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# AGAWAM

## ADVERTISER NEWS

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# Mayors greet public at Chamber breakfast

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Mayor Christopher Johnson and West Springfield's Mayor William Reichelt held a mayoral breakfast at Tansey's Catered Table, the banquet hall at Partner's Restaurant and Catering.

At this event Tansey's provided a buffet breakfast for all attendees and each mayor was available for a Q&A session.

Johnson's main focus during this event was the high school project. In his opening statement, he emphasized how important this project is to the town.

"I came back because I want to see the high school project to fruition," Johnson said. "That's the number one reason I came back...that needs to happen. It's

been 51 years since we last cut a ribbon on a school in Agawam."

There will be a vote on the project on June 11, which will come in the form of a major debt exclusion override.

The main purpose of this vote will be to decide between funding a new high school or investing in the existing building so that it can continue running for the next couple decades.

Before making the vote, Johnson reminded people to ensure that they had all of their information in order. Specifically, he warned against the use of social media to collect information on the project.

"Make your decision based upon the facts, please don't rely on what you see on social media and assume that it's true because



A large crowd gathered at Tansey's Catered Table, the new banquet hall at Partner's Restaurant and Catering, to take part in the Mayoral Breakfast. TURLEY PHOTO BY QUINN SUOMALA

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# High school project headed for council, debt exclusion votes

*Mayor: Failing to address school building could affect accreditation*

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Mayor Christopher Johnson presented an update on the high school project to the school committee and the city council on Feb. 26.

In this presentation he went over the options for how the town can move forward with this project.

Either they can vote to build a new high school or they can vote the project down and instead invest in the current building, either way something needs to be done to the current facility to ensure it can continue to function.

Building a new high school will cost a total of \$231.5 million, with the state (through the MSBA) providing \$99.5 million, making the town's share \$132 million.

The anticipated impact on the average single-family taxpayer is \$465-488 per year.

Investing in the current facility will cost \$73 million, with the MSBA providing no support. The anticipated impact on

the average single-family taxpayer is \$340-353 per year.

This difference is about \$10 a month.

Johnson is greatly in favor of the first option, building a new high school. Not only will this option provide a modern building and solve the issues with the current facility, but it will also provide the town with a new Early Childhood Center.

"We want to have a quality high school and we get to kill two birds with one stone," Johnson said.

The current high school building has a variety of problems. The roof needs replacing, as do the boilers, the building doesn't meet energy code standards and the science facilities are out of date.

"We won't have 21st century learning...we've got an outdated, antiquated HVAC System, we've got a roof that's popping holes almost on a weekly basis and, you see, we're the last ones coming to the party," Johnson said. "Every other community around us has built a new high school."

As things stand now, the school faces the chance of losing their accreditation from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

Already, AHS is on probationary status due to the state

of the building. They have only been able to maintain their accreditation as they informed NEASC that they are going through the MSBA process.

"If we lose NEASC accreditation...it will be very difficult for our students to get into quality colleges and universities because the first thing admissions look at is: are you coming from a NEASC accredited school," Johnson said. "If we lose accreditation, we will probably be the only high school in the Greater Springfield Area to not be accredited."

Losing accreditation will also have a negative impact on property value, as it will make moving to Agawam less desirable for families.

Additionally, it would make it difficult for the school to attract quality staff.

"Who would want to work for the only place in the area that's not accredited?" Johnson said.

There will be a special election to allow the town to decide on the project on Jun. 11. This vote will come in the form of a debt exclusion override.

The purpose of the debt exclusion override will be to allow Agawam continued financial flexibility.

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# Phelps School holding 'One Book' event

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Benjamin J. Phelps Elementary School is holding their annual One School/One Book event.

During this event each child in the school receives a copy of the same book. This year the book is Secrets According to Humphrey by Betty G. Birney.

Staff in Phelps will be sent a schedule and different members will read a chapter of the book. This recording will be uploaded to the school website so students and their families can listen to it while they read along.

"The goal of the program is to bring families into reading together and the whole school reading the same story at the same time," Special Education Teacher Rhonda Typrowicz said. "We're hoping the community sees this as how we're trying to strengthen our school family and our school community by doing things all together."

According to Typrowicz, this event has worked to bring students in the school together in the past.

"Kids, believe it or not, have been seen talking about it waiting for the bus or during lunch," she said.

Throughout this event, Typrowicz creates a folder for the school where she shares different

writing prompts or activities that relate to the book for teachers to do with their students should they so desire.

Students are also welcome to engage in the activities at home.

Typrowicz initially got the idea to begin this activity from an acquaintance in another school district whose school participated in the activity.

"I was always intrigued by it," Typrowicz said. "I loved her idea and the way she talked about how it brought the school community together."

So, about six years ago, she brought it up to the instructional support team and everyone agreed to give the event a try.

From there they created movie trailers to announce the event. Their first book was one of the Humphrey series, and they have used that series since then.

"What I was originally looking for was a book series, something that we could do year after year so the kids could kind of build a relationship and get to know a character," Typrowicz said.

The series can be read in any order, so children can enjoy a familiar and new students to the school can begin reading without any confusion.

Typrowicz also enjoyed the educational ties present in the Humphrey book series.

EVENT | page 12



# Library announces upcoming March adult events

AGAWAM – The Agawam Library welcomes spring with unique programming for adults. Starting on March 4, catalog users will notice a new look to the online catalog. Users will enjoy a sleek new design that will fully integrate our digital material from Libby and Hoopla. The new catalog will also offer searching in additional languages, better predictive text and customizations. It will be a seamless transition to the new system and library cards and accounts will not be affected.

The monthly game night has grown, and adults are invited to a good, old-fashioned board game night on Wednesday, March 6, at 6:30 p.m. Players enjoy games like Settlers of Catan, Ticket to Ride, Munchkin, and more, but feel free to bring a game. There will be multiple tables for multiple games, so bring a friend or meet some like-minded gamers at the event. Light refreshments will be served, too! This is a drop-in activity for adults 18 and older.

Come learn how to reduce, reuse and

recycle your old furniture and home decor from Sharon Ensign, owner and curator of Re-Inspired in Southwick. Ensign will share her talents for repurposing old and outdated items and encourage participants to tap into their own creative thinking to upcycle and refresh their homes – just in time for spring. Please register online for this program on Monday, March 11 at 6:30 p.m.

The library acknowledges National Nutrition Month on Monday, March 18 at 6:30 p.m. as Big Y Dietician Kathy Jordan will share her expertise on which nutritious foods can improve overall quality of life and provide health benefits with mindful eating. Please register online or by calling the Information Desk (413) 789-1550 X4. This program is sponsored by the Agawam Center Library Association.

Tea and Trivia return in March. Patrons can come and have their wits challenged and enjoy a cup of hot tea. Register for one or both of the trivia times: Tuesday, March 19 at 6:30 p.m. or Wednesday, March 20 at

2:30 p.m.

Library Tech Times will focus on getting started with Kanopy, the streaming service for TV shows and films. Kanopy has updated its searching and Library Associate, Erica will update users on any changes. Users have two chances to attend: Wednesday, March 20 at 6:30 p.m. and Tuesday, March 26 at 10:00 a.m. Users are asked to bring their library cards and passwords, as well as any device on which they would like to set up Kanopy. Please register for either class online or by calling the Information Desk.

The springtime favorite returns March 22 and March 23, Crafterpalooza is back. Donate leftover or unused craft supplies, then restock current supplies or get something brand new! The library will collect donations March 5 through March 18. Donations must be clean, in good condition and come from a non-smoking home. Please bring items in original packaging or clear, zippered bags. Patrons are invited to come shopping on Friday, March 22,

from 1 to 3 p.m. and Saturday, March 23, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Bags will be provided. Please call the information Desk with any questions, (413) 789-1550 X4.

March has a great line-up for virtual author talks. Join in on Wednesday, March 6 at 4 p.m. for a discussion with Nina Totenberg; Thursday, March 14 at 4 p.m. for a chat with YA Fantasy Author Christopher Paolini and Thursday, March 21 at 7 p.m. for a discussion with bestselling author Madeline Miller. Please note that the virtual author series takes place online. Please visit the website for more information and to register for any or all of the virtual author talks <https://library.org/agawamlibrary/upcoming>.

Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Friday and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Many of the programs are sponsored by the Agawam Center Library Association. Online registration for adult events begins March 1. Please visit our website for more information and to register [www.agawamlibrary.org](http://www.agawamlibrary.org).

## ACC holds undie Sundays

AGAWAM – Throughout the month of March, Agawam Congregational Church members, friends, and visitors will be collecting new underwear for men, women and children which will be distributed to those in need at the end of the month.

Undie Sundays is just one of the many Church's missions during the course of a year.

Agawam Congregational Church is located at 745 Main St., in the Historic District. The church is handicapped accessible with a large parking area. For more information, contact the church at 413-786-7111 or [office@AgawamCong.com](mailto:office@AgawamCong.com).

## Spring tag sale on March 22 and 23

AGAWAM – Spring Tag Sale will be held on Friday and Saturday March 22 and 23 at Agawam Congregational Church, 745 Main Street, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., each day, the church hall will be filled with interesting, affordable, and diverse items. There will be something for everyone of all ages. A limited number of vendor tables will be available at \$25. A table and chair will be included. For an application, contact the church via e-mail: [office@agawamcong.com](mailto:office@agawamcong.com) or call 413-786-7111. The church is handicapped accessible with a large parking lot.

## ACAA meeting held March 13

AGAWAM – Peter Cangialosi will be the artist demonstrator at the Wednesday March 13, at 6 p.m. meeting of the Agawam Community Artists and Artisans.

Cangialosi is a graphic designer, printmaker and woodworker from Holyoke. His prints have been featured in various shops, galleries and shows around the Pioneer Valley and greater Massachusetts.

Specializing in relief and monotype, his prints offer a new perspective on the mundane and ordinary.

Eight of Cangialosi monotype landscapes are part of the Boston Athenaeum's permanent collection. In 2019 he began building bespoke furniture, picture frames, and various household items, turning raw materials into something not only functional but beautifully unique.

Cangialosi will bring his beautifully handmade lamps and woodcuts. He will show and discuss the process of his craft with some tools and examples of materials he uses, such as carved woodblock, and carving tools.

Cangialosi will bring the parts and the pieces to show the construction of his lamps.

This is a free presentation; all are welcome to enjoy this extraordinary and unique art demonstration.



Peter Cangialosi will be demonstrating his art technique at the ACAA March meeting.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

The demonstration will begin at 7 p.m. at the Agawam Public Library, 750 Cooper St.

For more information, please contact Ceil Rossi at (413) 207-1247 or email; [tocarefree2@hotmail.com](mailto:tocarefree2@hotmail.com).

## Antique appraisals hosted April 6

AGAWAM – Feeding Hills Congregational Church, located at 21 North Westfield St., is hosting an antique appraisal Saturday, April 6 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The cost is \$5 an item or 3 for \$12 with a three item limit.

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

For further information call Kathy 413-786-0195.

## Catholic Women's Club holds March Meeting

AGAWAM – The Catholic Women's Club of Agawam will be holding its March meeting on March 11, at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Center of St. John the Evangelist Church. The guest speaker will be Cecile Fragoso who will be speaking on the Lazarus Ministry. St. John's Parish Center is located at 833 Main St. All Catholic women in Agawam and Feeding Hills are welcome to attend.

## Food donation for season of 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.

## Easter Bunny arrives at mall

HOLYOKE – Western Massachusetts is hopping over to Holyoke Mall on March 1 to welcome the Easter Bunny back for the spring season.

Mr. Cottontail returns to his holiday home March 1 through March 30 on the lower level in JCPenney Court to bring in the new season with holiday photos and themed events.

This March, hundreds of families will celebrate their favorite Easter tradition at Holyoke Mall. Reservations are recommended and can be made by visiting [whereisbunny.com](http://whereisbunny.com). Guests who pre-book will receive a complimentary gift valued at \$20.

Easter Bunny Photo Hours:  
Monday to Friday: 2 to 7 p.m., extends to 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on March 18  
Saturday: 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., extends to 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on March 23  
Sunday: noon to 6 p.m., extends to 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on March 18

Capture the magic all season long at one of the center's Easter Bunny events:

Hoppin' Into Spring: March 9 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Sensory-Friendly Event: March 10 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Pet Nights: March 18 and 19 from 5 to 7 p.m.

All events will take place on the lower level outside of JCPenney.



## Help world hunger one step at a time 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 inter-faith CROP Hunger Walks around the theme "Ending hunger one step at a time."

Many of the Walkers will be proclaiming

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](mailto:drforfa@hotmail.com) or by calling 413-739-6608. Learn more about CROP at [www.crophungerwalk.org](http://www.crophungerwalk.org).

# 'Let's Get Growing: Spring Gardening Workshops' March 23

8 classes designed to educate, empower home gardeners

By Dalton Zbierski  
dzbierski@turley.com

WESTFIELD – The Western Massachusetts Master Gardener Association is excited to present the "Let's Get Growing: Spring Gardening Workshops" on March 23 from 8 a.m. to Noon.

The event will occur at Westfield Middle School and feature eight classes designed to teach and energize gardeners of all skill levels. Rosey Bonner, a member of the WM-MGA Symposium Planning Team, offered a glimpse of what can be expected on the fourth Saturday of March.

"Believe it or not, this is our 25th year," Bonner said. "We will work with all gardeners from beginning to experienced and will continue our mission, which is not only sustainability and the idea of 'do no harm' but also rejuvenation and regeneration. We need to help the ecology get back to where it should be. Hopefully, our workshops offer a variety of things that can do that."

The event is structured so that there are four programs beginning at 8:30 a.m. and another four starting at 10:30 a.m. Attendees will be able to attend two.

One 8:30 a.m. program is "Planting for the Birds in Your Backyard" and will include information on turning your yard into a year-round sanctuary for birds with proper plant selection and placement. The session will be led by Dan Ziomek, the manager at Sugarloaf Gardens in Sutherland.

"He's known at least in the master gardeners' circle for being a great pruner, but one other thing in Dan's background is he's a birder," Bonner said. "He even runs a talk

show on birding once a week, so he's going to put together his mastery of plants and birds and present on planting for birds in your backyard. He'll be talking about plants that are pretty, plants that are useful and how to bring them together."

Another 8:30 a.m. program is "Start Your Own Seeds – A Hands-on Workshop", which will educate gardeners on when and how to start seeds, care for seeds and plant them. Each participant will prepare a peat pot and plant tomato seeds to take home in this session led by Master Gardener George Kingston.

"They'll learn the nitty gritty for everything from how do you choose seeds; do you get them from a catalog, or do you get them from Costco? What planting medium do you do? When do you transfer? All those kinds of ideas," Bonner said.

A third 8:30 a.m. program is "Pruning for Better Blooms" and will demystify the "when, why and how" of pruning shrubs to create the best flower show. Led by Horticulturist Jen Werner, a retired professor of Landscape Design Management at STCC, the session will review tools, techniques and specific pruning tips for popular flowering landscape shrubs such as hydrangeas, lilacs and rhododendrons.

"(Werner) is going to be talking about what plants to prune and what not to prune," Bonner said. "She'll talk about a variety of bushes and shrubs and how you can prune them."

The last 8:30 a.m. program, "The Joy of Container Gardening", is led by Master Gardener Priscilla Touhey. The session will demonstrate how to create your own ornamental container garden for spring, what plants are appropriate and how to maintain it.

"You can grow everything from vegetables to flowers in containers and make them beautiful," Bonner said.

One 10:30 a.m. program is "Garden for Life: Using Native Plants in the Landscape" and will be led by Blue Stem Natives Nursery Owner Kristen Nicholson. The session will address the immense value of native plants and discuss why planting natives in your yard is so important.

"You may know a lot about native plants, but you may not. Here are some good ones to start that are good combinations for butterflies or bees," Bonner said.

A second 10:30 a.m. program is "Essentials for the Upcoming Growing Season 101" and is led by Master Gardener and Green Thumb Guru Ed Sourdiffie. The workshop will help attendees learn what to expect in the spring, how to prioritize and what to do to ensure a successful gardening season.

"(Last year), several people wanted to know, 'Okay it's spring, it's March, what do I do?' That's why we put that workshop in," Bonner said. "How do you open a garden? Do you till or do you not till? If you ever watch Mass Appeal, Sourdiffie is their resident gardener."

A third 10:30 a.m. program is "Setting Up Your Vegetable Garden for Success", led by Beth Carmichael, Margery Gerard and JoAnne Palmer, master gardeners and co-leaders of the Full Circle Food Pantry Garden in South Hadley. The workshop will empower attendees to start their own vegetable gardens or enhance their current gardens, helping to improve production and yields.

"A major issue out there is food security and also the cost of food," Bonner said, noting the garden produces 2,000 pounds of

food every year for the South Hadley food pantry. "Even if you're able to feed your family, the cost has gone up, so we're really focusing this workshop along those lines of being able to set up your own vegetable garden for success."

Lastly, at 10:30 a.m., is "Friend or Foe: Helpful and Harmful Garden Insects and Worms", led by Entomologist Dr. Olga Kostromytska, an assistant professor at the UMass Stockbridge School of Agriculture. The program will discuss both beneficial and pest insects in New England and how to spot invasive species such as invasive worms.

"Rounding out our workshops, (Kostromytska) will be talking about insects that are good, so don't get rid of them all," Bonner said. "She'll talk about which ones are beneficial and which are harmful. She'll also talk about the hot topic out there, which is the Asiatic Jumping Worms that are destroying our soil and becoming more prevalent."

In between sessions, the Marketplace Fair will occur. The fair will include information tables on urbs, monarch butterflies, composting, bees and "Ask a Master Gardener".

"We've expanded that break in response to people giving us suggestions for topics, knowing we can't cover every topic, but how do we share more information. We're trying to take advantage of that middle piece more; not only get your coffee and look at vendors but get your questions answered," Bonner said.

One can register for the event online at WMMGA.org. If one registers on or before March 22, the cost to attend is \$30. On the day of the workshop, tickets will be sold for \$40, cash only.

## Veterans trip to Battleship cove April 7

AGAWAM – On Sunday, April 7, The Agawam Veteran's Council will be hosting a trip to Battleship Cove. The price is \$50 per person which includes round trip motor coach transportation and museum admission.

Take an incredible journey to historic landmarks and honor those who served aboard them. Step aboard six wartime vessels, including the Battleship USS Massachusetts and Destroyer Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Enjoy a unique dining experience onboard the Morse Code Galley.

To make reservations or to find more information call 413-593-3939 or email amy@king-gray.com.

## Agawam Garden club scholarships now 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, sus-

tainable 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.

## St. Joseph's holds Italian dinner Sunday

WESTFIELD – St. Joseph's National Catholic Church, 73 Main St., is hosting a community Italian dinner on March 10 at 12 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.

## Caregivers needed for Harmony House opening

CHICOPEE – Harmony House of Western Massachusetts is in the final planning stages for a springtime reopening. After closing the original home to purchase and renovate a much larger home in the Aldenville section of Chicopee, the Harmony House Board and volunteers are excited about this reopening so they can resume caring for terminally ill people in need of loving care and a comfortable, safe home. To care for these neighbors in need, many more volunteer caregivers are needed by this spring.

HARMONY | page 12

## Kids' clothing and books donations 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 desired. No footwear, including shoes, boots or sneakers will be accepted. All donations will be screened before donators 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.

## Tickets available for annual Hibernian breakfast

AGAWAM – 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).



# Opinion

## Guest Column



### Why must I pay into Social Security when I'm collecting benefits?

Dear Rusty

I am collecting full Social Security benefits at age 72 and also working full time.

Why is the Federal Government still taking money from my paycheck? I have written to Social Security experts on this issue and they tell me "It's the law." That is not a good answer for me. Approximately \$4,400 was taken from my pay in 2023 for Social Security and, yes, I get a pittance of a Cost Of Living Allowance increase, but not equal to what I pay. No one has been able to fully explain the Federal Government's thought process on taxing me for Social Security when I am getting full Social Security benefits. Can you?

Signed: Working Senior

Dear Working Senior

Far be it from me to try to explain the federal government's thought process on anything, but I can explain why those already collecting Social Security benefits must continue to pay Social Security payroll taxes while working.

It actually goes back to 1935 and the panel commissioned by President Roosevelt to create America's Social Security program. Said panel determined how the program would be financed, Congress approved it and FDR signed it.

That methodology was essentially this:

Workers who earn and their employers must contribute to Social Security via payroll taxes to fund the program (we now know this as FICA for employees and SECA for the self-employed). When the program first started, certain employees and their employers were required to each contribute 1% of the employee's first \$3,000 of earnings. Obviously, those amounts have risen over the decades. And, for clarity, only certain workers originally participated in Social Security, which has also changed over the decades so that now nearly everyone, who works must pay Social Security payroll taxes.

Starting in 1937 and still today, SS payroll taxes paid by those now working are used by the federal government to pay benefits to those who are currently receiving. Said another way, Social Security is a "pay as you go" program where income from those working and their employer is used to pay benefits to those receiving.

Payroll taxes collected aren't put into a personal account for the worker; rather they are used to meet current SS payment obligations. Any excess money collected is invested in special issue government bonds as reserves for future use, although current annual SS income is less than annual program costs - an entirely different topic.

So, the financing method enacted in 1935 and started in 1937 still applies - those who work and earn and their employers must pay into the system to fund benefit payments to those, who are now receiving and that includes those workers who are already collecting their Social Security. FYI, there was a time when, if someone worked after starting their SS benefits, they lost all of their benefits. Fortunately, that rule no longer exists, so those, who are collecting SS benefits can now continue to get benefits if they work, but they must also still pay into the program from their work earnings to

### Local fishing holes...



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

## Guest Column

### Sapelli will be a good mayor for businesses, citizens



Blueberry pruning 101  
[[USE IN THE GARDEN BOX FROM JR TEMPLATE]]

My blueberry bushes came to me as full grown plants uprooted from an acquaintance's yard.

He needed the space for something else, so I happily agreed to take the eight bushes off of his hands. They struggled a lot the first few years of being in their new home, I think because the move was a stressful one.

Over the last couple of seasons we've seen more fruit production, thankfully, but I know there should be more. I think I may need to improve my pruning practices.

We are nearing the end of the dormant season, but if I get right to it, the job can still be accomplished this year.

There are many good reasons to prune in the

dormant season. Because there are no leaves on the bushes, you can really take a good look at what you have to work with. You can notice off-colors, bent branches and the like when there is no leaf cover.

Late February into early March is perfect timing because theoretically the coldest part of the winter has passed. Sometimes pruning reduces cold hardiness, but like I mentioned, we should be OK since we are nearing winter's end.

Some rules transfer from pruning one type of plant to another; in other words, you'd make these same type of considerations for pruning roses or other woody plants. Let's call these the obvious cuts.

First concentrate on dead wood. Prune away any entirely dead branches all the way to the ground.

If parts of branches are dead, make a cut to the next living part of the branch. If you see anything that looks diseased or a little "off," cut that section or branch away too.

Sometimes branches get damaged from animals or ice storms. Likewise, cut damaged branches back to a section that shows no signs of damage.

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### Moore gets his vote as people's advocate on council



Brown creeper

A brown creeper regularly visits an oak tree in my yard. The other day I watched the creeper fly to the bottom of the tree and make his way up the tree. A few minutes later a white-breasted nuthatch made its way down the same tree. I think the creeper also grabs some mealworms, which I have out for the bluebirds and any other birds that wants them.

The brown creeper is a small brown bird about 5 1/2 inches long. It has brown streaking above and white underneath and a long, downward, curved bill. Noticeable behavior is creeping up a tree trunk, then dropping down to the base of the same tree or another tree to start the process all over again. It probs bark for insects and larvae. Sometimes it visits feeders for chopped nuts or suet.

The brown creeper blends in with the tree bark. When alarmed it will flatten itself against the tree and remain motionless. Its song is a series of high pitched whistles, "see wee see to wee." The call is a high "tsee."

The female lays five to six white eggs with dark spots in a hammock style crescent shaped nest of bark, twigs, mosses and lined with feathers. It constructs the nest behind a loose piece of bark on a dead tree or in a natural cavity about five to 15 feet above the ground.

Brimfield resident

I received an email from a Brimfield resident, who keeps me up to date on his bird sightings.

He said in a recent email, "I did a walk yesterday at Quabbin gate 43. A small group walked to the area where people can rent or launch boats. No much about." He said some folks heard pine

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# Professor reflects on STCC's impact on his career

SPRINGFIELD – When he accepted a teaching position at Springfield Technical Community College in 2013, Professor Anthony Rondinelli knew he had come full circle and in his heart he knew it was the right move.

Many years earlier, as he was graduating from high school, Rondinelli decided STCC was his college of choice. He wanted to stay local, and he knew it was the most affordable higher education option available to him.

"I decided to attend STCC because of its affordability and excellent reputation, but also because I was a working student," Rondinelli said.

After earning his associate's degree from STCC, Rondinelli earned a bachelor's degree and then two master's degrees, and worked for many years in private industry. He served in a variety of roles, from sales and marketing, to management, to finance/risk analysis, to accounting and financial reporting.

However, he always had a desire to teach, and armed with real world business experience, he took positions at several area colleges and universities beginning back in 2010. He was hired as an adjunct faculty member at STCC in 2013, and then

as a full-time faculty member in 2014, and has felt like he's come back home ever since.

"STCC's been so important to my career and to my own self-development over the years," Rondinelli said. "Without STCC, I don't know if I would have ever come back and entered teaching, a career that I really love."

Today, Rondinelli is a full-time, tenured professor of business. He teaches several courses in accounting, personal income taxes, personal finance, marketing, management and computer basics, among others. He's able to draw on his experience in the private sector to illuminate the paths of his students. Rondinelli finds joy in helping others and making a difference.

A resident of Feeding Hills, where he resides with his wife and 2 children, Rondinelli grew up in Springfield. He graduated with honors from Cathedral High School (now Pope Francis Preparatory School) in 1989. While he was accepted at many other local area colleges, he chose to go to STCC. It made sense financially. His father, a tradesman who owned a shoe-repair business in downtown Springfield, died when Rondinelli was just 8 years old. His older brother then took over the trade, and

Rondinelli helped out at his shop even as a small child. He continued working there while a student at STCC and beyond.

"STCC was a great fit for me, because I could balance my work-life with my studies," Rondinelli said. "Affordability was very important. With my dad passing away when I was so young, our family didn't have a lot of financial means."

Now in his 10th year at STCC, Rondinelli gives back by serving on the college's Foundation Board as a faculty representative. He's the chair of the student Business Club. He is a regular participant on committees, including serving as a member of the recent Strategic Planning Task Force.

Rondinelli is proud of his community involvement, including doing consulting for SCORE, a national organization that provides free business mentoring services to new and existing businesses. He also publishes articles and offers expert commentary on various financial matters, in part to shine a light on STCC's name.

One of his goals is to pursue a doctoral degree in business after his son graduates from college. His son, Christopher Rondinelli, completed the Emergency Medical Technician certificate course at STCC in 2023, and is now a certified EMT. Chris is

a freshman in the physician's assistant degree program at Springfield College.

While Rondinelli continues to set many goals for himself, he has no plan to leave STCC. He says he loves being in the classroom and enlightening others. His motto is to "never stop learning and growing."

"To me, when I see that light go off in the mind of a student, that's very fulfilling," Rondinelli said. "It's been the most fulfilling thing I've ever done professionally."

STCC President John B. Cook said Rondinelli embodies the spirit of community college transformation.

"Having many conversations with Anthony over the years, it is hard not to experience his wonderfully earnest passion for the STCC mission," Cook said. "We are fortunate to have him in our faculty ranks, teaching a subject matter that continues to carry an imperative for our students."

Rondinelli said he feels privileged to be a part of STCC as a former student and now as a professor.

"STCC has been great," Rondinelli said. "I started here in the fall of 1989, and now I feel as though I've come full circle in being back here to do what I really love, which is to support students as they transform their lives."

## SECURITY ■ from page 4

help pay benefits to SS recipients.

I hope this provides some insight for why you must continue to contribute to Social Security even after you have started collecting your benefits. It is a result of how the program is financed predominantly by workers through payroll taxes on their earnings and to a lesser extent from interest on Trust Fund reserves and income tax on Social Security benefits. With very few exceptions, everyone who works helps pay benefits to those now receiving.

*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 informational 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](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.*

## BACKYARD ■ from page 4

siskins and saw a few white-throated sparrows. On the water, there were a few hooded mergansers and black ducks and in the distance some gulls flying about. On the way home he stopped by the ponds in Warren and the water was not open, so no birds.

He also took part in the Great Backyard Bird Count on Feb. 16 and 17. Here are his results: one red-tailed hawk, four mourning doves, two red-bellied woodpeckers, two downy woodpeckers, one hairy woodpecker, three blue jays, two black-capped chickadees, three tufted titmice, two European starlings, two American robins, three house finches, 97 dark-eyed juncos, four white-throated sparrows, one common grackle and three northern cardinals.

He reported his first sighting on Feb. 16 at 1:40 p.m. and watched for 25 minutes and his second sighting on Feb. 16 at 3:30

p.m. was for one hour. On Feb. 17 his sightings were 8:30 a.m. and 10:15 a.m., both for 45 minutes at a time. Missed species, ones he has seen before, included pileated woodpecker, white-breasted nuthatch, brown creeper, American crow and American goldfinch.

### Bluebirds

The bluebirds continue to come to my feeder for the mealworms. I am purchasing more mealworms or the bluebirds than when I had chickens. I used to purchase the mealworms as a daily treat to my small flock. One hen would jump up and eat them out of my hand before I could put them in their feeder.

*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](mailto:mybackyard88@aol.com) or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.*

## GARDEN ■ from page 4

Now it gets a little more tricky, but it still should be straightforward and it applies to mature blueberry plants, not new plantings or super old neglected bushes.

Look at the base of your plant. Is it wider than 18 inches in any direction from the center? If so, cut away these stems at ground level or try to dig them up, roots and all in the coming weeks, then move them to a new spot, preferably a nursery bed where they can grow up a bit. I'm into a whole new topic, so let's get back to the task at hand.

Once the plant has been cut back to within its limits, look for growth coming from the base that is on an angle or crossing over other branches. Cut that away too, so that we encourage upright growth instead.

Okay, with that behind us, let's dive into more difficult territory. Here is when you begin to rejuvenate the plant (listen carefully, self).

Old canes will be gray in appearance and thick. You probably don't want to cut away every one, but perhaps removing one-

third of these stems would be a good plan.

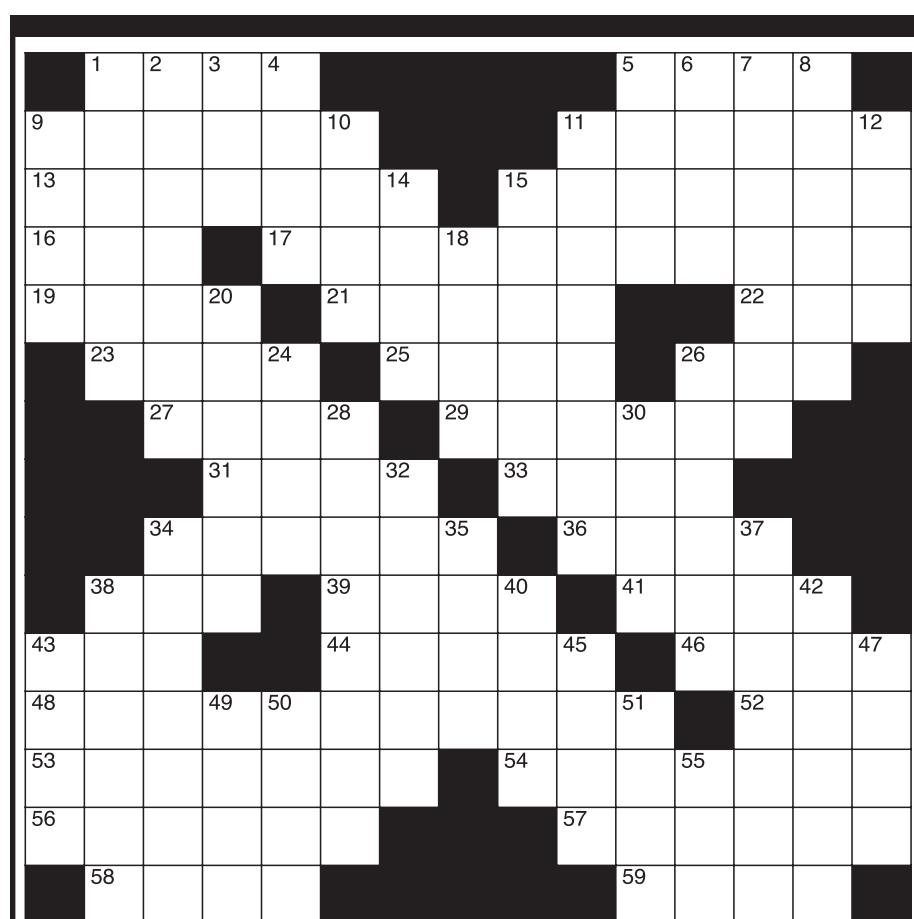
Cut them back to ground level. Your next cuts will be what I can "fine tuning," or making cuts that thin out older twiggy growth in the upper part of the plant by cutting back stems to a younger, upright branch.

Go by color here. Younger growth is reddish in appearance. Hand pruners are your desired tool of choice, while bypass loppers or a hand saw is essential for the bigger cuts I mentioned first.

You'll be surprised by how great your blueberry bushes will look and just how productive they will be with this type of maintenance pruning accomplished annually. I think there is just enough daylight for me to get to my own pruning.

I can almost taste the blueberry pie come July. Yum.

*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](mailto:pouimette@turley.com) with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.*



### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Chaps
- 5. Currently fashionable
- 9. Collision
- 11. More slim
- 13. European city
- 15. Implicitly
- 16. The side of something that is sheltered from the wind
- 17. The Mount Rushmore State
- 19. Gold or silver wire cord
- 21. Muscles along insects' diaphragm
- 22. Trent Reznor's band
- 23. Sweet juicy gritty-textured fruit
- 25. Broken branch
- 26. Indicates ten
- 27. Expression of annoyance
- 29. Brings together
- 31. Ancient city in Thrace
- 33. Sailors' spirit
- 34. Looked into
- 36. Muckraking woman
- 38. A type of cast
- 39. One's responsibility
- 41. Where golfers begin
- 43. Make a mistake
- 44. Semitic Sun god
- 46. Ancient Italian-Greek colony
- 48. Beheaded
- 52. A place to stay
- 53. Unwise
- 54. Most supernatural
- 56. "Dennis" is a famous one

### CLUES DOWN

- 57. Ointments
- 58. Exam
- 59. Leaked blood
- 20. Embellished with expressions
- 24. Infrequent
- 26. Temperature unit
- 28. Hydrophilic amino acid
- 30. Honk
- 32. Legislative body
- 34. Swinish
- 35. Russian assembly
- 37. Take over for
- 38. Put in advance
- 40. Satisfy
- 42. Felt
- 43. Dutch cheese
- 45. Witnesses
- 47. Strong insects
- 49. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
- 50. Ancient people of Scotland
- 51. Cheerless
- 55. Sick



Mayor Christopher Johnson and West Springfield's Mayor William Reichelt held a Mayoral Breakfast to talk with businesses and residents about updates on their towns.



Tansey's Catered Table, the new banquet hall at Partner's Restaurant and Catering, took the opportunity of the Mayoral Breakfast to do a ribbon cutting to honor their opening.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA



A buffet breakfast was provided by Tansey's Catered Table for all in attendance at the Mayoral Breakfast.



Mark and Siena Tansey of Tansey's Catered Table thanked everyone for coming to their restaurant for the Mayoral Breakfast.



West Springfield Mayor William Reichelt gave his opening address welcoming everyone to the Mayoral Breakfast.



Mayor Christopher Johnson provided some updates on the town in his opening address at the Mayoral Breakfast.



Executive Director of the West of the River Chamber Robin Wozniak welcomed all attendees to the Mayoral Breakfast.

**MAYORS** ■ from page 1

in most cases it is either blatantly false or only a small portion of what you read is true," Johnson said.

He reminded those in attendance that all information on the project is updated to the project website at <https://www.agawamed.org/o/ahs/article/1312997>.

He is also willing to come to different locations to give his presentation on the updated information about the project.

"If you wanted me to come and make the presentation to you about the project, I'd be happy to," he said.

Johnson also mentioned that the town hopes to cut the ribbon on the new police station come this fall.

Additionally, Johnson gave an update on the Tuckahoe Turf Farm Project, which is currently under construction to be a new park.

This piece of land is 290 acres in size. In comparison, according to Johnson Agawam Municipal Golf Course is a little under 100 acres. This is a sizable project that Johnson anticipates will be greatly beneficial for Agawam.

"It's going to be one of the nicest parks in Western Massachusetts," Johnson said. "It all adds to the quality of life in our community."

On top of these projects, Johnson mentioned his intentions to introduce a couple of economic development ventures in the next few months.

"One of them might become one of the largest taxpayers in town, if we're able to conclude our negotiations with them," Johnson said. "So there's a lot of exciting things that are on the agenda for Agawam."

Johnson was asked about an update on the fiber optics project. He informed the crowd that Go Net Speed is trying to get going in Agawam; they are working with the utility pole owners to try to install their wires.

Unfortunately, they are encouraging difficulties as the state operates on a different system than all other states in New England, one which complicates the process of acquiring pole licenses.

"As soon as they have all the pole li-

censes in place they are immediately going to begin to build out in Agawam," Johnson said.

Finally, Johnson informed that crowd that the Meadow Street project work should be back in full swing come spring.

In spring the construction crews will work on finishing the drainage work and replacing water and sewer lines.

"We know it's a pain but...we needed to do both storm drainage work and water and sewer replacement, so we're trying to get both done as part of one project," Johnson said.

He also hopes that North Street will open up in the spring, once the asphalt plants are open for the town to pave the road.

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# SPORTS

## Lawsuit changes brackets in basketball tournament

By Gregory A. Scibelli  
gscibelli@turley.com

FRANKLIN – Over the years, there have been issues with ineligible player use or other rule-breaking that has led to high school teams being left out of sectional or state tournaments.

This year, however, a school took action and it ended up halting the state tournament and changed opponents for several teams involved.

Oliver Ames High School, which competes in Division 2 in many sports, appealed it being left out of the State Division 2 Boys Basketball tournament due to a paperwork.

According to a representative from the MIAA, schools are required to submit certain paperwork for entrance into the tournament, and Oliver Ames failed to meet the requirement. They were thusly removed from the tournament and did not have a spot when seeds were released on Saturday, Feb. 24.

Some preliminary games in the tournament, of which Oliver Ames would have been a part of due to their projected lower seed, were scheduled to start on Monday, Feb. 26, but the tournament had to be halted due to an injunction being

BASKETBALL | page 12

## Agawam beats Minnechaug to start states

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

WEST SPRINGFIELD – David Newsome took his time getting off the ice following the Division 2 state preliminary round game between the 33rd-seeded Agawam Brownies and the 32nd-seeded Minnechaug Regional Falcons on February 25.

A few minutes earlier the senior defenseman scored a goal in overtime giving the Brownies a thrilling 3-2 victory over the Falcons before a large crowd at the Olympia Ice Center in West Springfield.

“This was my last high school hockey game here at Olympia, and I just wanted to take it all in one final time,” Newsome said. “It’s a great feeling, especially scoring my first game-winning goal in a



Goalie Frankie DiSanti gets ready to block a shot.



Cole Buffum sends a quick pass to David Newsome.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY SOFIA DIGRANDE

HOCKEY | page 12



Cole Buffum heads into the offensive zone.



Angelo Robbins tries to clear the puck.



Brett Eggleston makes a pass from behind the goal.



Elijah Maldonado dekes and tries to get around a pair of defenders to go for the hoop.



As the referee watches, Aiden Lavelle looks to shoot.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

## Brownies fall in state tournament opener

AGAWAM – A legal challenge changed Agawam’s opponent at the last minute.

Agawam, which had the No. 24 seed in the tournament, was scheduled to face Bay Path Voc-Tech.

But when Oliver Ames High School mounted a league challenge (see related story), the Brownies’ opening opponent for the state tournament changed to Masconomet, which beat Agawam in a preliminary round game last Tuesday evening 70-50.

Scorers for the Brownies were not reported in the match-up. Agawam’s season finished at 12-9 overall.

Agawam also made the semifinals of the Western Mass. tournament this year, losing at Central.



Riley Jorgensen circles the perimeter.



Ethan Danek is pressured under the hoop.



Gavin Cruz tries to shoot over the opposition.

# Sports

## Baldwin gets modified win as he prepares for NE return

FLORENCE, S.C. – Tommy Baldwin Racing drivers Jack Baldwin and Luke Baldwin both had success Saturday night at Florence Motor Speedway.

Jack sealed the night by capturing the victory in the opener of the Carolina Crate Modified Series, driving the No. 7NY in a final lap dash battle to the finish. Luke made his Tour-Type Modified debut in the SMART Modified Tour Peanut Patch 99 with Sadler-Stanley Racing and scored a top-five finish.

Jack qualified on the pole earlier in the day, inverting to fourth and running inside the top-five for the whole 62-lap Crate Modified race, before making the move for the win in the final corner.

Luke posted the fastest lap time in his first official Tour Modified practice in the PSR No. 7VA for the Sadler-Stanley Racing group. The team, owned by former NASCAR driver Hermie Sadler and Attorney and Virginia State Senator Bill Stanley, is Luke's official home for the full SMART Modified Tour season in 2024. He also qualified the car in third spot in time trials and started second after the redraw.

"Excited to win another Crate Modified race, especially being able to get to Victory Lane at Florence," Jack Baldwin said. "Slate (Myers) had a fast car tonight. I hate that it came down to him spinning, but I was as low as I could possibly go without hitting the inside wall. Florence is a fun track. We

were able to ride a bit early then close a large gap over the final 30 laps to be in position to win. I can't thank everyone on the TBR team and PSR enough."

Both Baldwin brothers attended Florence events with the help of their respective team members and PSR Chassis members, with Tommy Baldwin Jr. at Las Vegas Motor Speedway with Rick Ware Racing.

"Super proud of everybody involved with this team for what we accomplished at Florence," Luke Baldwin said. "We showed race winning speed all the way through the day, and if a few things went my way, we may have had a shot at winning it. We had a solid second-place run going until a late race restart where I made some mis-

takes and fell to fifth. Nothing to hang our heads about. Huge thanks to all the guys at Sadler-Stanley Racing, Bill Stanley, Hermie Sadler and PSR Products. The car was a rocket ship and they made my job easy. Also, thanks to Pace-O-Matic, The Stanley Law Group, and Mohawk Northeast for making it happen. Congrats to Carson Lof-tin on his first career win."

Next up for the Tommy Baldwin Racing team will be for Luke driving the No. 7VA for Sadler-Stanley Racing in the second SMART Modified Tour race of the season next Sunday, March 10 at Caraway Speedway. Jack Baldwin is currently slated to return to the seat during the summer in the SK Modifieds at Stafford Motor Speedway.

## Worcester Railers lead early, but fall to Trois-Rivieres Lions

WORCESTER – With 21st Century technology being what it is there are letters, numbers and abbreviations for almost everything that happens in hockey.

Almost everything, anyway. There is nothing on the stat sheets for an M.O. That is what the Railers would have registered here Sunday afternoon, a Missed Opportunity.

Worcester led the Trois-Rivieres Lions, 2-0, after the first period then gave up five straight goals over the final 40 minutes and was beaten, 5-2.

The Railers remain in fourth place in the North Division, both in terms of points and winning percentage. They have no cushion, though, and will play at Maine Tuesday morning with a one-point lead on Reading and a two-point edge on the Mariners.

Trois-Rivieres is four points out, not eight, thanks to its victory Sunday.

Worcester got goals from Zach White and Reece Newkirk. It also got 41 saves from John Muse, third most for a Railers goaltender this season.

Nolan Yaremko led the Lions with a hat trick, the second of the season against Worcester. He scored two goals 1:24 apart in the second period then converted a 5 on 3 power play chance at 19:01 of the third period. Jakov Novak and Nicolas Lariviere had the other goals for the visitors.

Joe Vrbetic made 25 saves for Trois-Rivieres in posting his first win in four starts

against the Railers this season.

The four Trois-Rivieres goals in the second were scored by, in order:

Novak at 3:18, Lariviere at 4:17, and Yaremko at 11:26 and 12:50. Yaremko's first goal was on a power play.

The Lions had the better of play in the game's early going as the Railers were careless in their own zone. With the first period nine minutes old, Trois-Rivieres had an 11-3 edge in shots on goal.

Muse kept it scoreless.

Worcester finally broke through at 17:35 with White scoring his seventh goal of the season. He had been flying throughout the period and outbattled a Lions defenseman in the left corner, then skated into the circle and beat Vrbetic along the ice.

It was White's first point after an eight-game scoreless drought.

With 1:47 to go in the period, the Lions' Anthony Beaugard was called for interference by referee Hunter Mottinger. Teammate Brycen Martin was apparently uncivil in his remarks to Mottinger and wound up with an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty.

Newkirk made it 2-0 with 21 seconds left in the period, 34 seconds left on the 5-on-3. It was just the Railers' second 5-on-3 goal of the season.

Worcester was held to nine shots the rest of the way and wound up with a game, and opportunity, lost.

## T-Birds suffer loss to Isles

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (25-24-3-2) could not overcome a 3-0 hole in the opening period as the Bridgeport Islanders (18-29-6-1) skated off as 4-1 winners at the MassMutual Center on Sunday before a seventh straight sellout crowd of 6,793.

Not even a minute into the festivities, both Sam Bitten & Will Bitten got the Thunderdome engaged in the game with a pair of fighting majors in bouts against Seth Helgeson and Eetu Liukas respectively. However, the Islanders held a sizeable edge in offensive zone time, and that translated into an early lead for the visitors.

At the 9:10 mark, Ruslan Iskhakov artfully slipped the puck to Matt Maggio in the left-wing circle, where the rookie swiftly moved the puck from backhand to forehand and uncorked a perfect wrist shot under the crossbar past Colten Ellis to make it 1-0 for Bridgeport.

The penalty parade continued as two separate Springfield players were whistled for penalties just 45 seconds apart, opening the door for Bridgeport's power play. On the ensuing two-man advantage, Ellis made a save on an initial try by William Dufour, but Carsen Twarzynski was positioned perfectly to slide the rebound home to make it a 2-0 score at 11:18.

In the final minute of the period, Brian Pinho further bolstered the Islander lead when he sidestepped a hit attempt before beating Ellis between the legs with a snapper at 19:23.

After being outshot 18-5 in the first, the T-Birds responded with some push-back in the second, but rookie Bridgeport goalie Henrik Tikkanen was steady in the crease. Mikhail Abramov finally dented the young goaltender at 12:11 when he deposited a loose puck in the blue paint after a Jakub Vrana slapper squeaked through Tikkanen's equipment. Abramov's second goal in as many days cut the margin to 3-1.

The T-Birds' best chance to get closer came in the middle portions of the third period, when back-to-back Bridgeport penalties handed Springfield a 5-on-3 advantage. However, Tikkanen and the gutsy Isles' PK unit stood up to the challenge, and a Springfield penalty would then nullify the advantage.

Karson Kuhlman put the game away at 16:48 with an empty-net goal to seal the visitors' seventh win in 11 tries this season against the T-Birds.

The T-Birds and Islanders complete their season series on Friday night for one final installment between the rivals inside the MassMutual Center. Puck drop is set for 7:05 p.m. at the Thunderdome.

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## Registration open for Quabbin Valley baseball

The Quabbin Valley Over-28 Baseball League is looking to infuse new talent into its league for the 2024 season.

Registration for the 2024 season is now open and any interested players can go to [www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org](http://www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org) to get registered, or to seek more information or make inquiries about the league. The league website will also be updated over the next month with information about the upcoming season.

There are many open roster spots available in the league for the 2024 season, which is tentatively scheduled to begin on Sunday, April 21. The league plays most Sunday from late April through late August with playoffs following that. The league plays a 15-game schedule and typically fields six teams each year. Games are usually played at 10 a.m. with fields in Easthampton and South Hadley normally used.

The Quabbin Valley league is an all-abilities league and all are welcome to join. Eligibility is players who are age 28 and over. You must be 30 to be eligible to pitch in the league. Your age for eligibility is whatever age you will turn in 2024. The league is also able to entertaining taking in an entire group as a team to add to the league. Please email the league board for to inquire about entering a team.

The league is currently in the process of preparing for the 2024 season and held a meeting on Feb. 18 to discuss plans for the upcoming season. The next meeting is scheduled for Sunday March 24 at 11:40 a.m. at the Hangar Pub & Grill in South Hadley. All are welcome to attend the meeting, ask questions and express interest in joining.

Send us your sports news and photos: [sports@turley.com](mailto:sports@turley.com)





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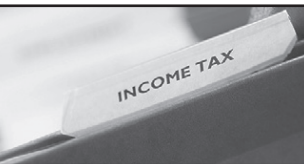
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# Public Notices

### AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION Legal Notice

The Agawam Conservation Commission will meet on **Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 6:00PM** at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St, Agawam, Ma. The purpose of this meeting will be to hear the Request for Determination of Applicability of McGill on property located at 2 Colonial Ave..

By Order of  
Henry A. Kozloski,  
Chairman  
AGAWAM  
CONSERVATION  
COMMISSION  
03/07/2024

### AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION Legal Notice

The Agawam Conservation Commission will meet on **Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 6:05 PM** at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St, Agawam, Ma. The purpose of this meeting will be to hear the Request for Determination of Applicability of the Agawam DPW on property located at 87 & 95 Parkedge Dr.

By Order of  
Henry A. Kozloski,  
Chairman  
AGAWAM  
CONSERVATION  
COMMISSION  
03/07/2024

### Legal Notice Town of Agawam Planning Board

The Agawam Planning Board will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 6:00 PM** at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. The purpose of this hearing will be to hear the petition of 88 Agawam LLC aka Shield

Hotel Management LLC for a zone change request for 1422 Main Street, Parcel ID K4 I 7, from Residence A-2 and Business A to entirely Business A. Copies of the proposed zone change can be obtained from the Office of Planning and Community Development between the hours of 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM at the Agawam Town Hall, 36 Main Street, Agawam, MA.

By Order Of:  
Violet Baldwin, Chairman  
Agawam Planning Board  
03/07, 03/14/2024

### Legal Notice Town of Agawam Planning Board

The Agawam Planning Board will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, March 21, 2024 at 6:15 PM** at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. The purpose of this hearing will be to hear the petition of Mayor Johnson on a proposed ordinance to amend Chapter 180 & Chapter 114 of the code of the Town of Agawam regarding Class 1 and Class 2 licenses. A copy of the proposal can be obtained from the Office of Planning and Community Development between the hours of 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM at the Agawam Town Hall, 36 Main Street, Agawam, MA.

By Order Of:  
Violet Baldwin, Chairman  
Agawam Planning Board  
03/07, 03/14/2024

### Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Division Docket No. HD24P0364EA Estate of:

**Theresa A. Grus**  
Also Known As:  
**Theresa Ann Grus**  
Date of Death:  
**January 29, 2024**

### INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Mark R. Magistri** of Agawam, MA a Will has been admitted to informal probate.

**Mark R. Magistri** of Agawam, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without** surety on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts 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. 03/07/2024

### LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given by Langanet Towing pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c.255, Section 39A, that on **March 22, 2024** at 63 Ramah Cir S, Agawam the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy the garagekeeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicle.

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VIN: 1N4AL21E88N525071  
Tyshun Cleveland  
24 Harvard Street  
Springfield, MA 01109  
03/07, 03/14, 03/21/2024

### AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION Legal Notice

The Agawam Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 6:10 PM** at the Agawam

Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. The purpose of this hearing will be to hear the Notice of Intent Application of the Agawam DPW for work to be performed for the Westfield River Interceptor Sewer Relocation project on Main Street subject to the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act.

By Order of  
Henry A. Kozloski,  
Chairman  
AGAWAM  
CONSERVATION  
COMMISSION  
03/07/2024

### TOWN OF AGAWAM Accepting Bids

The Town of Agawam invites sealed bids that can provide the Town with an Inventory Supply and Management System.

A full bid package with specifications will be available on 3/11/24 at 10AM via email to [bids@agawam.ma.us](mailto:bids@agawam.ma.us). Bids shall be received **until 2:30 PM, 3/21/24** at the DPW Annex, 1000 Suffield St., Agawam, MA 01001 03/07/2024

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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.publicnotices.turley.com)



**HOCKEY ■ from page 7**

state tournament game. We're looking forward to moving on to the next round now." A year ago, the Brownies season came to an end following a road loss to Medford in the preliminary round.

"This is my first postseason victory as a varsity hockey coach, which feels very good," said Agawam head coach Todd Rowley. "We did win a Western Mass. and a state title about ten years ago. It was an outstanding hockey game tonight."

Agawam won a postseason game for the first time since defeating Westfield, 3-1, in the 2015 Western Mass. Division 3 finals. The Brownies beat South Hadley in the 2013 Division 3A Western Mass. championship game before capturing the state title with a 3-1 win against Grafton High School which was held at Olympia.

The Brownies (12-9) 2023-24 season came to an end four days later following a 7-0 loss at top seeded Tewksbury Memorial in the round of 32.

Newsome, who's a four year member of the Agawam hockey team, scored his third goal of the season in overtime against Minnechaug. The other six Brownies seniors are Hayden Dupre, Peyton Buffum, Anthony Buoniconti, Brett Eggleston, Drew Scherban, Jake Parolo.

"The seven seniors have been phenomenal this season," Rowley said. "I'm very happy that they'll be playing another game."

Agawam and Minnechaug didn't face each other during the regular season. Neither team qualified for the Western Mass. tournament.

"We played Minnechaug last year, but we didn't match-up against them during the regular season this year, which is a shame," Rowley said. "They're an outstanding hockey team and they never quit. I know this game would come down to the wire and it could've gone either way."

The Brownies finished the regular season ranked ninth in goals against per game in Division 2.

A lot of credit for that goes to junior goaltender Frankie Disanti and the Brownies defensemen.

Disanti made a total of 22 saves in the preliminary round match.

"I thought Frankie played another great game just like he has all season," Rowley said. "Our defensemen also played very well."

Minnechaug finished their season with an 11-10 overall record.

The Falcons seniors, who played in their final high school game, are Gage Vedovelli, Tim Harrigan, Derek Semanie, Tristen Hottin, Jake Klakotskiy, Mike Roy, Elijah Arel, and Gabe Tassinari, who was the starting goaltender.

"This was the senior's last high school hockey game, which is tough," said Minnechaug head coach Kyle Bousquet. "We kept battling back and anything can happen in overtime."

Newsome, who's an assistant captain, described his first game winning goal.

"It came off a faceoff, and I just shot it at the net from the top of the circle," he said. "I've never scored a game winning goal before."

Rowley gave a lot of credit to junior Landon Ashford for winning the draw in

the faceoff.

"It all started with Landon Ashford winning the faceoff," Rowley said. "Then David took a shot, and the puck went into the net."

Agawam juniors Evan Connery and A.J. Robbins were credited with assists on the game winning goal.

Peyton Buffum, who's the Brownies captain, fired a shot into the net past Vedovelli (30 saves) giving his team a 1-0 lead with 6:37 remaining in the first period. Buffum's team leading eleventh goal of the season was assisted by Eggleston and sophomore Tommy Connery.

The Falcons tied the score for the first time a little more than five minutes into the second period when junior Ben Daniels netted his ninth goal of the season. The assist was given to junior Brayden O'Sullivan.

A goal by Tommy Connery, which was assisted by Ashford, gave the Brownies the lead back with less than four minutes remaining in the middle period.

Minnechaug freshman Liam Faneuff, who netted a pair of regular season goals, tied the score for the second time at 2-2 with a breakaway goal five minutes into the third period.

DiSanti made a couple of saves late in the third period, which sent the contest into the eight minute sudden victory overtime period, which is 4-on-4, tied at 2-2.

"I was a little bit nervous during the overtime period," DiSanti said. "It was a back-and-forth game but I'm just glad that my team was able to win it."

The Brownies also had a couple of scoring chances early in the extra session before Newsome became the hero.

**BASKETBALL ■ from page 7**

filed by Oliver Ames in a court. The injunction went through and the MIAA was ordered by a judge to include the ousted school in this year's tournament.

"One team from Eastern Mass. was headed for Amherst and had to be turned around because of this," Eric Castonguay, athletic director at South Hadley High School said. "It stopped the whole thing."

While it only affected a handful of teams in Western Mass. Division 2, Amherst and Agawam were among the teams that were locally affected.

Karen Gomez, athletic director at Agawam High School, had to wait until a new opponent was announced in order to schedule her game.

She was originally scheduled to play Tuesday, Feb. 27 and host Bay Path Vocational Technical. That opponent changed when Oliver Ames was inserted into the tournament. Masaconomet ended up visiting Agawam, and luckily, at short notice, agreed to come to Agawam and played at the same time the Bay Path-Agawam game was scheduled for.

Amherst was forced to postpone its game from Monday. One team unaffected was Chicopee Comprehensive, which did not see an opponent change and traveled to Scituate in the Round of 32.

The rest of the tournament went on as scheduled and was in the quarterfinals as of press time.

**PROJECT ■ from page 1**

The town tax levy for FY2024 is \$73,053,295. Their max levy is \$88,508,212. This leaves the town with \$15,454,917 in excess levy capacity.

Johnson was worried that if the high school project was not excluded from the levy, it would cause the town to lose the financial flexibility allowed to them due to their excess levy capacity.

"The principle interest payments on this project won't count toward our maximum tax levy," Johnson said. "That preserves the financial flexibility that we enjoy. I would hate to be in a situation

where in the future...we're so close or exceeding our tax limit that we have to go for a prop two and half override to fund services."

Johnson strongly encourages all in the town to get the information they need and to vote in favor of this project.

"The costs are high, I get it, I understand, nobody wants to raise taxes but this is about the quality of life in Agawam and the quality of the education that we can provide for our students," he said.

For more information on the project go to [www.agawamhsproject.com](http://www.agawamhsproject.com) and [www.agawam.ma.us](http://www.agawam.ma.us). You can also reach out to [agawamhsproject@gmail.com](mailto:agawamhsproject@gmail.com).

**HARMONY ■ from page 2**

If individuals are interested in this mission, please stop by at any time during an upcoming caregiver recruitment event to learn about the caregiver opportunities offered at Harmony House and to take a tour the new home. Harmony House is located at 66 View St. Many of the current volunteers and members of the Board of Directors will be available to answer any questions.

March Caregiver Recruitment Events: Wednesday, March 13 from 5 to 7 p.m.; Wednesday, March 20 from 10 a.m. to noon.

Harmony House becomes a new home with 24/7 support for hospice patients who can no longer remain safely in their

own home. Therefore, caregivers should have a healthcare background and ideally be able to commit to at least 4 hours per week. Whether it's a few hours a week or a few hours a month, Harmony House is a welcoming place for people looking to help people.

Harmony House is a local, non-profit organization whose mission is to provide a loving home providing compassionate care for the terminally ill who have limited or no resources for special care in the final stage of life. Harmony House is primarily staffed by trained volunteers including nurses, CNAs/HHAs, caregivers, companions, and others. If interested in learning more or becoming a volunteer, please contact Harmony House at 413-315-9784 or [harmonyhousewma@gmail.com](mailto:harmonyhousewma@gmail.com).

**EVENT ■ from page 1**

"Humphrey is a school pet in an elementary school and each story Humphrey either gives a life lesson...and there is always a school tie-in, whether it's actual academics or relationship building, or things like that," Typrowicz said.

Since introducing this series, Typrowicz has had kids come up to her and share that they are reading other books in the series or books from spin-off series. She enjoys how it gets all the different children into reading.

Additionally, the event itself allows Typrowicz to get to know more of the

school community.

"It allows me to have access to more of the kids in the school and build relationships," Typrowicz said.

As the special education teacher she doesn't see many of the students in the school, so she enjoys the chance to get to know more of them, especially in such a fun context.

More than anything, Typrowicz hopes that this event will continue forward for many years to come, even when she eventually retires.

"It's something I enjoy doing and it's something the kids enjoy so I hope it continues for the foreseeable future," she said.



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**Preschool Enrollment**

**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](http://agawamed.org)). Select "Schools" - Early Childhood Center, select "Menu" - select "ECC Enrollment Information."



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