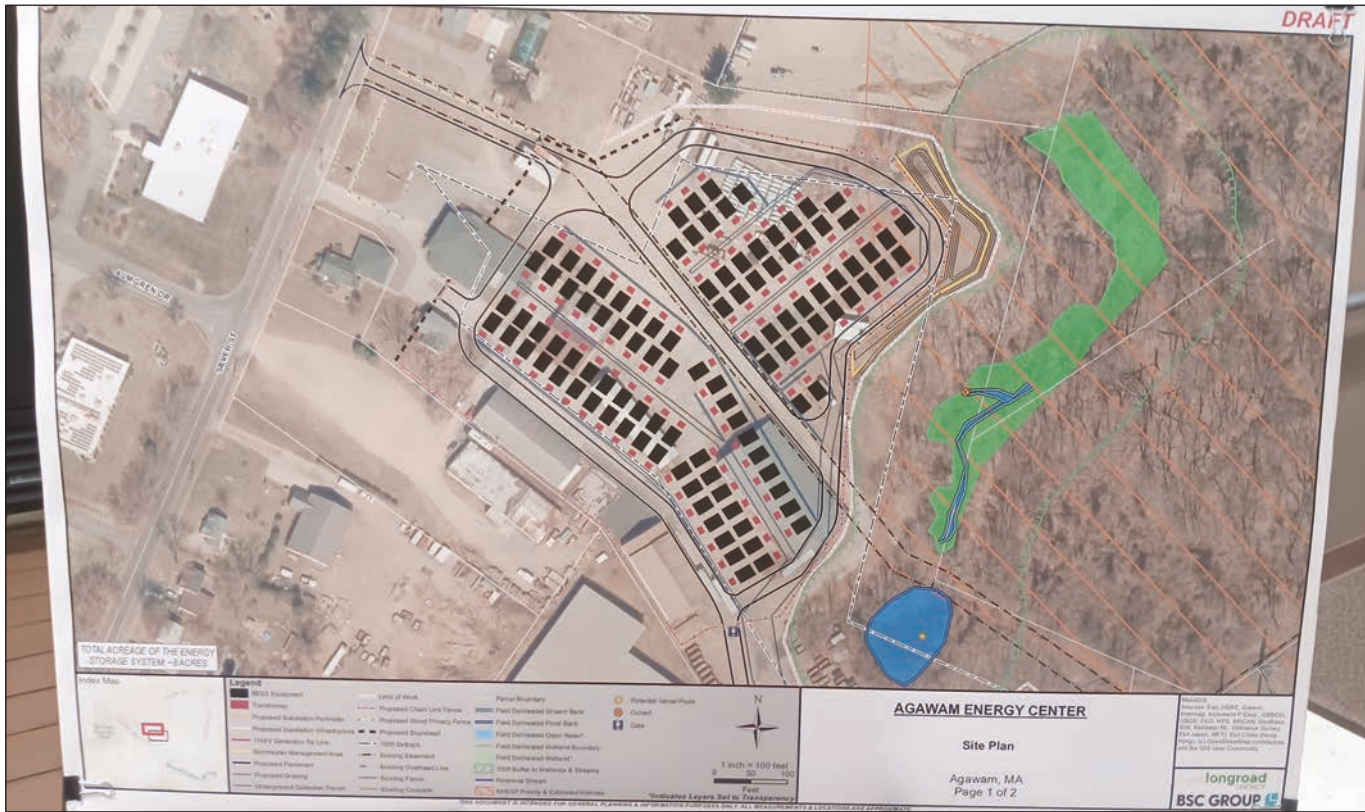
SCHEDULE

Year	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Project Development	Start				
Project Permitting		Start			
Project Construction			Start		
Test & Commission				Start	

WHY BESS?

- Stores energy during low energy demand, when energy prices are lower
- Discharges energy during peak energy demand, when energy prices are higher
- By supplying energy when demand is highest, storage can help curb prices for electricity consumers

Preliminary plans for the site were shown at the information meetings last month.



DRAFT

AGAWAM ENERGY CENTER

Site Plan
Agawam, MA
Page 1 of 2

longroad
BSC GROUP

The Planning Board will now be evaluating the formal site plan for the property.

PLAN ■ from page 1

place that a BESS will be installed. “They need more power to meet the demand,” Johnson “There are more of these coming all over the state.”

While nothing can be done about a BESS being allowed to be installed on a site in the community, how it is done can be regulated a little bit more locally. “There are some communities that don’t have any regulations and energy companies go through the state approval process,” Johnson said. “In that case, the towns and cities don’t get a say in anything.”

Now the Agawam Planning Board will get to evaluate the site plan to ensure that Longroad meets the requirements of those standards. If the project continues to move forward, it is expected to come online around 2028 or 2029, right in time to start generating much-needed tax revenue to help offset funds needed to pay for the Agawam High School project. The facility is expected to become the second-highest taxpayer in the community, according to Johnson.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI
Mayor Christopher Johnson addresses residents.

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BOLDYGA ■ from page 1

by reckless spending, over-regulation, and one-party rule.”

One-party rule has occurred a couple of times during his tenure in the State House, first under Democratic Gov. Deval Patrick, and now under Maura Healey. Boldyga was in the state house during two terms of Charlie Baker, a Republican who stepped down in 2022 and now runs the NCAA.

Boldyga said the cost living in Massachusetts is overwhelming and is being driven by progressive radical agendas that serve special interests over common sense policies.

“These policies continue to harm low- and middle-income residents,” Boldyga said. “Make no mistakes about it, Democrats in Boston created this problem and their solution is only making matters worse.”

Boldyga said he is in full favor of an audit of the state legislature’s spending, something Democrats in the majority have resisted, calling it a violation of the separation of powers in government. An audit of the state legislature was approved by a ballot question voted on by the people in the Commonwealth. But attempts by the state auditor to conduct that audit have been met with resistance and lawsuits seeking to throw out the intention of the ballot question.

Boldyga also says he will reject a single-payer system of healthcare, saying it will drive out providers in Massachusetts, limiting options for residents.

Boldyga represents the Third Hampden District, which has grown to include several communities, including seven of eight precincts in Agawam, Boldyga’s home town of Southwick, Granville, Tolland, as well as the hill-towns of Russell, Blandford, Montgomery, Chester, Huntington, and Middlefield.



State Rep.
Nicholas Boldyga

Boldyga currently serves on the Human Resources and Employee Engagement Committee, and the joint committees on Aging and Independence, Agriculture and Fisheries, and Revenue.

This will be the first time, provided both his opponents turn in nomination papers and are certified to be on the ballot, that Boldyga will face two challengers in the general election. Boldyga has defeated multiple Democratic opponents in the general election in the past, and has competed in a primary just once. He has never faced an independent or other third party opponent.

Boldyga was previously a member of the Southwick Select Board, which he was a member of for 18 months of a three-year term before he was elected state representative

HEALTH ■ from page 5

everything there is a season. Making a few changes in your routines and habits can help you feel better this fall.

Entertain yourself: Even in the Middle Ages, people enjoyed indoor games like chess, as well as outdoor activities and fall fetes.

As the saying goes, to everything there is a season. Making a few changes in your routines and habits can help you feel better this fall.

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

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