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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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Game Central: Teens welcomed

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The library hosted a Nintendo Switch Gaming afternoon to all children in grades five through twelve.

This event is put on by Librarian Evan Delano every third Friday of the month from 2:30 to 4 p.m. in the children's room at the library.

Those interested are welcome to come and enjoy, they are also invited to bring their own switch or switch games.

"People can bring their own games and, as long as they are library appropriate, we can play them," Delano said.

The library has a variety of games to choose from, so those in attendance decide which game they will play at the beginning of the event each time.



Children in grades five through 12 were welcome to come to Agawam Public Library to play a variety of Nintendo Switch games. TURLEY PHOTO BY QUINN SUOMALA

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Committee: Lack of facility to build parade float

Agawam's St. Patrick's Day contingent will be led by a horse-drawn carriage

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – For the second straight year, the Agawam St. Patrick's Committee will not be building a parade float this year due to lack of building space.

Instead, the Colleens will be riding in on a horse drawn carriage, provided by Mainly Drafts in Ludlow.

"This year we might be using a beautiful white wedding carriage with green upholstery drawn by a single horse," Doug Reed from the Agawam St. Patrick's Committee said.

They had used a horse drawn carriage last year as well, which while not the usual parade float, was still exciting for the crowd.

"Last year people thought the horse drawn carriage was really cool," Reed said.

While Reed and others on the committee are disappointed that they could not do a parade float this year, they were glad they were still able to provide something for the Colleens to use during the parade.

"It's a little bit of a let down because we have an awful lot of first place trophies to showcase for but it's really about the experience for the girls," Reed said. "And it is really a pretty darn good substitute in the pinch that we're in."

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Agawam St. Patrick's had used a space at Six Flags in order to construct their float. However, after the pandemic when they returned, Six Flags was no longer able to lend them the space.

Therefore, while the first year they had been able to finish off a float they had started prior to the pandemic, last year and this year they were unable to get a new location to build their float.

It is difficult to get a location that is both large enough to contain a float, and that someone is

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Doering students sweep Elks Writing Contest

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Three students from Roberta G. Doering School took the top three places in the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Americanism Essay Contest.

These students were Sixth Graders Karolena Poznyur, Ava Skowron, and Coranna Murphy from Teacher Kathleen Goyette-Jediny's class. These students took first, second and third place respectively.

This contest was geared toward students in grades five through eight. They were asked to write about what the Bill of Rights means to them in an essay that did not exceed 300 words.

To prepare for the essay, Goyette-Jediny taught her students about what the Bill of Rights is and the different ideas it contains.

"We went through the rights and we went through the importance of what they meant to the students," Goyette-Jediny said. "The students really narrowed

down the importance of the Bill of Rights and what our freedoms are."

Using those lessons and their personal experiences, her students then began their essay writing. Some of them covered ideas of how different minorities achieved rights in the United States, while others focused on the importance of the rights we have.

"A few of them touched on how we got to have [the rights] and how other countries don't have them," Goyette-Jediny said.

"Some of them made it general about the bill of rights and some of them nailed it down to 'this is how we got here and how we fought for our freedoms within our own country.'"

Goyette-Jediny is beyond proud of her students and all the work they put forth for this contest.

"I am proud of every single one of them for writing from their heart," Goyette-Jediny said.

This was her first time doing the contest and she was blown away by the fact that her students received first, second and third place at the local level.

Her students have now been entered into the district-level competition. If any of them win that, they will move onto the state-level and then potentially the national level.

Goyette-Jediny looks forward to hearing how her students do as they move forward.

In her classroom Goyette-Jediny strongly pushes writing and encourages her students to love writing.

"I do a lot of writing with my students and I think we work hard at it," Goyette-Jediny said. "I think that when the students can see that it's important they rise to the occasion and it becomes important to them."

By entering this contest, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars writing contest (which her stu-



Doering Sixth Graders Karolena Poznyur, Ava Skowron, and Coranna Murphy were presented with certificates and awards for winning the Elks writing contest. They are joined by Mayor Christopher Johnson, Lodge Secretary and Americanism Committee Chairperson Patricia O'Connor and Exalted Ruler Milt Vazquez

TURLEY PHOTO BY QUINN SUOMALA

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Winter reading challenge at APL

AGAWAM – Did you know kids and teens can enter to win prizes just by logging reading online? The Agawam Public Library's annual Winter Reading Challenge goes through Feb. 29. During this time kids and teens can log days that they read on the library's Beanstack website found at, agawamlibrary.beanstack.org. On March 4, the prize winners will be announced, so be sure to log all the reading and earn raffle tickets before that day. For more information about this program or other programs at the Agawam Library go to our website agawamlibrary.org or call 413-789-1550 ext. 3.

Winter Blues Art Festival on March 2

AGAWAM – The Agawam Community Artists and Artisans will present Beat the Winter Blues Art Festival on Saturday March 2, with snow date of March 9. The Art Festival will become an annual event.

The art festival will take place at the Sacred Heart Parish Hall, 1061 Springfield St., from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

There will be food served from the Sacred Heart Parish kitchen. Breakfast and lunch may be purchased.

Artists and artisans will be selling framed original art, prints, pottery, fused glass, jewelry, stained glass, photography, wire art, wood craft, gourds, and more.

For further information please contact Ceil Rossi email at tocarefree2@hotmail.com or call (413) 207-1247

Kids' clothing, books needed

AGAWAM – Agawam High School's SAVE Club and National Honor Society, along with Agawam's Zero Waste Club, are hosting their 6th Annual Kids' Used Clothing and Book Exchange. This event was created to normalize the reuse of clothing and books that remain in good condition.

Clean, gently used, kids' clothing and books will be collected at the Agawam Public Library on Friday March 8, from 1 to 5 p.m. All types of clothing and books from infant through teen styles, are de-

sired. No footwear, including shoes, boots or sneakers will be accepted. All donations will be screened before donors leave.

Free shopping of this clothing will take place on Saturday, March 9 at the Agawam Public Library from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Shoppers are asked to bring reusable shopping bags, as this is a zero-waste event. Any clothing or books that remain will be donated to local charities. For more information, email Nancy Bobskill at AgawamZeroWaste@gmail.com.

Help end hunger at Crop Walk

AGAWAM – Looking to make a difference in our local community and in communities worldwide, the Agawam/West Springfield CROP Hunger Walk has set a goal of 100 Walkers and hopes to raise \$10,000 to help end hunger and poverty through long-term sustainable approaches. A portion (25%) of the funds raised here in Agawam, Feeding Hills, and West Springfield will go to the Parish Cupboard in West Springfield. Last year, 55 Walkers raised more than \$9,700.00 through the CROP Hunger Walk.

This year's event will take place at Feeding Hills United Church of Christ, 21 North Westfield St., on Sunday April 28. Together, our local communities and some 1,000 others nationwide are joining together in interfaith CROP Hunger Walks around the theme "Ending hunger one step at a time."

Many of the Walkers will be proclaim-

ing their solidarity with the millions of neighbors around the world who have to walk to live, as well as with the millions served by local food pantries, food banks and meal sites here in the U.S. from combating droughts to providing agricultural training to stocking shelves in hundreds of food pantries across the United States, CROP Hunger Walks are fighting hunger.

Churches, school teams, civic groups and groups of friends are urged to take part this spring. There will be a CROP Team Captain's Rally on Saturday, March 2 at Feeding Hills UCC at 9 a.m. CROP promotion material packets will be available, as well as refreshments. For more information, please contact CROP Coordinator Diana Forfa at drforfa@hotmail.com or by calling 413-739-6608. Learn more about CROP at www.crop-hungerwalk.org.

Food donation for Lent

AGAWAM – Not sure how to give back in this season of Lent? At Feeding Hills Congregational Church we challenge individuals and families to donate 40 non perishable food items in 40 days. Items can be dropped off at the church weekly or following Easter. All donations are to benefit the West Springfield Parish Cupboard which services families in need throughout West Springfield, Agawam, and Feeding Hills.

Tickets available for Hibernian breakfast

HOLYOKE – In concert with the festivities surrounding the 2024 Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade the Ancient Order of Hibernians, James A. Curran, Division One of Hampden Hampshire Counties invites the public to attend the annual Communion Breakfast on Sunday March 10, at 8:00 a.m. A Memorial Mass at St. Jerome Church, followed by a Breakfast at 9:00 a.m. at the Wyckoff Country Club, 233 Easthampton Road, Holyoke.

The Hibernians will honor James P. Kelly, CEO of the Polish National Credit Union with the 2024 Hibernian Christian Charity Award. The Guest speaker will be Erin Duffy Lacy, Irish National Dance Champion and Research Fellow at Harvard Medical School.

For reservations by March 8, call Atty. John J. Driscoll at 413-537-1573. Tickets are \$25.00 per person (Tables of 10).



St. Patrick's parade to be held March 17

HOLYOKE – The St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke is excited to announce the 71st annual Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade will be held on Sunday, March 17. The Parade will air live at noon on WWLP-22News and be live-streamed on WWLP.com.

"The St. Patrick's Committee is thrilled to host the 71st Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade on St. Patrick's Day this year" said 2024 Parade President, Hayley Dunn. "The Committee has been working hard all year to secure phenomenal talent and entertainment for all to enjoy on Parade Day. We can't wait to see you along the Parade Route!"

In order to arrive at Holyoke High

School in time for the noon broadcast, the Parade will step-off at approximately 11:10 a.m. from the former Kmart Plaza. The parade's website, www.holyokestpatrick-parade.com, will provide all of the details regarding the parade route and parking information for spectators.

22News Anchors Rich Tettermer and Taylor Knight, along with Sheila Moreau from the Parade Committee, will serve as Parade hosts. Throughout the event, the 22News team will provide interviews from the Parade route with participants and bystanders throughout the coverage.

St. Patrick's Road Race will be held on Saturday, March 16.

Garden Club scholarships available

AGAWAM – Applications are now available for the Agawam Garden Club 2024 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 June meeting. Completed applications along with transcripts and references must be submitted to Denise Carmody, 40 Primrose Lane, Agawam MA 01001 by April 1. Applications are available through Agawam High School or can be found on our website at agawamgardenclub.com.

Scholarship and fellowships offered

WESTFIELD – The Horace Smith Fund has scholarship and fellowship money available for graduates of Hampden County public and private high schools. Graduating high school seniors and students already in college may apply for Scholarships of \$12,000. Those in their final year of college and previous college graduates pursuing advanced degrees may apply for Fellowships of \$15,000. Applicants must maintain at least a B average in college and be enrolled as full-time students. Awards are made based on both academic achievement and financial need. Of great importance is a personal written account of why the student feels deserving of financial assistance and their goals in pursuing higher education.

Last year, \$316,000 was awarded to 30 individuals. Scholarships were given to 22 grad-

uating seniors from nine Hampden County high schools. Three scholarships were also awarded to current college students to assist them in completing their undergraduate degrees. Five fellowships were given to college graduates pursuing advanced degrees, who had graduated from Hampden County high schools. The Horace Smith Fund was established in 1899 by the successful and generous philanthropist named Horace Smith, co-founder of Smith & Wesson, established in Springfield. Completed applications must be received either electronically or by mail to The Horace Smith Fund at 16 Union Avenue, Suite 2K, Westfield, MA 01085 no later than March 15. Applications are available at local high school guidance offices, college financial aid offices, online at www.HoraceSmithFund.org or by phoning (413) 739-4222.

Dr. Ilyasah Shabazz, daughter of Malcolm X, to speak at STCC Feb. 29

SPRINGFIELD – Dr. Ilyasah Shabazz, the daughter of the late activists Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz, will speak at Springfield Technical Community College on Feb. 29 at noon as part of the college's celebration of Black History Month.

Shabazz, an accomplished educator, author and activist, will share her insights and experiences rooted in the rich legacy of African American history and culture.

Shabazz will speak in the auditorium of Scibelli Hall (Building 2) at STCC. The event is free and open to the public. Attendees are encouraged to pre-register. To register for the event, please visit stcc.io/shabazz.

Shabazz is chairperson of the Malcolm

X & Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center Board of Trustees. In her work to preserve the legacy of her parents, she has dedicated herself to institution-building and intergenerational leadership development with the tenets of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Her books include a memoir, "Growing Up X," and a children's book, "Malcolm Little: The Boy Who Grew Up to Become Malcolm X."

Shabazz has furthered her community impact with the City University of New



Dr. Ilyasah Shabazz

York's Office of Academic Affairs, where she created a curriculum to encourage higher education for underserved, inner-city and marginalized high school dropouts.

She has worked with the Office of the Mayor in Mount Vernon, as director of Public Affairs & Special Events. She founded and produced a young adult development program to provide historical context on social justice – encouraging

personal empowerment and community service as a way of life.

As president and founder of Ilyasah Shabazz Enterprises, she produces a variety of forums dedicated to power, possibility and sovereignty.

"We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Shabazz to STCC," said Dr. Kiyota Garcia, Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs and Interim Chief Equity Officer at STCC. "We want our students, staff and faculty and the community to prepare to be enlightened and empowered by Dr. Shabazz. She will illuminate the significance of Black history and its enduring impact on society."

Interested in applying to STCC? Visit stcc.edu/apply or call Admissions at (413) 755-3333.

New amendment added to gun bill by Velis

BOSTON – During the Senate's gun bill debate, an amendment by Sen. John Velis (D-Westfield) was unanimously adopted with bi-partisan support to create a legal mechanism to ensure that repeat violent offenders of gun crimes, who have violated the conditions of their release can be detained until trial.

The amendment, which was supported by both the Massachusetts Chief of Police Association and the Massachusetts District Attorney Association, focuses directly on individuals without a license-to-carry who have been charged with a gun or violent offense, released following a hearing, and who subsequently have violated the conditions of that release by committing yet another gun crime or violent offense.

"If we keep allowing repeat violent firearm offenders who have no regard for the conditions of their release, our gun laws, or human life back on the streets then we are going to continue to see lives lost by senseless violence and families forever devastat-

ed by what should have been preventable," stated Velis. "The violent gun crimes that we are seeing and hearing about in our communities, are overwhelmingly being committed by individuals without a legal license to have a gun, who have a known demonstrable propensity for violence, and it's past time that we had a mechanism to address that."

"I am fully supportive of this amendment as it will give law enforcement an additional tool in keeping victims and the general public safe from those who repeatedly pose significant risk to public safety," said Hampden District Attorney Anthony D. Gulluni. "We are increasingly seeing the same offenders out in our community brazenly re-offend and ignore our serious gun and drug laws. This would be a significant step in keeping law abiding peo-



Sen. John Velis

ple and families safe in their communities."

In the Velis's floor remarks, he noted several recent gun crimes in Western Massachusetts that this amendment aims to address, including the arrest of an individual charged with murder just last week in Springfield. The individual had not only been convicted of a prior firearm offense but was out on bail for three separate gun charges at the time of his arrest. Velis also recounted the tragic death of an infant this past fall in the City of Holyoke where an innocent pregnant woman was struck by a stray bullet while traveling on a PVTA bus resulting in devastating loss of her baby. One of the suspects charged with the infant's horrific murder was out on bail for an unrelated open firearm charge at the time of the shooting.

"We cannot lose sight of all the people who live in constant fear of the gun violence happening right outside their front door or across the street from their child's school on a daily basis by the offenders who are released over, and over, and over again," said Velis, who noted that the City of Springfield's shot spotter had picked up 9 separate instances of gun fire on Wednesday afternoon, including a couple hundred yards away from an elementary school. "We have an opportunity today that would send a clear message to these violent repeat offenders, if you are released for a violent crime or unlawful gun offense and go back into our communities and cause more of the same havoc you will be detained until your trial, and we will not let you cause more senseless harm."

With the amendment included in the Senate's final gun bill, the legislation will now be a part of the House-Senate negotiations on a final compromise bill.

Connecticut Trolley Museum looking for volunteers

EAST WINDSOR, CT – Connecticut Trolley Museum will hold a Volunteer Recruitment Day on Feb.17. There will be two sessions to visit, 10 a.m. to noon and 1 to 3 p.m. Visit alone or bring the family. There will be snacks and refreshments to enjoy. Registration is required at www.ct-trolley.org.

Join the Museum for our Volunteer Open House. The Museum was founded in 1940 and ever since then the Museum has relied on volunteers who are enthusiastic about volunteering. Without volunteers the Museum would not be able to exist and serve the mission of interpretation, preservation, and education of Trolley History. Volun-

teers do not have to specifically be enthusiastic about trolley history to volunteer at the Museum. There are many departments to fulfill your volunteer need such as- Education, Operating, Woodworking, Mechanical Work, Restoration, Grounds Works, Track Work, Signal & Communication Work, Special Events, Clerical Work, Tour Guides and more.

The Connecticut Trolley Museum is located at 58 North Road (Rt. 140) and is a short 15 minutes north of Hartford or a short 15 minutes south of Springfield. For more information, please call our business office at 860-627-6540 or visit our website at www.ct-trolley.org.



St. Joseph's to hold Italian dinner

WESTFIELD – St. Joseph's National Catholic Church, 73 Main St., is hosting a community Italian dinner on March 10 at noon. This community dinner will feature traditional baked cheese lasagna, meatballs with marinara sauce, salad, fresh Italian bread and an Italian dessert along with hot coffee and cold beverages.

Dine-In or Take-Out tickets are \$18 for adults and \$8 for children under 12. For tickets, contact (413) 562-3067 and leave a message with number of tickets requested (Dine-In or Take-Out) along with your

name and telephone number. The deadline for purchasing tickets is March 7. Take-out dinners will be available for pick-up at 12:30 p.m. Everybody is welcome.



Conference for women May 9

SPRINGFIELD – The third annual Pioneer Valley Conference for Women will be held May 9 at the Marriott Springfield Downtown from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The conference will be held in person and virtually. This year's theme is Unleashed. Sponsors include M&T Bank and USI.

Dr. Christina Royal will serve as emcee for the conference. The former president of Holyoke Community College, Royal is now president and CEO of Infinite Unlearning, LLC, a woman, BIPOC, and queer-owned executive coaching and consultancy service supporting mid to senior leaders and their organizations. Her goal is to educate leaders on a new paradigm of the future of work and help them shed their limiting beliefs and lead from a place of potential.

Keynote speakers are Meghan Rothschild, president, and owner of the marketing and public relations firm Chikmedia, and Jessika Rozki, founder of Rozki Rides, a transportation service focusing on children

and seniors.

Rothschild is an award-winning business owner, public speaker, and social influencer. As a speaker, she is known for engaging audiences on topics such as social media, marketing strategy, public relations, women in business, melanoma survivorship, and living with endometriosis.

Rozki's career in transportation began 15 years ago as a school bus driver in Chicopee. In 2019, with the resolve to balance her professional aspirations and family life, Rozki launched Rozki Rides. Based in Greater Springfield, the company started as a professional transportation service catering primarily to families.

In addition, there will be 10 different panels that women can choose to attend in the morning and afternoon. Panelists, all local women, will be announced in the coming months. For more information, visit <https://sheslocal.org/pioneer-valley-conference-for-women/>.

FEMA award MA for testing costs

BOSTON – The Federal Emergency Management Agency will be sending almost \$13.5 million to the state of Massachusetts to reimburse it for the cost of providing testing at public schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The \$13,450,826 Public Assistance grant will reimburse the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for contracting with Trans Med USA Inc. and Merrow Medical to provide test kits at schools between July 2022 and May 2023.

The department purchased and distributed 1,089,354 COVID-19 antigen tests to students, faculty and staff at schools statewide during that time period.

"FEMA is pleased to be able to assist Massachusetts with these costs," said FEMA Region 1 Regional Administrator

Lori Ehrlich. "Reimbursing state, county, and municipal governments, as well as eligible non-profits and tribal entities, for the costs incurred during the COVID-19 pandemic is an important part of our nation's ongoing recovery."

FEMA's Public Assistance program is an essential source of funding for states and communities recovering from a federally declared disaster or emergency.

So far, FEMA has provided nearly \$2.8 billion in Public Assistance grants to Massachusetts to reimburse the commonwealth for pandemic-related expenses.

Additional information about FEMA's Public Assistance program is available at <https://www.fema.gov/public-assistance-local-state-tribal-and-non-profit>. To learn more about the COVID-19 response in Massachusetts, please visit <https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4496>.

Holyoke Community College Jazz Festival set for March 1 and 2

HOLYOKE – Hot off a win for Best Latin Jazz Album at the 66th annual Grammy awards, pianist, composer, and band leader Luis Perdomo will be the featured guest artist at the 25th anniversary Holyoke Community College Jazz Festival, March 1 and March 2.

The two-day festival opens on Friday, March 1, with an 8 p.m. concert with Perdomo performing with the Amherst Jazz Orchestra under the direction of David Sporny on the stage of the Leslie Phillips Theater in the HCC Fine & Performing Arts building.

The Friday night concert is free for HCC students, faculty and staff, and \$10 for the general public.

"Luis is a great musician, a great teacher, and a great guy," said festival organizer and HCC music professor Bob Ferrier. "I know

him from the Jazz in July program at UMAss, where we teach together. He just won a Grammy for the number one Latin Jazz Album, so that's special. We're very happy to have him here at HCC for our 25th anniversary festival."

The festival will continue on Sat., March 2, in the Leslie Phillips Theater with jazz combo performances. Jazz clinics, workshops and jam sessions will be held throughout the day in the HCC Recital Hall.

Perdomo will conduct two music clinics, one at 11 a.m. and another at 1 p.m.

A concluding concert will be held in the theater Saturday afternoon featuring Perdomo with HCC students and festival faculty.

In addition to his work as a performer, Perdomo is a composer, bandleader, and

teacher. He began performing in his native Venezuela as a teenager and now makes his home in New York City. He is also an associate professor of music at Berklee in Boston.

A prolific sideman, he has appeared on more than 200 records, playing with the likes of artists such as David Sanchez and David Gilmore as well as recording seven albums as a bandleader. He was a member of Ravi Coltrane's Quartet for 10 years and is a founding member of the Miguel Zenon Quartet.

The Amherst Jazz Orchestra, led by trombonist David Sporny, has been a mainstay of the HCC Jazz Festival since the first one in 1998. The HCC Jazz Festival has been held every year except for 2020 and 2021 when it was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Pianist Luis Perdomo will be featured at the HCC Jazz Festival. SUBMITTED PHOTO

Opinion

Guest Column

in the Garden

by *Roberta McQuaid*

More questions for the Garden Lady

Eleanor wrote in with this question for the Garden Lady regarding amaryllis bulbs: "I have three bulbs from last year that have been hibernating and now they are in the sun and have produced long green leaves but no buds. I read it somewhere that if you let them dry out, no more water, but keep them in the sun they will send out buds, but I cannot find where I read that. I hope it is true...so I can still get flowers this year before I have to repeat the whole process (by putting them back in dormant condition in August for a few weeks). I do have one more bulb from last year that did give me a flower...but these other three ones are not showing me any prospects. Can you help?"

Without seeing your bulbs and the foliage, my best guess would be that they will likely not flower this year. What leads me to that conclusion is that one other bulb you have already flowered.

If they were on the same timeline, then probably the other bulbs did not have enough strength to send up a flower stalk. I would not let them dry out, but continue to water and fertilize monthly so that the foliage will grow strong, and be able to make enough energy for blooms next year, after a period of dormancy in the fall.

I know this is upsetting after all of your hard work. Re-bloom is often an experiment.

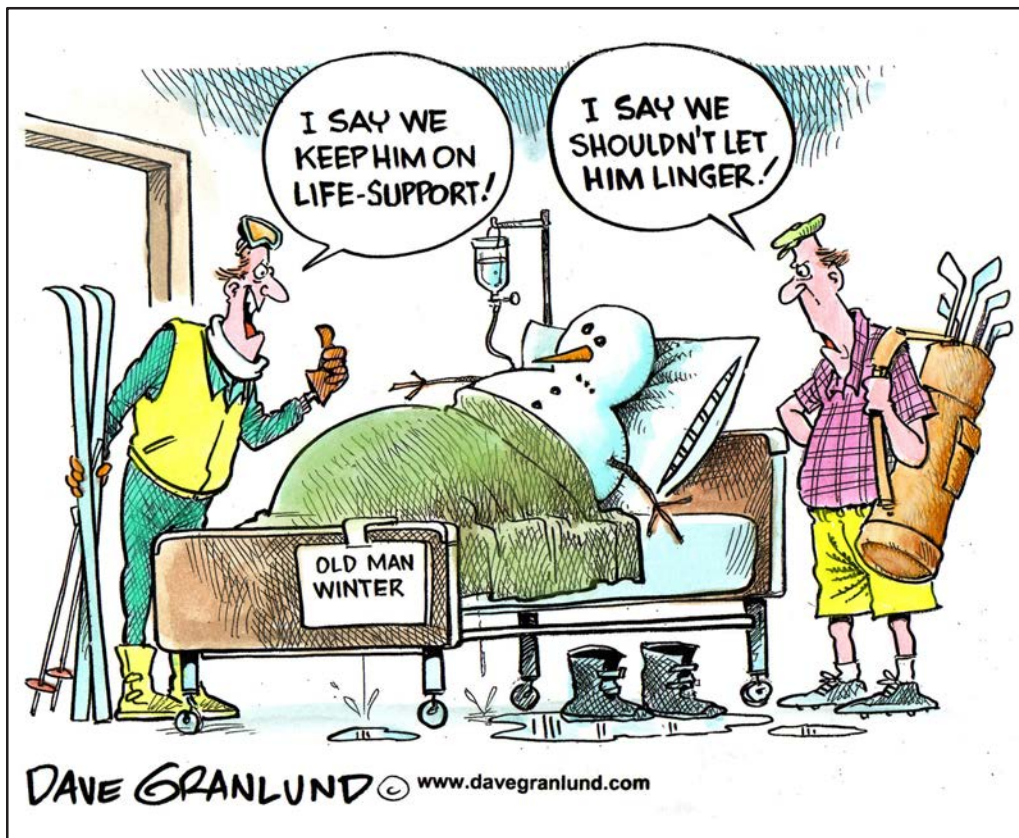
Sadly, sometimes it happens and sometimes it doesn't. It may not be anything you did wrong - it could be that the one bulb that did flower was a bigger bulb to begin with or was from healthier stock initially.

Meredith, who gardens in Wilbraham, posed this question to the Garden Lady: "As I look at all of the seed packets strewn before me, what your best advice would be for starting seeds indoors?"

Ah-hah! I have been itching to talk about this, so your timing is perfect.

Although we are excited to get the season started, the biggest mistake people

GARDEN | page 5



Guest Column

in my BACKYARD

By *Ellenor Downer*



Goldfinch

I received an email from a Brimfield resident who counted 36 plus American goldfinch in his yard during a snow storm. The next day he saw about a dozen.

I also had about 20 plus goldfinch eating on the ground under my feeder. I had seen two or three mixed in with juncos and sparrows from time to time, but not this many. In winter, they are found in flocks that wander in search of food.

The American goldfinch is five inches long. The male during breeding season has a bright yellow body and black cap, wings and tail. The wings also have white bars. The female is yellowish, green overall with black wings and tail.

In winter, the male looks more like the female with a yellowish brown, yellowish wash on the face and chin and black wings with white wing bars. The female in winter is grayish brown with a little yellow and dark brown wings with white wing bars.

Goldfinch feed on the ground, on weed stalks, thistles and foliage. At feeders, they prefer hulled sunflowers and thistle (Niger) seeds.

The female lays three to seven light, blue eggs in a nest of strands from weeds and vines, downy elements from wind-dispersed seeds such as thistles bound with caterpillar webbing placed in a shrub or tree.

BACKYARD | page 5

Should I claim Social Security at 68 or wait until I'm 70?

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By *Russell Gloor*

Dear Rusty

I have a question regarding my SS benefits. I turned 68 this month and work part time.

I earned \$28,000 last year, but will probably gross \$36,000 to \$38,000 this year. My husband collects his SS and he earned \$25,000 last year. I was told by a financial planner that I should apply for my benefits now, instead of waiting until I'm 70. I would collect \$1,700 per month at 68 and \$1,944 per month if I wait. Which is the smarter move?

Signed: Seeking Answers

Dear Seeking:

I'm sure your financial advisor would agree that your decision on when to claim your Social Security comes down to just a few basic things: 1) how badly you need the money, 2) your life expectancy and 3) whether you will receive a spousal boost from your husband when you claim.

Because you have already passed your Full

Retirement Age of 66 years and 4 months, your work earnings won't negatively affect your monthly SS benefit amount. If you claim now, however, your work earnings will affect how much of your SS benefits will be subject to income tax. Assuming you file your income tax as "married/filing jointly," up to 85% of the Social Security benefits you receive during the tax year will become part of your income taxable by the IRS. If you do not urgently need the extra money that your SS will provide, then waiting longer to claim will also postpone paying income tax on your received benefits and that may be a consideration.

Your life expectancy is key in making your decision on when to claim. You already know that your benefit will be \$244 per month more if you wait until you are 70 to claim. If you claim at 68 (e.g., this month), you will collect about \$40,800 by the time you reach 70. If you, instead, wait until age 70 to get that extra \$244 per month benefit, it will take you about 14 years collecting at the higher rate to offset the \$40,800 you would have received had you claimed now (in other words, you would break even money wise at about age 84). If your life expectancy is longer, then waiting to claim may be the better choice. Of course, no one knows how long they will live but, for general guidance, average life expectancy for a woman your current age is about 87. Family history and your current

health are obviously influencing factors as well. If you wish to get a more personal estimate of your life expectancy, I suggest using this tool:

www.socialsecurityreport.org/tools/life-expectancy-calculator/.

In the end, if you believe you will attain at least average life expectancy and you don't urgently need the money now, waiting longer will not only give you a higher monthly benefit in your later years, but also the most in cumulative lifetime benefits. If, however, you have reason to suspect you won't achieve at least average life expectancy or you need the SS money sooner, claiming before age 70 is likely the better move.

One other thing to consider: If your benefit as your husband's spouse will be more than your own earned maximum SS retirement benefit, then you should claim your SS benefit now. Your maximum benefit as a spouse would be 50% of your husband's full retirement age entitlement and, if that is more than your own benefit will be at age 70, then claiming now to get your maximum spousal benefit would be your best choice. To get a spousal benefit from your husband, your personal FRA entitlement (not your age 68 amount) would need to be less than half of his FRA entitlement. If that isn't the case, then you should make your decision based only on your own Social Security entitlement, as de-

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PHONE

413.283.8393
Fax: 413.283.7107
Subscriptions: 413.283.8393

EMAIL

Advertising Sales
Wendy Delcamp
wdelcamp@turley.com

Editor

Gregory Scibelli
aan@turley.com

Subscriptions

cgriswold@turley.com

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AGAWAM ADVERTISER NEWS TEAM



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



ADVERTISING SALES
Wendy Delcamp
wdelcamp@turley.com

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PATRICK H. TURLEY
CEO

KEITH TURLEY
President

DEANNA SLOAT
Graphics Manager



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Schools & Youth

Elms College December 2023 graduates

CHICOPEE – College of Our Lady of the Elms congratulates 75 students who graduated in December 2023 following the conclusion of the fall 2023 semester. The following students are from Agawam and Feeding Hills.

Rebecca McKiernan graduated with a Master of Arts in Teaching and Liam Sole graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Computer Science.

Croteau named player of the week

ANNVILLE, PA – Cameron Croteau of Feeding Hills is one of three Lebanon Valley College student-athletes to receive a conference player of the week award.

Croteau, a member of the men's ice hockey team, was named Middle Atlantic Conference Offensive Player of the Week and the United Collegiate Hockey Conference Co-Player of the Week for the week ending Feb. 11.

Croteau led the Dutchmen to a big weekend sweep at King's to keep LVC's playoff hopes alive with four points on three goals and one assist while winning 21 faceoffs and being a +4 on the ice. In Friday's 7-2 victory, the sophomore scored the seventh goal of the game for the Dutchmen in the third period and won eight of 14

faceoff attempts with a blocked shot. Croteau had four shots in the game and was a +2 on the ice.

In Saturday's thrilling 5-3 victory he scored twice and had the primary assist on the game-winning goal. The sophomore's first goal gave LVC a 2-1 lead after the first period after King's scored the first goal of the game. He then assisted on the game-winning goal by Cade Helmer to break a 3-3 tie at 11:49 in the third. Croteau put the game away with an empty net goal with 1:11 left. He won 13 of 25 faceoffs in the game, took three shots, and was a +2 on the ice.

Croteau, a graduate of Agawam High School, is pursuing a bachelor of science in exercise science.

Curry College fall 2023 Dean's List

MILTON – Curry College named Marykate Wysocki of Agawam, to the fall 2023 dean's list.

President's List at Coastal Carolina University

CONWAY, SC – President's List for the fall 2023 semester at Coastal Carolina University. The following students are from Agawam and Feeding Hills. Emilia Barron and Gianna Curto.

Opinion



Bluebird

BACKYARD ■ from page 4

Bluebirds

A flock of about eight male and female bluebirds continue to come to my raisin suet cake and the feeder with mealworms. I fill it once or twice during the day as I enjoy watching them as I work at my desk. During the snow on Tuesday, they visited the mealworm feeder and suet feeder frequently. The blue against the white snow was almost as striking as the red of the cardinal against fresh snow.



Bald eagles

Bald eagles

I received a photo of a pair of bald eagles taken by a Palmer resident at Forest Lake in Palmer. They were in the top of a pine tree by the lake.

Brimfield birds

A Brimfield resident sends emails of the birds in his yard on a regular basis. He said, "One day last week a Carolina wren showed up for a day. The warm brown coloration of the bird caught my eye when I glanced out at the feeders. It was feeding on the suet cakes and the 'log' made of

suet, berries and mealworms."

He counted 36 plus goldfinch in the yard during a snow storm. The next day there were over a dozen still about. Usually it is three or four goldfinch that show up.

He shared an email from a friend in Belchertown, "We had a female redwing at the seed trays today. It's unusual to get one here this early. We also had four bluebirds show up and munch on the suet. They seem to make a visit when the weather is crappy.

The Belchertown resident also said, "We're inundated with goldfinch. The thistle seed bag is covered with them. I had to fill the hearts feeder three times today due to the numbers of goldfinch around."

The Brimfield resident reported a large number of juncos, four white-throated sparrows and come house finch. He said, "A pileated woodpecker did a fly by the other day. That is how we most often see then although a few years ago a male was coming

to our suet feeders. The female came close to the feeders but never feed that I saw." His wife drove past Wheeler Pond in town and was surprised to see the pond was not completely frozen and that there were two pair of hooded mergansers on the pond.

Birds on Feb. 13

The Brimfield resident observed ten species of birds in his yard during the snow on Tuesday, Feb. 13. He counted five mourning doves, one downy woodpecker, one hairy woodpecker, two black-capped chickadees, three tufted titmice, two house finches, one American goldfish and 80 dark-eyed juncos.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

SECURITY ■ from page 4

scribed above.

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.

GARDEN ■ from page 4

make is starting seeds too early. Always research the varieties you want to grow in a good seed catalog.

Johnny's Selected Seed and Fedco come to mind as having great advice on how many weeks prior to the last frost seeds should be sown. For example, tomato seeds should be planted indoors the last week of March or first week of April.

Although that seems late (we want to do it now), we don't want root bound transplants come May.

While average household temps will still result in seeds sprouting, bottom heat by use of heat mats will aid in germination because it will keep the seed bed a constant temperature.

Plants usually suffer without enough light – placing seedlings in the window usually results in seedlings that stretch to the sun. A simple shop light with fluorescent bulbs set a couple of inches above growing plants works out great.

Think about the soil you are using, too.

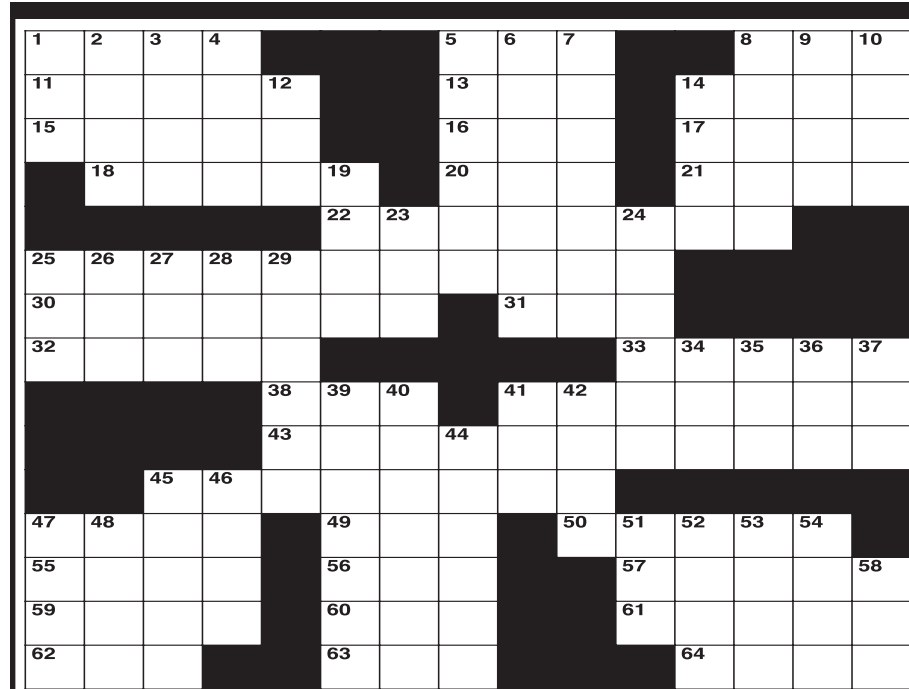
A soilless mix is far superior to regular potting soil or garden soil. It's milled a little finer, and is made to be well-drained weed and pathogen free.

Moistening it to the consistency of a wrung out sponge before use is perfect. Don't bury small seeds too deep. Tiny seed should simply be pushed into the soil surface and not covered.

Hardening off the seedlings you grew before planting them in the ground is very important. Start acclimatizing them to the great outdoors slowly, first by putting them in the shade for a few hours, working up to full sun over the course of a week's time.

By taking my advice into account, you will be well on your way to growing healthy seedlings indoors.

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



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Golf scores
- 5. Shock therapy
- 8. Ballplayer's tool
- 11. Quench one's thirst
- 13. Female relatives of American war vets (abbr.)
- 14. Every one of two or more things
- 15. Member of Muslim people
- 16. Play
- 17. Type of cheese
- 18. Type of lounge chair
- 20. ___ King Cole, musician
- 21. Fellows
- 22. North, Central and South
- 25. In an early way
- 30. Foes
- 31. Georgia rockers
- 32. Cryptocurrency
- 33. Narrow path
- 38. Disallow
- 41. Joyousness
- 43. Inaccessible
- 45. Evoke emotions
- 47. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
- 49. Boston Celtic punk rockers (abbr.)
- 50. Sword
- 55. Actor Idris
- 56. Affirmative (slang)
- 57. Afflicted
- 59. One point north of northeast
- 60. Born of
- 61. Arabic name
- 62. Traumatic brain injury (abbr.)
- 63. Extremity
- 64. Post

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Pacific Standard Time
- 2. Protruding ridge on

- 3. Indian king
- 4. Type of milk
- 5. One who brings home the bacon
- 6. More comprehensible
- 7. Connected with sense of touch
- 8. Red mineral
- 9. Breezed through
- 10. Therefore
- 12. Supplement with difficulty
- 14. Early kingdom of Syria
- 19. Satisfy
- 23. They confuse doctors (abbr.)
- 24. Brass instrument
- 25. Domesticated animal
- 26. Ribonucleic acid
- 27. Snakelike fish
- 28. Woman (French)
- 29. Economically-minded aircraft
- 34. When you hope to get somewhere
- 35. Tease
- 36. Actress Gretchen
- 37. Midway between northeast and east
- 39. Inoffensive
- 40. Yellowish cotton cloth
- 41. Consume
- 42. Does not tell the truth
- 44. Improved something
- 45. Spiritual leader
- 46. Abba ___, Israeli politician
- 47. Fix
- 48. Evergreen tree genus
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Prejudice
- 53. Major C. European river
- 54. Long, narrow strap
- 58. Male parent

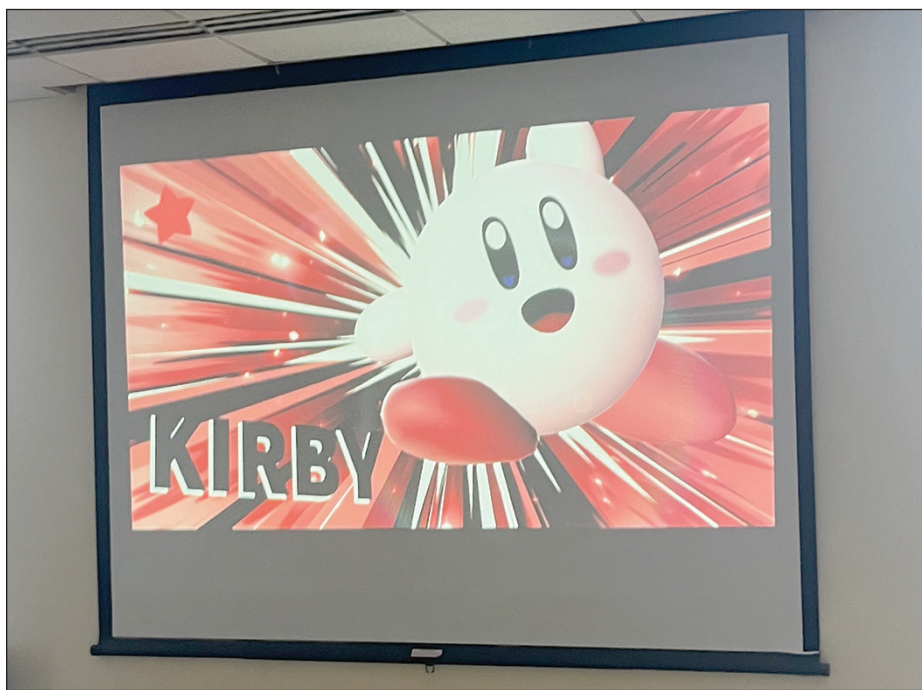


Drake Peabody enjoyed the Nintendo Switch Gaming Event put on by Librarian Evan Delano.



The event has become popular at the library.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA



The library offers a variety of Nintendo Switch games for people to check out and for library events.



The event encourages youth from the community to come and engage in competition with one another.

GAME ■ from page 1

“They’re good party games or games you can play with at least two people,” Delano said.

Delano sets up several chairs in the area and puts the chosen game up on a projector. Up to four people can play at a time using the library’s switch, more if someone brings their own switch.

For when there are more people than there are controllers, Delano also has a variety of board and card games set up at a table nearby, for people to play while they wait their turn.

“It can be frustrating having to wait your turn, so I have some games out for them to play when waiting,” Delano said.

Delano initially got the idea as they noticed a trend across libraries in the area of hosting different video game events.

“The last library I worked at had a Nintendo Switch program that a lot of people came to and they even brought their own switches,” Delano said. “I wanted to try to get something going here.”

They want to show community members that the library is more than a place to get books, but they can also try out different technology that they otherwise may not have access to.

“Maybe teens who don’t have a switch of their own and they know about it, are excited about it, but don’t have a chance

to play, so having the chance to play at the library can be very cool,” Delano said.

Delano in fact does not own a switch at their home, so they enjoy the chance to see how it works and to see the joy of the kids who get to play games with their friends that they otherwise might not have had the opportunity to.

While this event still remains fairly small, Delano doesn’t mind as it means everyone gets a chance to play and they don’t have to worry too much about taking turns.

However, they would encourage anyone interested to come and check it out, as more people are always welcome.

“I would like for more people to know about it so if they’re excited about it they can join us,” Delano said.

Additionally, Delano recently hosted a similar event for children in kindergarten through fourth grade, due to requests from parents and siblings of teens who participate in this event.

“It just seemed like there was a lot of interest from younger kids,” Delano said. “Any opportunity to do something that kids are actually excited about that gets them into the library I’m okay with.”

They hope to continue that program, so long as there remains an interest.

To learn more about other events at the library go to <https://www.agawamlibrary.org/about-2/contact-us/>.

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SPORTS

WRESTLING

Falcons, Brownies crown champions

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

NORTHBIDGE – At the Central/Western Massachusetts Division 2 tournament held earlier this month at Northbridge High School, Minnechaug wrestling was a runner up for total points with 232 while Agawam placed third with 202 points.

The Falcons crowned the most individual champions with four while Agawam had two champions

Holyoke and Chicopee also were part of the tournament. Holyoke had 72 points for 10th place and Chicopee placed 11th with 54.5 points.

Kal Ly won the 126-pound weight class, representing Minnechaug. Hunter Gormally took the championship at 157 pounds, Matthew MacPhail won at 175 pounds, and Sam Dean was a champion at 180 pounds.

Agawam had a pair of champions as Max Halloway took the title at 215 pounds and Nicholas Ugolini took a championship home at 132 pounds.

More Falcons had successful experiences at the sectional meet,

WRESTLING | page 8



Sophia Laprise takes a side approach to the hoop.
TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Isabella Laprise sends a pass around the perimeter.



Katelyn Cleavall sends a three-point attempt away.



Mia Canavan attempts to make an offensive rebound.

Montagna nets 15 in finale

AGAWAM – Last Monday night, Agawam High School girls basketball picked up a 45-34 win in its regular season final against Westfield.

The Brownies finished the regular season with a 12-6 record overall. In the win, Marlee Montagna finished with 15 points to lead all scorers.

Agawam got points from eight different players in the match.

The Brownies are headed for the state tournament for sure and also qualified for Western Mass. for the first time since the new tournament structure began.

The Brownies faced Northampton in the quarterfinals earlier this week. The state tournament will begin next week.



Marlee Montagna tries to keep the ball inbounds.



Peyton Buffum goes after the loose puck.



Angelo Robbins looks to flick a pass up the ice.



Drew Scherban grabs the puck in traffic.

Agawam shut out in final matchup

AGAWAM – The Agawam High School hockey team suffered a 2-0 defeat against Longmeadow in its regular season finale last Thursday afternoon.

Agawam finished the regular season with an 11-7 record. The Brownies did not make the Western Mass. tournament, and may play a nonplayoff game this week. The state tournament will begin next week.



David Newsome gets a stick on the puck and gets ready to head up the ice.



Evan Connery goes after the goal in the offensive zone.



Goalie Frankie DiSanti pounces on a shot.

Sports

Miracle League of Western MA to receive Doyle Award

SPRINGFIELD – The Miracle League of Western Massachusetts, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing inclusive baseball opportunities for individuals with disabilities, have been selected as the recipient of the Ryan Doyle Courage Award by the Western Mass Baseball Hall of Fame.

The Ryan Doyle Courage Award, named in honor of the late Ryan Doyle, a courageous young athlete who battled cancer, recognizes individuals or organizations that demonstrate exceptional courage, resilience, and dedication to the sport of baseball in Western Massachusetts. The Miracle League of Western Massachusetts was chosen for their unwavering commit-

ment to creating an inclusive environment where all individuals, regardless of ability, can experience the joy of playing baseball.

Founded in 2015, the Miracle League of Western Massachusetts has been providing accessible baseball programs for children and adults with disabilities. Through their adaptive facilities and volunteer support, they ensure that every player has the opportunity to participate in America's favorite pastime. The organiza-



tion has positively impacted the lives of countless individuals, fostering camaraderie, self-confidence, and a sense of belonging within the community.

The Miracle League of Western Massachusetts will be formally presented with the Ryan Doyle Courage Award at the Western Mass Baseball Hall of Fame induction ceremony on March 7th 6pm at Twin Hills Country Club in Longmeadow. This event brings together Western Mass base-

ball legends, enthusiasts, community leaders, and former MLB players to celebrate the accomplishments of the inductees.

For more information about the Miracle League of Western Massachusetts, their inclusive baseball programs and to volunteer, please visit <https://miracleleaguwestma.com/> or contact Brian Feeley at brian@miracleleaguwestma.com.

To Learn more about Ryan's story: Please visit the Ryan Doyle Foundation at <https://rd26.org/>.

For tickets to attend the induction dinner on March 7th please go to www.valleybluesox.com or email WMassHOF@valleybluesox.com.

Worcester Railers fall in shutout to Orlando Solar Bears

ORLANDO, FL – The Worcester Railers HC (21-20-4-2, 48pts) got shutout by the Orlando Solar Bears (24-16-6-2, 56pts), on Thursday night by the final score of 4-0 in front of 5,684 fans at the Kia Center.

Orlando struck first with two quick goals late in the first period from Mitchell Hoelscher (1-1-2) and Alex Frye (1-0-1). Tanner Schachle (1-0-1) added one more in the second to push Orlando ahead 3-0 going into the third. Jimmy Mazza (1-0-1) ripped a shot down-ice off of the draw in the third period into an empty net to give Orlando the final goal of the game and a 4-0 victory over Worcester.

The Railers started off the first period strong. During the first ten minutes, the Railers utilized a two-man forecheck which led to some great chances down low and keeping both the puck in their offensive zone and the tired Solar Bear players on the ice. Despite their efforts early, the Solar Bears would light the lamp first. A shot from the point by defenseman Zachary Massicotte was initially blocked out in front but found its way to an open Mitchell Hoelscher (22nd) who was sitting on the doorstep. The Solar Bears piled on the goal scoring just two minutes later with a 2-on-1 rush. Hoelscher would drag Railers Defenseman Ryan Dickinson to the far side boards to allow Forward Alex Frye (10th) to capitalize on the doorstep with a backhand shot to beat the outstretched John Muse. The Solar Bears

outshot the Railers, 12-6.

The second period was a quiet one for the Railers. They would lead the period with shots on goal but none would result in a goal. The Railers had some great opportunities on their first power play of the game late in the period and built some strong momentum for them to carry into the third. However, the Solar Bears would continue to deal damage to the Railers with another late-period goal. Solar Bear forward Tyler Bird would enter the Railers defensive zone from the far side and send a quick pass to the high slot. The puck bounced to forward Tanner Schachle (2nd) who picked up the loose puck and backhanded a shot through Muse. The Railers led the period and game with shots on goal 14-5 and 20-17.

The third period provided a mix of chances and physicality from both sides. John Muse did a great job shutting down an odd-man rush and breakaway opportunity just a few minutes into the period. Shortly after, the Railers would get their chances on net during their powerplay chance. Tension throughout the game built up to the point where Railers Forward Jack Quinlivan dropped the gloves against Solar Bear Defenseman Jérémie Biakabutuka. The game was capped off with an empty net goal scored by Solar Bear Defenseman Jimmy Mazza with a final score of 4-0 in favor of Orlando. The Railers outshot the Solar Bears in the third and in the game, 16-8 and 36-25.

Charlotte Checkers get best of Springfield Thunderbirds

CHARLOTTE, N.C. -- The Springfield Thunderbirds (23-20-3-2) were unable to complete a third-period comeback attempt, as they fell by a final score of 5-3 against the Charlotte Checkers (24-20-5-0) on Sunday inside Bojangles' Coliseum.

The Checkers carried much of the offensive play in the opening 10 minutes, making Malcolm Subban work a lot in the first period. Moments after a Springfield delay-of-game penalty ended, Charlotte maintained offensive pressure and got on the board as Gerry Mayhew found open ice in the low slot and one-touched a pass from Casey Fitzgerald through Subban at 9:22. The Checkers hit two other posts in the period on their way to outshooting Springfield 17-7 in the first frame.

Springfield had its own chance clip iron in the early stages, as Jakub Vrana narrowly missed giving the T-Birds a 1-0 edge when he one-timed a Ryan Suzuki saucer pass off the pipe behind Spencer Knight. Despite the disparity in shot attempts, the T-Birds still found a way to get the game evened up when Zach Dean deflected a Leo Loof shot from the left circle all the way to the crease and through Knight's legs with just 1:09 left in the first, tying the game, 1-1.

The tying marker, however, proved to do little to quell Charlotte's offensive mojo in the second period. Another lengthy defensive zone sequence for the T-Birds ended in a Ryan McAllister one-time goal at 2:13 of the middle frame. Springfield's penalty kill then got dented for the first time in the season series at 10:49 when Zac Dalpe found a loose puck deep in the blue paint before

Subban and the defense could clear it away. The Checker captain's 12th goal of the season upped the lead to 3-1, which would stand through the end of the second. Charlotte outshot Springfield 33-12 through 40 minutes.

Springfield threatened another third period comeback just 41 seconds into the third as Joey Duszak wristed a shot over Knight's blocker to make it a 3-2 game off assists from Matthew Peca and Adam Gaudette. Despite a heavy presence in the Charlotte zone in the opening half of the final frame, the score stayed 3-2 until Justin Sourdif guided a Mayhew centering pass through Subban to restore the two-goal cushion for the Checkers at 12:04.

Still undeterred, Peca and the T-Birds responded in kind just 48 seconds later, as the captain circled the offensive zone before elevating a wrist shot through traffic and over Knight's glove to cut it down to a 4-3 score.

With 2:51 remaining, the Springfield power play was given a grand opportunity following a tripping penalty on Sourdif, but the Charlotte penalty killers answered the call, and another Springfield minor penalty nullified the power play and spoiled any chances of a tying goal. Mayhew finished his three-point night, finding the empty net with just over 30 seconds to play.

It marked Charlotte's first win in four tries this season against the Thunderbirds. Springfield returns home to begin a three-game weekend on Friday as the I-91 rival Hartford Wolf Pack comes to town. Puck drop is set for 7:05 p.m. at the MassMutual Center this Friday night.



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WRESTLING ■ from page 7

including Ezekiel Vargas, who was the runner up in the 106-pound weight class. Zayde Facchetti was the runner up in the 165-pound finals. In the consolation finals at 138 pounds, Owen Goldberg scored the win with a quick 28-second pinfall.

Jordin Agosto came in second for Agawam with a great effort in the 120-pound championship match. Ryan Sexton was also a runner-up, falling 6-0 in the championship match at 138 pounds. Keymani Rivera was a winner in the consolation bracket at 165 pounds, taking third place in the meet.

Steven Santiago brought home a championship for the Knights, winning the 113-pound weight class over runner-up Jordan Dietz from Minnechaug.

Ludlow High School traveled to Ashland High School and the Lions participated in the Central Mass. meet for Division 3. The Lions placed third in the tournament with 168 points. Host Ashland won the meet with Wayland taking second place.

Champions for Ludlow included Ryan Gomes at 126 pounds. He defeated Ethan Anastasia from Holliston by an 8-2 decision. Lucas Alvan was the other champion with the victory at 165 pounds. He scored a third period pinfall for the sectional title.

Samantha Bertini was defeated by technical fall to be the runner-up at 106 pounds while Tristin Stephens won the consolation bracket, taking third place at 215 pounds at the meet.

The top six finishers in each weight class moved on to their respective division state meets and the top placers from that meet head to the All-State meet, also known as the Meet of Champions for the opportunity to head into the New England meet, which takes place next weekend.

BBB Scam Alert: Shoppers beware of Facebook Marketplace cons

AGAWAM – Facebook Marketplace can be a great place to find deals on items for sale in your neighborhood. But like any online classified site, watch out for warning signs before handing over money. BBB is seeing reports of Facebook Marketplace scams in BBB Scam Tracker, especially for big-ticket items like used cars and RVs.

How the scam works

You are shopping on Facebook Marketplace and spot a listing that looks like a good deal, so you contact the seller. The seller replies by saying that she or he is out of the country, in the military, or otherwise unavailable. Instead, the person tells you they are using eBay, Amazon, or another

reputable third-party company to sell and ship the item.

The seller assures you that you will have a chance to see and test drive the vehicle before committing to a purchase. However, you must first wire money or send funds via pre-paid debit card to “Amazon” or “eBay.” They will act as an escrow service. If you are unhappy with your purchase, you can simply return it for a full refund. Since you have confidence in the site being used for escrow, you agree.

Unfortunately, both the third-party service and the seller are a con. The car or other item doesn't exist. Some scammers have even gone as far as creating fake invoices from “Amazon” or “eBay,” stealing their lo-

gos to make the invoices look real.

How to avoid scams on Facebook Marketplace:

- Always meet the seller and see the item for sale before purchasing. This will help you avoid most scams on Facebook Marketplace. This is also true for housing rentals. If you can't tour the house or apartment before renting it, it's likely not available.
- Avoid deals involving shipping or escrow services. This scam is only one take on this trend. Avoid them by purchasing directly from the seller.
- Report scams to Facebook. If you've encountered a scam on Facebook Marketplace, report them to Facebook.

• Check BBB Tips: Many sales scams use similar techniques. Check out tips on BBB.org/scamtips to learn more.

For more information

For more ways to protect yourself from social media shopping scams, see BBB's tips for smart shopping online. You can also find more general tips at 10 Steps to avoid scams.

If you've been the victim of a social media ad scam, share your experience at BBB Scam Tracker. Your report could help other consumers avoid falling victim to similar scams.

Note: eBay and Amazon are BBB Accredited Businesses.

BBB Scam Tracker is being honored by the Global Anti-Scam Alliance

AGAWAM – “We are incredibly proud of BBB Scam Tracker and grateful for this recognition from the Global Anti-Scam Alliance,” said Melissa Lanning Trumpower, executive director of BBB Institute for Marketplace Trust, the educational foundation of the International Association of Better Business Bureaus. “BBB Scam Tracker allows people to search previous reports to determine if they're being targeted. As a result, we estimate that our scam-fighting tool helped people avoid losing \$24.3

million in 2023. We want to thank GASA, ScamAdviser.com, and the esteemed panel of judges, for honoring BBB Scam Tracker with this award.”

BBB Scam Tracker is supported by Amazon and Capital One, members of the BBB Corporate Trust Council, a coalition of select companies that join with BBB Institute to build a trustworthy marketplace by

providing their expertise, resources, and funding support.

Following the launch of the upgraded BBB Scam Tracker in 2022, BBB Institute added a Scam Prevention Guide on the homepage to help people learn how to spot and avoid scams.

“Our goal is to continue building out the BBB Scam Tracker platform to empower

people to protect themselves from fraud,” said Trumpower.

The ability to search reported scams is made possible thanks to the dedicated, collaborative work of Better Business Bureau professionals working in communities across the US and Canada to review and publish scam reports.

Launched in 2015 and retooled in 2022, BBB Scam Tracker had 4.58 million views and published more than 65,000 scam reports in 2023.



Public Notices

**TOWN OF AGAWAM
Public Hearing –
Thursday,
February 29, 2024
6:00 PM
Agawam Senior Center –
954 Main St.,
Agawam, MA 01001
Proposed FY 2024 CDBG
Application**

The Agawam Planning Board will conduct a Public Hearing on **February 29, 2024 at 6:00 PM** in the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam.

The public is encouraged to attend this hearing to discuss the Town's FY24 application to the Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities for up to \$950,000 in available Community Development Block Grant Funds. All persons with questions or comments regarding the grant application will have an opportunity to be heard. Those unable to attend can send written comments to the Agawam Town Planner,

Agawam Town Hall, 36 Main Street, Agawam, MA 01001, Attn: Pamela Kerr, or pkerr@agawam.ma.us.

The Town is encouraging input on community needs and projects which would benefit from grant funding. The project currently being considered is comprehensive infrastructure improvements to Moore Street and Valley Street. Additional projects may be discussed and may be included in this and future grant applications.

Persons who require special accommodations for the hearing should contact the town at least one week prior to the hearing date at (413) 786 – 0400, ext. 8245. For further information contact Joseph Hagopian at PVPC at (413) 781-6045 or jhagopi an@pvpc.org. 02/22/2024

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
Hampden, s.s.
TRIAL COURT OF THE**

COMMONWEALTH SUPERIOR COURT CASE NO. 2379CV-00383

CHARLENE DEGRAY AND TOD A. DEGRAY Plaintiffs

vs. ETHEL E. (SMITH) SLATER, deceased, her heirs, devisees, assigns and successors in interest, et als THERESA (SMITH) MAY COOK, deceased, her heirs, devisees, assigns and successors in interest WILLIAM I COOK, and/or his heirs, assigns, and successors in interest Defendants

This case came on to be heard upon the motion of the Plaintiffs, praying for an Order of Notice and thereupon consideration thereof, it is

Ordered and Adjudged that an Order of Notice issue to said Defendant, THERESA (SMITH) MAY COOK, deceased, her heirs, devisees, assigns and successors in interest, and to said

Defendant, WILLIAM I. COOK, and/or his heirs, devisees, assigns and successors in interest by publishing an attested copy of this order once each week for three consecutive weeks in the Agawam Advertiser, a newspaper published in the Town of Agawam at least fourteen (14) days before the day of March 7th next, and that said defendants and/or their heirs, devisees, assigns, and successors in interest do cause their written appearance to be entered and their written answers or other lawful leadings to be filed in the office of the Clerk of said Court at Springfield in said County of Hampden on or before the said 7th day of March next. If THERESA (SMITH) MAY COOK deceased, her heirs, devisees, assigns and successors in interest, and WILLIAM I. COOK, and/or his heirs, devisees, assigns and successors in interest fail to do so, judgment by default will be taken against you for

the relief demanded in the complaint.

Unless otherwise provided by Rule 13 (a) your answers must state as a counterclaim any claim you have against the Plaintiffs, Charlene DeGray and Tod A. DeGray, which arises out of the transaction or occurrence that is the subject matter of the Plaintiffs' claim or you will thereafter be barred from making any such claim in any other action.

Entered: 1/20/2024
By the Court:
Manitsas, J.
Clerk/Magistrate

02/08, 02/15, 02/22/2024

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD24C0022CA
In the matter of:**

**Valerie Lauranda Warner
CITATION ON PETITION
TO CHANGE NAME**

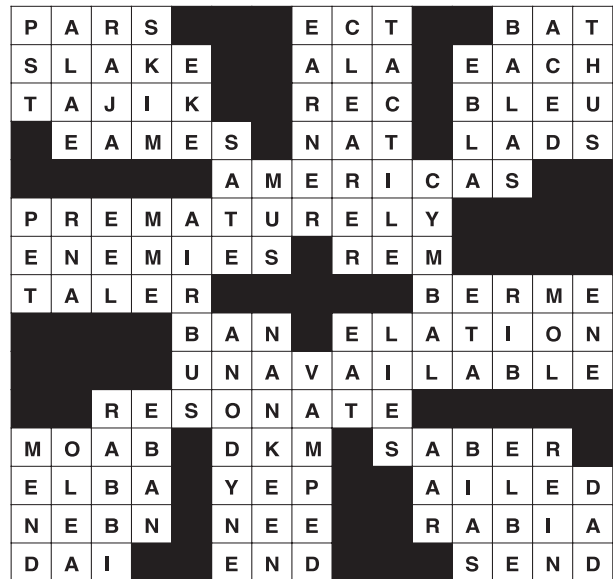
A **Petition to Change Name of Adult** has been filed by **Valerie Lauranda Warner of Agawam, MA** requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:

**Valerie Brochu Lauranda
IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: **Hampden Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 02/29/2024.** This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.

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

Date: February 01, 2024
Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
02/22/2024



Agawam Advertiser News

OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$225, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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

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- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 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.

Public notice deadlines are Mondays at noon, Fridays noon for Monday holidays.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com



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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
33 Base Price \$32.50	34 Base Price \$33.00	35 Base Price \$33.50	36 Base Price \$34.00
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Consider becoming an organ donor and help save lives

SPRINGFIELD – Consider adding becoming an organ donor.

“Every nine minutes a new person is added to the national transplant wait list, which is already overcrowded with more than 100,000 men, women and children waiting for a lifesaving organ. Over 40,000 transplants were performed in 2022, a record year for transplants in the United States, but many more people could benefit from a lifesaving organ transplant,” said Dr. Kenneth McPartland, Medical Director, Transplant Division, Baystate Health, in a press release.

Making your wishes known is easy. If you would like to become a donor, your wishes can be indicated on your driver’s license, or you can register online at www.donatelife.net/register.

While doing so, let your family know about your decision to become an organ donor so that they along with friends know and understand your wishes in advance.

There are many common misconceptions about donation that persist today.

Donate Life America offers the following facts to help you better understand organ, eye and tissue donation:

- Anyone can be a potential donor regardless of age, race, or medical history.
- All major religions in the United States support organ, eye and tissue donation and

see it as the final act of love and generosity toward others.

- If you are sick or injured and admitted to the hospital, the number one priority is to save your life. Organ, eye and tissue donation can only be considered after you are deceased.

- When you are on the waiting list for an organ, what really counts is the severity of your illness, time spent waiting, blood type, and other important medical information, not your financial status or social status.

- An open casket funeral is possible for organ, eye and tissue donors. Through the entire donation process the body is treated with care, respect and dignity.

- There is no cost to the donor or their family for organ or tissue donation.

- Information about an organ donor is only released to the recipient if the family of the donor requests or agrees to it.

“Deceased donors leave a legacy by giving the gift of life after they pass, but did you know that this gift can be given during your lifetime? As a living kidney donor, an individual can live a long and healthy life with one kidney while giving someone else a second chance at life,” said Nancy Dias,



Dr. Kenneth McPartland

BSN, RN, Living Donor Coordinator, Baystate Medical Center.

Baystate Medical Center offers many options in living kidney donation. The transplant program works closely with the National Kidney Registry as a Donor Care Center of Excellence to facilitate national exchanges or kidney swaps, as well as voucher donations.

Compatible and incompatible pairs can donate and receive kidneys with one of the many options available. Visit the NKR website for more information <https://www.kidneyregistry.org/>.

Baystate Transplant Program offers the only Transplant Services in western Massachusetts for adult patients requiring kidney transplantation. In 2023, Baystate has performed close to 70 kidney transplants, the most ever performed in a single year since the program started over 30 years ago.

The program has over 150 patients on the national transplant waiting list and is continuing to find ways to increase access to kidney transplantation.

Today, more and more people are making a difference in someone’s life by becoming

a living kidney donor to a patient on the Baystate Health waiting list, an alternative to waiting for a kidney from a deceased donor. More information about the process of living donation is available on the Baystate Health Transplant Program website at baystatehealth.org/transplant.

Transplant surgeons use the latest techniques, including minimally invasive surgery, so that patients experience a faster recovery and spend less time in the hospital. In addition to experienced surgeons, the Baystate Transplant Team includes nephrologists, nurse transplant coordinators, dietitians, pharmacists, social workers, financial counselors, as well as administrative and clinical assistants to help guide patients through the process.

Living or deceased donor renal transplants are offered as treatment of end-stage renal disease.

Life is meant to be shared. It takes only five minutes to sign up as an organ donor at www.organdonor.gov/sign-up.

To learn more about becoming a living kidney donor, call Baystate Medical Center’s Transplant Program at 413-794-2321 Option 2 and speak with the living donor coordinator or sign on to the Baystate Transplant website at baystatehealth.org/transplant for a confidential screening process.

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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.

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PARADE | from page 1

able to give up for the committee to use and store their float.

“We need garage space with a tall door and it’s not that easy for people to give up garage space for our use,” Reed said.

Reed is hopeful that for next year they will have a new location to build. They have no confirmation yet, but Reed mentioned they have a potential lead.

He says they are prepared to work to fit whatever space is available to them. While they may have to get creative with building off site, depending on space and transportation, the main goal is to have a float once more.

“We may have to build some things off site...but if it comes down to it we can work around that,” Reed said.

The Colleens and the committee all love

the building of the float each year and they miss doing it.

Agawam was well known for its award-winning floats, and they are eager to get back to it.

“We want to get back to collecting more blue ribbons,” Reed said.

Even more than the awards, Reed misses the experience the float building was for all involved, especially the Colleens.

He described the experience of going around the parade route and then finding out at the end who would receive the award.

“When the Colleen and the Court are sitting on a float, Holyoke has decided what kind of ribbon to put on our float and they come up,” Reed said. “When they pin a first place ribbon on there and hand you a trophy and we hand it to the Colleen...the look on their faces, that’s the reward.”

Job Connection

HELPING YOU FIND HELP

Direct Support Professional

Looking for someone who is dependable and energetic with excellent social skills who likes working with people. You will be working with an adult female with developmental disabilities in a home setting in the hill-town area, providing 1:1 support in a self-directed day program. Responsibilities include working on achieving goals set through her program, assist with appointments, basic meal prep, basic hygiene and documentation on Microsoft Word.

This position is part-time Monday through Friday, 25 hours a week, pays \$21-\$23 per an hour depending on experience, and hours can be flexible. This would be an excellent experience for a college student going into the human service or medical field. You must be 18 years old, have valid driver’s license, pass a CORI, fingerprinting check, have a clean driving record and good computer skills.

If interested mail or email your resume to: Multicultural Community Services 1000 Wilbraham Road, Springfield, MA 01109 or Lisapodworsi@mcsnet.org.

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WRITING ■ from page 1

dents also won), Goyette-Jediny hoped to help her students see the value of perseverance in writing.

"I think it teaches them that hard work can and does pay off," she said.

Overall, she hopes that through her encouragement her students will continue the act of writing beyond her classroom.

To her, writing is all about sharing ideas and she wants students to learn how to express themselves and their thoughts through this skill, more so than hyperfocus on perfect grammar or spelling.

"It's about their ideas and what they're trying to put on paper, the rest will come," Goyette-Jediny said. "The grammar we can work on later, let's get the idea down, let's get the love down and then we can fix it."

"I do a lot of writing with my students and I think we work hard at it. I think that when the students can see that it's important they rise to the occasion and it becomes important to them."

— Teacher Kathleen Goyette-Jediny



Lodge Secretary and Americanism Committee Chairperson Patricia O'Connor and Exalted Ruler Milt Vazquez from the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks present a certificate to Coranna Murphy for third place in the Elks writing contest.


TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA




Lodge Secretary and Americanism Committee Chairperson Patricia O'Connor and Exalted Ruler Milt Vazquez from the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks present a certificate to Ava Skowron for second place in the Elks writing contest.



Lodge Secretary and Americanism Committee Chairperson Patricia O'Connor and Exalted Ruler Milt Vazquez from the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks present a certificate to Karolena Poznyur for first place in the Elks writing contest.




Agawam West Springfield
West of the River Chamber
Connect & Grow




★ **MAYORAL BREAKFAST** ★


February 27, 2024
7:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.
Tansey's Catered Table
Agawam, MA



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Agawam Early Childhood Center

Are you an Agawam resident looking for a comprehensive, competitively priced preschool experience for your 3 or 4 year old child?

The Agawam Early Childhood Center (ECC) will begin accepting applications for both morning and afternoon sessions for the 2024-2025 school year beginning March 11, 2024.

- The ECC provides all students with a standards-based education that builds the foundation for all future learning with the Agawam Public Schools.
- We meet the needs of children with and without disabilities and follow a developmentally appropriate curriculum where all children learn through play hands-on activities.
- We offer half-day sessions at both the Agawam Early Childhood Center (ECC) at 108 Perry Lane and at Sapelli School 65 Begley St.
- Applications are currently available at the Family Resource Center or you can download the application via the Agawam Public Schools website (agawamed.org). Select "Schools" - Early Childhood Center, select "Menu" - select "ECC Enrollment Information."



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