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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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Zero Waste Club hosts clothing, book drive

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – On Saturday, Mar. 9, the library hosted a book and clothing drive put on by the Agawam Zero Waste Club.

They mainly focused on collecting clothing items for kids and teens, though any clothing was welcome. People were also encouraged to bring used books to donate.

The day prior to the actual drive, Friday Mar. 8, members of the Zero Waste Club and other volunteers collected donations from the community throughout the afternoon.

The volunteers then organized the donated clothes and had them arranged like a clothing store in the community room of the library for people to peruse from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the actual shopping day.

About a hundred people came throughout the day to shop around and get clothes for themselves, their families or other people they knew.



NHS Students Colin Smith, Bianca Banaru and Alyssa Beaver all volunteered to help with the Agawam Zero Waste clothing drive. TURLEY PHOTO BY QUINN SUOMALA

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Debt exclusion heads for ballot vote

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – At the latest city council meeting Mayor Christopher Johnson clarified the purpose of the debt exclusion override for the high school project.

Johnson responded to comments concerning the current tax levy capacity, including the fact that proposals for debt service show the town could afford debt service without the need for a debt exclusion.

The town has approximately \$38 million in the stabilization fund, the free cash fund and the undesignated fund ballots, which already makes up a significant portion of the tax levy.

The overall tax levy limit is currently at about \$88 million. Currently is raising about \$73 million through property taxes to fund the fiscal 2024 budget.

Under projections presented at the Feb. 26 public meeting about the high school project, the first year of debt-service is about \$10 million.

The tax levy limit also continues to rise each year, accounting for new growth.

Johnson clarified that the debt exclusion would simply

prevent the high school project from being included in the tax levy limit, it would not cost the taxpayers more than they would be taxed anyway.

“The debt exclusion simply means that the payments on that bond will not count toward the town’s levy limit, it doesn’t mean that it costs any more, it doesn’t mean that it affects the taxes any more, it just means that in the calculation of the levy limit for the town, the bond payment will not count towards that number,” Johnson said.

The debt exclusion will not create another tax bill or add another line item on the tax bill.

The levy each year is calculated based on the levy from the last year, it can rise up to 2.5% plus new growth.

Johnson had proposed a debt exclusion override originally as he and others on the team felt it would be best to preserve the financial flexibility that the town of Agawam enjoys today.

Following Johnson’s clarification, the city council voted unanimously to approve the debt exclusion override and the funding of the high school, so

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Families get creative at library’s Spaghetti Tower Night

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The public library hosted a spaghetti tower event, in which children in kindergarten through second grade were challenged to build as tall a spaghetti tower as they could.

The children were provided with spaghetti, marshmallows and fruit snacks as the materials for their towers.

As they entered the room, kids and their caregivers were given the challenge to build the tower and provided with materials to do so.

The kids were welcome to work on their own, with their caregivers or with other people around them.

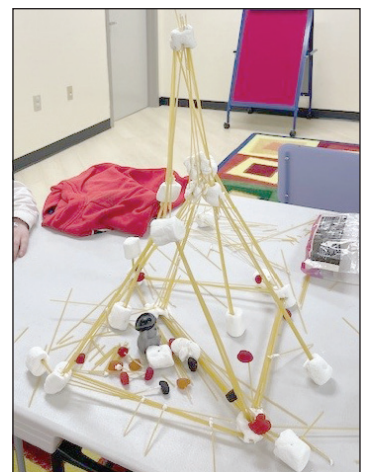
“They could work with other people at their table, with siblings who came, with friends they had their and a couple groups did decide to work together as teammates, some did it on their own, some had a little more parent help than others, and everyone’s ended up looking completely different, which was really fun,” Youth Services Associate Isabell Malvezzi said.

She was very pleased with how the event went.

“We had a total of eight participants, and it got a little competitive,” Malvezzi said. “The challenge was to build the tallest tower that they could individually...but a few



The Abdow family and their second grader Savannah Abdow enjoy the spaghetti tower evening at Agawam Public Library. SUBMITTED PHOTOS



Children and their families got to experiment with different spaghetti tower structures at the public library’s spaghetti tower building event.

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Agawam Senior Center announces upcoming events

AGAWAM – The Agawam Senior center, 954 Main St., has great events planned for the month of March. The Center is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information please call 413-821-0605

Dementia 101

March 20, at 1 p.m. at the Seminar Hall

Come learn about Alzheimer's and different dementias. The signs and symptoms and what we can do to help those individuals. Ways to cope if you are loved by someone with a diagnosis and the latest research. A little bit about our presenter, she is the Dementia Program director at Heritage Woods. She is a certified Dementia Practitioner and have a masters in Human Services with a focus in Gerontology. She has worked in the Memory care field

for almost 10 years and have volunteered with the Alzheimer's Association walk to end ALZ for 5 years with this most recent being a chair of the walk.

Call Kristina at 726-2836 to register.

Treats & Trivia with Nicole Matson

Wednesday, March 20 at 1:30 p.m.

Join us for a fun afternoon of TRIVA and treats, come as a group or a single just bring a great attitude!

Call Kristina at 726.2836 to register

Chair Yoga with Heidi

Thursday, March 21 at 3:30 p.m.

We are very excited to add another program to our growing list of activities to keep you on the move. Chair Yoga with Heidi

will start Thursday, March 7th at 3:30pm. The cost of the class will be \$4 per person. Class will then follow every Thursday at 3:30pm in the Veterans Hall. We hope you can join us.

Crochet Class offered

Beginners: We'll meet every Monday morning 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. April 10 through June 12th in the garden room. Learn the basics of crochet with Mark. If you used to crochet years ago but haven't touched a hook in many years or if you have never touched a crochet hook before, this is the class for you. Don't worry if you don't have hooks or yarn. We'll have enough for you to get started. After a week or two, then you may want to get some of your own, but you will need to know what

to get first. Crochet should be fun. All are welcome. Please call Kristina Lynch at the Agawam Senior Center to register. Classes are free, but they can fill up fast.

Intermediates: We'll meet every Wednesday morning 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. April 11 through June 13 in the garden room. This class is for folks who have some experience in crocheting as we'll tackle some of the slightly more difficult patterns/styles of crochet. Don't let the word intermediate scare you off. We have fun making beautiful items. Who knows, we may even make something fitted this time round. Sweaters or shrugs can be a lot of fun and beautiful too. Everybody with some experience is welcome. Please call Kristina Lynch at the Agawam Senior Center to register. Classes are free, but they can fill up fast.

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.

Town Easter Egg Hunt set for Saturday, March 23

AGAWAM – On Saturday, March 23, the Agawam Parks & Recreation Department, Agawam Lions Club, and Agawam Rotary Club will present the 2024 Easter Egg Hunt at School Street Park. The event will begin at the pavilion though parking will be available on both sides of the park.

No advance registration is necessary and there will be a charge of \$5 per family/car payable on entrance to the park.

Participants are advised to arrive ear-

ly as the hunt will begin at promptly at 10 a.m. Please bring a container of some kind to collect eggs.

There will be hunts for three age groups, age four and younger, age five to seven, and age eight and older, with special prizes in each area. Allergy-free gift bags will also be available on request.

There is a rain date of March 30 and if necessary, the event will occur rain or shine on that date.

City Council seeks new members for CPA Committee

AGAWAM – Please be advised that there are two openings effective April 30, 2024 for the Agawam Community Preservation Act Committee. Interested parties should contact Barbara Bard in the Agawam City Council office as soon as possible at (413) 726-9716 or email at bbard@agawam.ma.us.

Kitten ICU looking for volunteers

SPRINGFIELD – Dakin Humane Society has announced the reopening of its Kitten ICU, scheduled for July 2024 at its location at 171 Union St.

The unit, which contains 24 kennels, is expected to be staffed by 2 volunteers and a staff person for each of its three daily shifts, from July through October 31. The Kitten ICU's goal is to provide critical life-saving care to kittens facing severe health challenges, ranging from upper respiratory infections, dehydration, severe diarrhea, malnourishment, trauma and various other complex issues. After treatment, the kittens typically progress to foster care, then adoption, which is made possible by the care received in the KICU.

The majority of kittens that enter the KICU will come from a variety of backgrounds; they are discovered outside and brought to Dakin by concerned people, or they arrive through Dakin's Moms Fixed Free program, or its all-volunteer Kitten Street Team. Additionally, many kittens are expected to be surrendered from households that cannot care for them. Typically, they are between the ages of 5-12 weeks, with the majority being 5-8 weeks old. The seasonal program is expected to care for approximately 250 kittens who range from being frail to needing critical treatment.

"In order to successfully provide this program, we will need a core team of 50 volunteers to staff the KICU from July through October. People in our region care so deeply about animals and we are confident that we can recruit and train enough volunteers to help save these vulnerable kittens. Please reach out to learn more," stated Meg Talbert, executive director at Dakin Humane Society.

Dakin is actively recruiting volunteers who can commit to at least one shift weekly during a two-month period of time, and be available to occasionally substitute during the Kitten ICU's other two months of operation, if need be. Among the requirements sought for volunteers:

Ability to function in a fast-paced environment; Being comfortable handling and viewing sick, frail kittens; Feeding and weighing kittens; Assisting with cleaning; Possessing an advanced skill set as it pertains to adhering to and administering medical protocols; Monitoring vital signs; Making medical notations; Administering oral/eye medications; Conducting examinations; Handling needles for injectable medication; Administering fluids; Possessing physical dexterity and visual acuity; Being able to bend, lift and move quickly.

Dakin volunteer Marianne Gambaro of Belchertown worked in Dakin's Kitten ICU prior to the pandemic, and will return to the program this summer. Gambaro said "As a volunteer in the Kitten ICU, I've worked with the tiniest and neediest, including blind kittens or those missing a limb. Under the tutelage of Dakin's wonderful vet techs, I've administered fluids and medications, given supplemental feedings, and, of course, cuddled kittens. Sometimes a kitten does not survive, but we're comforted by the knowledge we did our best. For the majority who grow and thrive before our eyes, then become adopted, there is a sense of satisfaction like no other."

People interested in joining the KICU volunteer team are asked to visit the KICU page on Dakin's website (dakinhumane.org) to learn more about the program and fill out a volunteer application online.

EXPO scholarships available

WEST SPRINGFIELD – The Exposition Area Alumni Scholarship Fund is accepting applications for its 2024-25 school year scholarships; the deadline for applications is April 1. In addition, registration is now open for the 2024 Golf Tournament, scheduled for June 23 at St. Anne's Country Club in Agawam. Golf signup sheets and scholarship applications are available at expo-scholarship.org.

2024 Golf Tournament Dedicated to Henry Ouimette

This year's Exposition Area Alumni Scholarship Fund golf tournament will be held on June 23, at St. Anne's Country Club in Agawam. This year's tournament will be dedicated to Henry J. Ouimette, who was the last surviving founder as well as a Deadline Gang member, and passed in 2023. The tournament will be a shotgun-start format at noon, with dinner at St. Anne's immediately following.

The fee is \$125 per person or \$500 per foursome which includes greens fees, cart, contests, refreshments, lunch, dinner, and a great assortment of prizes. Dinner-only tickets are also available for \$30.

Sponsorships are available as follows: Gold sponsorships are \$750 and include a foursome and a tee sign; Silver for \$500 including a twosome and a tee sign; cart sponsor for \$250; and memorial tee signs are \$100 each. Raffle and cash donations

are also welcome. All sponsors and donors will be recognized at the dinner.

For sponsorship info, call Mark Navone at 413-433-2777, Dave Tuohey at 413-426-8859 or Nancy Piccin at 413-348-6032.

Students Encouraged to Apply for 2024-25 Scholarships:

Students who live in the West Springfield neighborhood surrounding the Big E, or who have immediate family members or ancestors who lived in the neighborhood, are eligible. The area is defined as the neighborhood bordered by Memorial Avenue to the south, River Street to the west, and the railroad tracks crossing Memorial Avenue to the north, a map is included in the application.

Applications are available at the fund's web site, exposcholarship.org, and from the guidance departments of many local high schools. Students who meet the geographic criteria and are in good academic standing are eligible. Applications must be accompanied by a transcript.

The fund was established in 1965 by a group of mostly first-generation Americans who grew up in the Memorial Avenue, West Springfield, neighborhood. Their legacy is more than \$500,000 in scholarships to hundreds of students with family ties to the neighborhood. The fund is sustained primarily by the annual golf tournament and memorial contributions.

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CROP Walk to help end world hunger set for Sunday, April 28

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 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 or by calling 413-739-6608. Learn more about CROP at www.crophungerwalk.org.

Holy Week continues at Agawam Congregational Church

AGAWAM – Palm Sunday service will be on March 24 at Agawam Congregational Church and will begin at 10 a.m. in the Sanctuary and on line at AgawamCongregationalChurch.com or [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com)

A Procession of the Palms will begin in the Narthex when people gather palms, proceed, and encircle the Sanctuary around the perimeter one full time while waving palms and moving to their seats in the pews.

The full choir will lead the procession

and move to the choir loft as people are seated. Palms were waved and touched by the crowd honoring Jesus as he entered the City of Jerusalem.

The first hymn to be sung will be “Hosanna, Loud, Hosanna” and the choir anthem will be “Hosanna” with other hymns sung by the Congregation “His Praises We Sing” and “In the Name of the Lord”. The sermon by Rev. Dr. Susanne Hayes will be “The Ultimate Rejection.” Congregants will be able to bring their palms home. Church

member Elizabeth Fogg has donated palms for every Palm Sunday for many years.

A Fellowship Hour will follow in the church hall at the conclusion of the service. Coffee, tea, juice, and water are available with various packaged snacks and desserts.

A Maundy Thursday and Office of Tenebrae service recognizing the suffering and death of Christ with the Last Supper will take place on March 28 at 7 p.m. After communion, twelve disciple candles

and the Christ candle will be lit and eight readers, with the minister, will Celebrate Tenebrae. “The Litany of the Passion” will be brief. The Sanctuary will be darkened as everyone will depart in silence and darkness.

Agawam Congregational Church is located in the Historic District at 745 Main St., with a large parking lot. For more information, or if someone would like a ride, please contact the church office at 413-786-7111 or office@agawamcong.com.

Spring tag sale March 22, 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 or call 413-786-7111.

The church is handicapped accessible with a large parking lot.

AWA spring meeting March 21 to feature gravestone carvers

AGAWAM – The Agawam Historical Association invites the public to its spring meeting on Thursday, March 21, at 6:30 p.m. at the Captain Charles Leonard House, 663 Main St., when Derek Strahan will present a program on local gravestone carvers of the eighteenth century.

In Agawam, over a hundred early gravestones still stand in the town’s burial grounds, including important works by some of the most skilled gravestone carvers of the region. In this lecture, local historian Strahan will explore the stories behind the carvers who produced these gravestones, and the evolving styles that

they used in order to commemorate the dead.

Strahan is the managing editor of the website *Lost New England*, the host of the *Western Mass History* podcast, and the author of two books: *Lost Springfield, Massachusetts and New England Then and Now*. Derek works as a Land Use and Environment Planner for the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, and he also serves on the board of directors of the Springfield Preservation Trust and the Longmeadow Historical Society.

This meeting is free and open to the public. Light refreshments will be served.

Veterans trip to Battleship Cove

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.

DRIVE ■ from page 1

Anyone was welcome to stop by and participate, no matter their age or their income.

“Anybody can go, the main thing is about sharing and reuse,” Nancy Bobskill of the Agawam Zero Waste Club said.

This was the sixth such event put on by the Zero Waste Club. According to Bobskill, this clothing drive was initially inspired by the toy exchange the club did.

“We were doing the toy exchange and we said, ‘what other kind of event could we do that would be meaningful to the community?’” she said.

Several people then came forward and suggested they try a clothing drive, so the club got started on preparing the event.

Each year it has been highly successful, with a great reception from the community.

“There’s generally a lot of clothing,” Bobskill said. “Every year we get a good turnout of people donating clothes and... every year there’s more people because more people here about it, which is great.”

Bobskill has greatly enjoyed seeing this event grow. Initially, she shared that she thought of it more of a chance to recycle and help save clothing waste, but now she sees it as a true community event.

“People really feel a strong sense of community,” she said. “So it’s really about loving your neighbor...it’s kind of showing that

we’re more alike than different. I didn’t really expect that kind of feeling for myself, but I found that to be so...we’re a community and it’s nice to be a community that shares with one another.”

Bobskill was also very grateful for all of the community assistance in putting this event together.

“This is really a group event,” she said. “We have a team of people, one person will do Facebook for us, another person will do the fliers, we have all these people doing different things and we’ll get a lot of students helping.”

The National Honor Society students from Agawam High School and other student volunteers are a great help in putting this program together.

They help to set up and organize the clothing the day before the shopping day and they help man tables during the actual event.

“I would be doing this forever if it was just me, or just a few of us in the group, so it’s really wonderful all the help we get,” Bobskill said.

Clothing leftover from the shopping day was given to a variety of community organizations. School nurses, groups for foster families, the prom closet at AHS and even someone sending items overseas to families in need were welcome to come at the end of the day and grab clothing.



Nancy Bobskill from the Agawam Zero Waste Club briefed the NHS volunteers on how to work the clothing and book shopping day.



Many members throughout the community donated books for the Agawam Zero Waste clothing and book drive.



Students from NHS and members of the Agawam Zero Waste Club organized the donated clothing for people to shop through.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA



Community members lined up outside of the community room of the library waiting for the clothing and book shopping day to begin.

Opinion

Guest Column

News from my garden to yours



I received a text from a friend earlier today asking what is covering my strawberry plants. I answered her with one word: water.

Yes indeed, a good portion of my garden is drowning at the moment, as are various parts of my yard. We have had too much rain in too short of a period and the ground is still frozen partway down.

It's happened before and will likely happen again, but every time it does, I wonder how these areas could possibly rebound and look good come spring. Usually, they do and with little help from me.

The water recedes and spring comes.

Keep in mind that the soil, be it in your garden or yard, will lose some of its fertility because of leaching, and it will be compacted from such excessive rainfall. Give your plants a side dressing of compost this spring; it will be sure to help restore fertility and improve the condition of the soil in general.

According to a soil test, my garden was notoriously low in nitrogen, so I incorporated blood meal into the soil at planting time with another dose a few weeks later. It didn't occur to me at the time, but flooding a couple of times early in

the year could be the culprit of the low nitrogen reading.

Soil that is heavy with water literally pushes out the space that was meant for oxygen and becomes compacted. Without oxygen, plants' vascular systems won't function properly.

As I said before, a few days in the off season likely won't hurt much, but if this were to happen during the growing season, your plants may look wilted even though they are sitting in water.

Root rot, perhaps, or simply that the roots are unable to absorb the water around them.

Lawns should be aerated to remedy this problem, and garden soil should be loosened – once it's dry of course – to get some air into the soil. This can be done numerous ways, by use of various hand tools.

Although scratching around with a three tine cultivator will likely bring some weed seeds to the surface, it is one of my favorite things to do in the garden. I find it a great stress-buster, too.

Do remember to try not to walk on saturated soil or it will compound the problem. Even in the spring when you are working in your garden, place a board under your feet to distribute your weight evenly and prevent more compaction.

Have you noticed that your houseplants have begun to put on an abundance of new growth? Mine sure have! Support this with a dose of half strength liquid fertilizer.

I need to take cuttings of fuchsia and geranium plants that I overwintered. It will sure be great to make cemetery logs with our own geraniums this year.

I will simply cut a terminal (meaning top) stem about 4-5 inches long just after a node

(that's where the leaves join the stem). I'll carefully take off all but the top two or three leaves and insert the leafless section into a small pot (say around 2-3 inches in diameter) of good quality moist potting soil.

The two or three leaves you left will be above the soil line. If you have rooting hormone on hand, you can dip the stem into that first, but you don't have to; plants in active growth usually root fine even without it.

I will place my cuttings in indirect light and mist with a spray bottle a couple of times a day to keep them from wilting before they root. Check in about a month, and if you are lucky, roots will have formed.

Depending on the size pot you used, and the size of the roots, it may be a good time to put the plants into a bigger pot and place them in a sunnier window until it's safe to plant them outside.

My daffodil plants are starting to pop up here and there in the yard. I had a little bit of balanced organic granular fertilizer left from last year, so I sprinkled it around the clusters.

Now and once the flowers have gone by are the two best times to fertilize narcissus. I am so excited to enjoy the varied colors and scents from this huge Genus of plants.

To me, they are the epitome of a true spring flower. Soon enough, soon enough!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 31 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.



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Will my benefit increase if I work while collecting disability?



Dear Rusty

I will be 64 in March and currently receive Social Security Disability Insurance payments. My full retirement age is 67, but I'm thinking about trying to return to work.

If I work and my earnings exceed the monthly disability payment limits, but do not exceed the annual limit, how will my disability payments be affected? Will working while receiving Social Security disability payments change my Social Security benefit amount when I reach my full retirement age of 67?

Signed Mending

Dear Mending

Social Security doesn't go by annual earnings when it comes to disability; they go by monthly earnings. If your work earnings in any one month of 2024 exceed \$1,550, that will be a flag to SS that you are no longer disabled (\$2,590 per

month if you're blind). If that happens for a few months in a row, they will most likely stop your SSDI payments.

Often, this happens retroactively, they won't find out until sometime later that you repeatedly exceeded the monthly limit, but they will likely cancel your SSDI benefits and require you to repay any benefits you received in months you exceeded the monthly SSDI earnings limit or months they deem you were capable of working without restriction.

I suggest you consider enrolling in Social Security's "Ticket to Work" program. While enrolled, you can work and will have a rolling nine month "Trial Work Period" over five years, during which you can earn more than \$1,110/month in 2024 without jeopardizing your SSDI benefits.

If, after completing your nine month trial work period, you are taken off of SSDI (because you're no longer considered disabled), and you again become disabled and unable to work, your SSDI benefits can resume without requiring you to go through the entire application process again. You can test your ability to work, will be able to work some and can earn more than the limit in some months, which makes the Ticket to Work program your best option. Read more

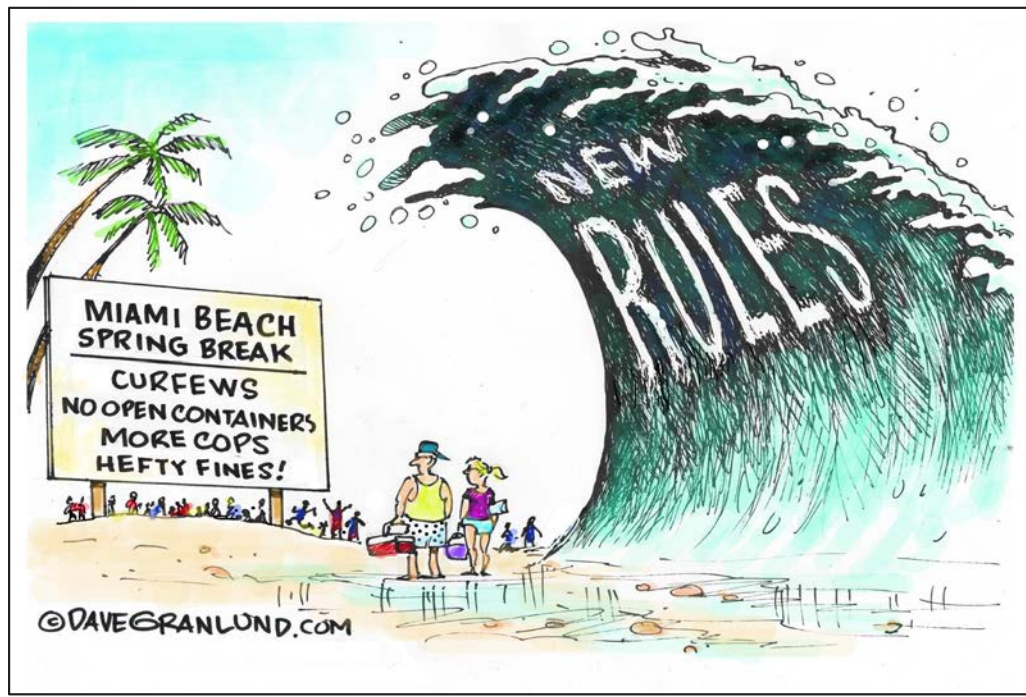
about it here by visiting <https://choosework.ssa.gov/>.

As for whether working while on SSDI will improve your benefit at your Full Retirement Age, that depends. Your current SSDI benefit is equal to your FRA entitlement from your earnings record at your disability onset date, but paid to you prior to your FRA. The method for determining your benefit under SSDI is complex and depends on the age at which you became unable to work and the number of Social Security credits you had accumulated at that time. Although SS retirement benefits normally require you earn at least 40 SS quarter credits and are based on your highest earning 35 years, those approved for SSDI can get benefits with fewer than 40 credits and less than 35 years of lifetime earnings. Since each case is unique, I cannot say whether your earnings while on SSDI will improve your FRA amount, but Social Security will monitor your earnings and increase your benefit if appropriate.

FYI, your SSDI benefit would normally automatically convert to become your regular SS retirement benefit at your FRA at the same amount you were receiving while on SSDI. It's possible that the limited earnings you may have from working while on SSDI may increase your benefit, but that's impossible for me to predict. Your benefit is based on your lifetime earnings history (adjusted for inflation), not on your contributions to Social Security while working.

So, if you are on SSDI and wish to try returning to work, and you think your monthly earnings will occasionally exceed the SSDI limit, I suggest you contact Social Security (1-800-772-1213 or your local office to explore enrolling in the Ticket to Work program. That would be your best option to avoid jeopardizing your SSDI benefits, and your benefit amount will be automatically adjusted by Social Security if appropriate.

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.



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Schools & Youth

HCC gallery to host reception for local artist

HOLYOKE – The Taber Art Gallery at Holyoke Community College will host a reception Thursday, March 7, for Northampton artist Raishad J. Glover, whose show is on display until March 20.

The reception, celebrating Glover's work and his recent addition to the HCC faculty, will be held in the gallery from 4:30 to 7:30 p.m. The Taber is located off the main lobby of the HCC Library on the second floor of the Donahue Building.

Cubes, hexagons, the environment, as well as other shapes and themes, come together in Glover's exhibit, "Geo-Spec: Cultural Introspection Wealth."

"The cube acts as a form of building block," said Glover. "Building blocks for family. Building blocks for community. Building blocks for ecosystems."

A hexagon, he notes, is essentially the outline of a cube, and a form prevalent in

nature, such as in the honeycombs found in beehives.

Glover studied studio art at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University in Boston and holds a master's degree in fine art in painting and printmaking from the Yale School of Art in New Haven.

He joined HCC in the fall after nine years teaching art at Claflin University and South Carolina State University in Orangeburg. At HCC, he teaches 2-dimensional design and painting.

"I have a lot of history up here, a lot of family, and a lot of friends, and a gallery in Boston that is used to exhibiting my work," said Glover, who lives in Northampton and maintains a studio there. "I wanted to get back to other areas that I'm familiar with and build connections."

The "Geo-Spec" exhibit explores concepts such as culture, mind growth,

wealth, and ecological design. "Geo" refers to geometry, "spec" to spectrum. Glover experiments with multiple mediums, such as lenticular printing, graphite powder, beeswax, dura-trans/backlit film, analog and digital photography, and LED Lights.

He is an advocate of sustainable design and chooses materials that are more environmentally friendly. Geo-Spec includes pieces constructed from granite, paper, glass, bamboo, and wool, among others.

One of the pieces is a refurbished portable television from the 1940s, retrofitted to play videos from an Amazon Fire TV Stick.

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

COLLEGE NOTES

AIC student named to the American Field Hockey Coaches Association

SPRINGFIELD – American International College congratulates Brooke Szafran of Agawam for being named by the American Field Hockey Coaches Association as a member of the 2023 Division II National Academic Squad.

Szafran was among fourteen members of the AIC field hockey team to be awarded the honor. These undergraduate student-athletes were recognized for having a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.50 on a 4.00 scale through the end of the fall 2023 semester.

Free dental services at STCC until end of March

SPRINGFIELD – Springfield Technical Community College's Dental Hygiene Clinic is accepting appointments for free preventative treatment for children and adults through March 29.

The clinic, located on the STCC campus, under the supervision of licensed dentists and hygienists, educates and trains students to provide quality comprehensive oral health care.

Students are enrolled in the Dental Hygiene and Dental Assistant programs at STCC. Upon graduation, the students are hired at dental offices throughout the state.

STCC usually charges a nominal fee. However, at times during the past few years as a service to the community, the School of Health and Patient Simulation has decided to waive fees on certain treatments.

"We are excited to offer free treatment to the community," said Christopher Scott, dean of the School of Health and Patient Simulation at STCC. "This helps our students get the hands-on training they need. It also gives people who might

not be receiving any dental care access to important dental hygiene diagnosis and treatment."

The clinic is in the Health Science Building (Building 20, Room 238) on the STCC campus. It is open Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 4 p.m. The clinic is closed on Wednesdays.

"The \$35 fee is waived for prophylaxis (teeth cleaning), exams and bitewing x-rays," said Meg Loadholt, the Dental Hygiene program coordinator. "We also offer other treatments, including sealants, whitening trays, nightguards, and full mouth x-rays at very nominal fees."

Loadholt said the clinic serves a dual purpose: to educate and to provide treatment to community members who need more affordable options.

Seniors in the dental programs need to treat a certain number of patients to graduate. In addition to receiving supervision, they use state-of-the-art equipment.

Loadholt said the free clinic could especially be helpful for patients who have been denied by their insurance for a deep

cleaning.

"It's a very costly procedure but they can come here and have that procedure done for free," said Loadholt.

Free dental care for certain services ends March 29, but the public will have another opportunity on the sixth annual Community Dental Day. STCC, in partnership with the Valley District Dental Society, will provide complimentary dental care on Saturday, April 27, between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.

To schedule an appointment, call (413) 755-4900. For more information, including a full list of services offered at the clinic, visit stcc.edu/dental.

Feeding Hills resident recognized as LVC Student-Athlete

ANNVILLE, PA – Cameron Croteau of Feeding Hills is one of more than 200 student-athletes who competed for the Flying Dutchmen during the winter 2023-24 sports season. Croteau, a graduate of Agawam High School, is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in exercise science at The Valley. Croteau was a member of the men's ice hockey team.

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

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, earth 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 club's 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.

HCC to host health careers open house

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College will host an open house at its Center for Health Education & Simulation on Wednesday, March 20, for anyone interested in exploring educational programs and careers in healthcare, animal care, human services, or culinary arts.

Visitors to the Health Careers Open House are welcome to tour HCC's state-of-the-art health education facility from 4 to 6 p.m. and talk to representatives from the college's programs in nursing, radiologic technology, veterinary and animal science, medical assisting, community health worker, direct care, emergency medical technician, Foundations of Health, certified nursing assistant, medical billing and coding, human services, and culinary arts.

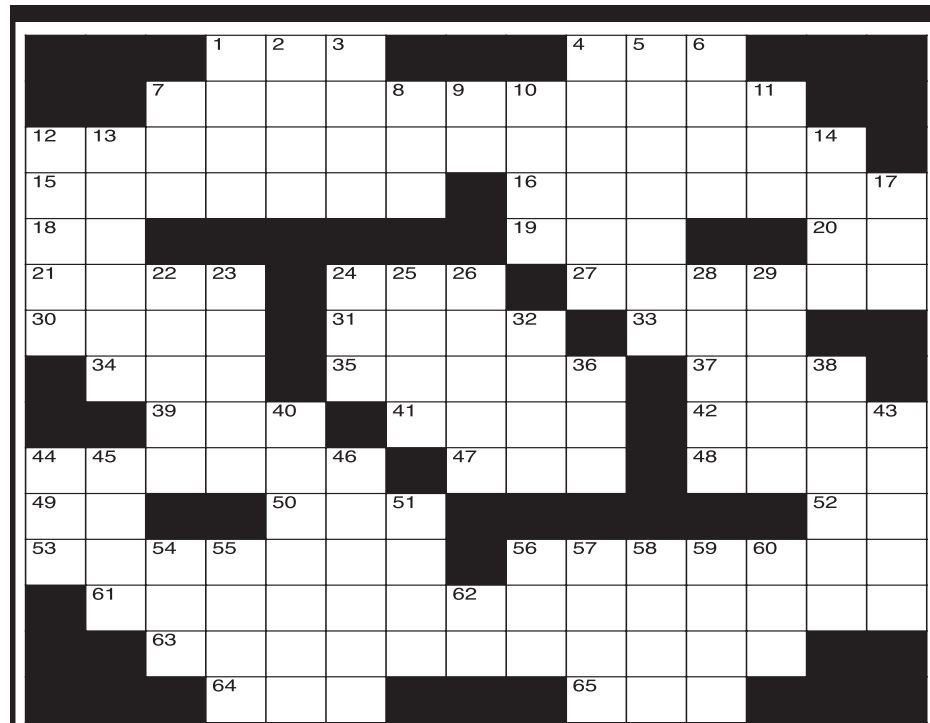
The event is free and open to the pub-

lic. The building, located at 404 Jarvis Ave., just off the main HCC campus, is home to the college's nursing and radiologic technology programs, and medical simulation labs.

There will also be representatives attending from the offices of financial aid, admissions, advising, and workforce development to talk to prospective students about their educational options and career pathways.

"This is an excellent opportunity to explore all of our health majors at one time, see our state-of-the-art simulation labs, meet our faculty and staff, and learn all about our outstanding student support services," said nursing resource coordinator Dee Westcott.

If individuals can't make it in person, please contact Dee Westcott at dwestcott@hcc.edu for more information.



CLUES ACROSS

1. Helps little firms
4. Political action committee
7. Allowed
12. Olivia Colman played one
15. Open
16. He had a notable lamp
18. Promotional material
19. Domesticated animal
20. Larry and Curly's buddy
21. The best ever
24. TV network
27. Checked for
30. Dry or withered
31. Expression of annoyance
33. Dash
34. Fifth note of a major scale
35. A secret clique
37. Partner to

CLUES DOWN

1. Prevent from
2. Czech city
3. ___ and Andy, TV show
4. A young pig
5. Removed surgically
6. Covered with
7. Chest muscle (slang)
8. Nigerian City
9. Midway between south and east
10. A way to shut
11. Stop playing
12. Marshy places
13. Takes apart
14. Ten cents
17. A gesture of assent
22. Scent
23. Teletypewriter
24. General's assistant (abbr.)
25. Hillside
26. Taxi driver
28. Semitic Sun god
29. Town in India
32. Traditional rhythmic pattern
36. Fugitives are on the ___
38. Type of dance
40. Two letters, one sound
43. Having a strong, pleasant taste
44. Golf score
45. Mayhem
46. Drenched
51. River in northeastern Asia
54. Drug to treat anxiety (abbr.)
55. Part-time employee
56. A very large body of water
57. Aboriginal people of Japan
58. Millisecond
59. Forearm bone
60. Subway dweller
62. Royal Mail

APL virtual photography show on display

AGAWAM – The Friends of the Agawam Public Library 4th Open Judged

Virtual Photography Show is on Display. The virtual photography show can be viewed by going to www.agawam-library.org, and scrolling down to the Friends of the Library widget. From there you will be able to click on a link to the show.

The show provided a platform to recognize and encourage photographers, and it benefited the Agawam Public Library. Twenty-one awards totaling \$1,540 were determined by judges Dave Roback and Tim Donelan.

There is 124 entries from 41 photographers are in the show.

The show was divided into four categories of photography: creative, nature, photojournalism and pictorial. Awards for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in each category, 8 honorable mentions, and a Best in Show for a total of 21 awards were given out.

For further information please contact Bob Kadis at r.kadis@comcast.net or at 413-789-4814.



Female Mallard Landing by Richard Harper is entered into the category Best in Show, Nature, in The Friends of the Agawam Public Library 4th Open Judged Virtual Photography Show.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Rotary hosts successful fundraiser

AGAWAM – The Agawam Rotary Club hosted a Valentine's Dinner at the Agawam Senior Center on Wednesday, Feb. 14. The dinner was catered by Storrowton Tavern and the funds raised support the Polio Plus program and other various non-profit projects supported by the Rotary. Following the dinner, the band "Decades," New England's Premier Oldies Dance Band, played.

In support of this year's Rotary International them "Rotary Creates Hope" at the Valentine's Day Dinner, John Barber from CHH Engraving, Inc. and President of the Agawam Rotary Club along with Mary Ann Ludtke, from Westfield Bank, and Treasurer of the Agawam Rotary, presented checks to support the work of three area non-profits.

First to Therese Ross, the Executive Director of Rick's Place, a non-profit organization founded in 2007 to provide compassionate grief support to children, teens, and their families. Named for Rick Thorpe, who grew up in Wilbraham and died in

Tower Two on 9/11, Rick's Place's mission is deeply rooted in helping youth and their families navigate life after the death of a close family member or friend.

Then to Marlene DeJesus, represented the Agawam Public Schools Family Resource Center, which is committed to enhancing school, family, and community partnerships. Their goal is to provide support and guidance to students and their families in need of community resources. They work to create connections to area agencies and organizations for your overall family wellness. Ayla Alkan is the Resource Center Coordinator.

And finally, to Debra F Mainolfi, a Board member of Unify Against Bullying. Unify is a charity of hope. That pledges to bring an end to bullying through the celebration of true diversity. Unify Against Bullying wants the children who are waging quiet battles against bullying, to know they are far from alone.



Therese Ross, John Barber, Marlene DeJesus, and Debra F. Mainolfi, were presented donations from the Agawam Rotary.

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Preschool Enrollment

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."

Agawam Early Childhood Center



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DEBT | from page 1

long as the residents vote in favor and the MSBA approves their portion of the funding.

Debt exclusions have been approved on many of the school projects that have happened throughout Western Massachusetts, including in neighboring Southwick.

The debt exclusion now heads to a ballot vote where voters in the community have an opportunity to approve or not approve the debt exclusion part of the project. If it is voted town, it is possible for the town to be able to fund the debt service on the project by making adjustments to the town budget. According to the proposal Johnson presented, the debt service would go down each year from the start of re-payment on the debt.

The city council approved a project totaling more than \$230 million, of which some of the funds will be come from the Massachusetts School Building Authority.



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SPORTS

St. Patrick's Road Race set for this Saturday

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

HOLYOKE – The weekend of St. Patrick's Day is synonymous with the popular parade in the streets of downtown Holyoke. But equally tradition is the 10K St. Patrick's Day Road Race.

The road race was disappointingly cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and again in 2021 when COVID-19 rates rose due to the vaccine not being as widely available at the time.

But last year, the race returned to the joy people throughout the region and beyond and Holyoke once again became a hub of activity beginning with "Race Day."

And the sights and scenes of St. Patrick's Day weekend were also back in the Paper City the past two years as the downtown

RACE | page 8

Agawam falls to Longmeadow in Suburban semifinals

CHICOPEE – Last Friday evening, Agawam 5/6 Division 3 Girls Suburban Basketball was defeated by Longmeadow in the playoff semifinals. The league did not report the final score of the game. Longmeadow moved on to face Belchertown last Sunday in the division finals.



Juliana Fleury shoots on target.



Emma Mercier takes a shot.



Bianca Calabrese holds the ball break before making a pass.



Riley Georgina sends a pass inside.



Reese Vanderhoof eyes a teammate to make a pass to.

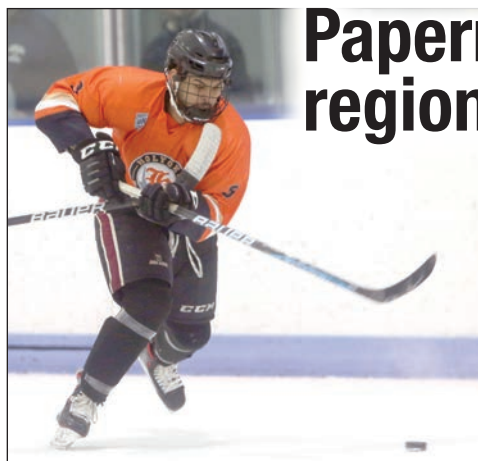
TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Nick Cambria looks to center the puck.



Zach Paisley heads up the left side of the ice.



Vinnie McAllister sends a pass away.

Papermen represent region in new league

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Papermen, an amateur adult hockey team, was in action last Saturday afternoon. The Papermen are brand new adult team participating in the Union Hockey League, a new adult league in the New York and New England region. The new team got started in January and is playing a 32-game season with seven other teams that joined the league. Home games are played at Fitzpatrick Rink in Holyoke.



Nick McNally comes into the ice and immediately takes control of the puck.



Gaetano Delonge receives a pass.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Mark Lavolette, of Ludlow makes his way up the right side of the ice.

Sports

Worcester Railers suffer loss to Trois-Rivières Lions

TROIS-RIVIÈRES, QC – The Worcester Railers HC (25-25-4-2, 56pts) lost to the Trois-Rivières Lions (23-26-3-3, 52pts) on Saturday afternoon by the final score of 3-1 in front of a crowd of 2,224 at the Colisée Videotron. The Railers head back home to play the Reading Royals for their second school-day game of the year on Wednesday, March 13th at 10:05am.

Trois-Rivieres notched the game's first two goals from Jakov Novak (1-0-1) and Justin Ducharme (1-0-1) to go up 2-0 entering the second. Nicolas Guay (1-0-1) extended the Lions lead to 3-0 with an early goal in

the second. Trevor Cosgrove (1-0-1) scored the final goal of the game in the second on the power play as the Railers would go on to lose 3-1 to Trois-Rivières to wrap up the weekend.

Jakov Novak (21st) continued his hot play against the Railers with his 13th point against the team this year. Novak found the puck loose in front on a chaotic play in front of Ceci and proceeded to pat it past him to Put the Lions ahead 1-0. While short-handed, Cory Thomas airmailed a puck from his own corner into the neutral zone. Justin Ducharme (14th) skated past the Railers

defense and scooped up the puck en route to scoring blocker side on a breakaway past Ceci to make it 2-0 Trois-Rivières going into the second.

Trois-Rivières picked up in the second where they left off in the first with a goal just 3:57 into the frame. Nicolas Guay (6th) entered the Railers zone on a three-on-one rush with Tyler Hylland and John Parker-Jones. As the puck bounced around the attacking zone, Guay placed a perfect shot bar-down past Ceci for his second goal in two games to make it 3-0 Lions. Worcester went to the power play for the second time

off a trip from Nicolas Lariviere. Trevor Cosgrove (7th) hammered a one-timer off a pass from Keeghan Howdeshell and made it 3-1 Railers on the man-advantage. The Lions continued to pressure in the second, but Cole Ceci was strong the rest of the period as Worcester was outshot 13-7 in the second.

Worcester woke up in the third, outshooting the Lions 18-2 in the frame. Worcester tested Strauss Mann heavily in the period, but the Greenwich, CT native was strong in net as he turned all 18 shots aside. He secured the third star of the game for the Lions, along with the win for Trois-Rivieres.

Thunderbirds suffer shutout against Providence Bruins

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (26-26-3-2) threw everything they could at the net of the Providence Bruins (35-17-3-2) without success in a 5-0 defeat on Sunday at Amica Mutual Pavilion.

It was evident from the onset that the goaltenders were not going to allow anything easily, as both Colten Ellis of Springfield and Brandon Bussi of Providence came out with laser-like focus. Bussi was exceptional from the get-go, as he turned away a trio of point-blank chances in the opening 10 minutes off of Will Bitten, Joey Duszak, and Zach Dean.

Operating on the first power play of the afternoon, the T-Birds instead saw the scoreless deadlock broken when Jayson Megna intercepted a pass and beat everyone up ice to beat Ellis on a backhand breakaway, giving the P-Bruins a 1-0 lead at 11:23 of the first period.

Megna's tally, which began Providence's Teddy Bear Toss, proved to be the

only shot to beat Bussi or Ellis for the next period and a half. The T-Birds peppered the Providence net from all angles and in all situations, but Bussi continued to bamboozle his division foes.

With Springfield still pushing hard to equalize, Oskar Steen finally afforded Bussi and his defense some insurance when he elevated a wrist shot past Ellis 3:58 into the final period. Joey Abate and John Beecher would follow suit, setting each other up for odd-man rush goals at 13:45 and 15:37 respectively. With the game well in hand, the Bruins' top power play unit added one more for good measure as Georgii Merkulov potted the Bruins' 5th goal at 19:28.

The T-Birds get some well-deserved rest before a crucial two-game series in Charlotte next Saturday and Sunday against the Checkers inside Bojangles' Coliseum. Puck drop on Saturday is set for 4 p.m., with a 1 p.m. matinee on tap for Sunday.

Pitkat gets new ride as he returns to Stafford Speedway

STAFFORD SPRINGS, CT – Woody Pitkat announced today that he will return to competition in the Open Modified events at Stafford Motor Speedway during the 2024 season. Pitkat will drive the No. 8, a Chassis Pro machine, owned by Mike and Makayla Holmes.

Pitkat will run all of the Open Modified events, including the \$20,000 to win NAPA Spring Sizzler to open the season, April 27-28.

"Mike has been a friend over the years and driving for him in this new car is a great opportunity," Pitkat said. "The team will remain very similar to our team with Dunleavy Racing, with Cam McDermott as the crew chief and many of our crew members. We're looking forward to getting back to Stafford, a place I am lucky enough to call home. They have done a great job with their short-track racing program and we're excited to chase wins in these major events."

The team may also run additional events in New England if time allows. Pitkat announced last week he will return to Dunleavy Racing to compete for the full Monaco Modified Tri-Track Series sched-

ule driving their No. 88.

Mike Holmes & Son Excavating includes services like septic installation, septic repairs, complete house lots, additions, yard expansions, drainage work, gravel driveways, trucking and more. They also have a 24-hour emergency service available.

"We're beyond excited to finally be a car owner, especially with having a driver like Woody Pitkat behind the wheel," Mike Holmes said. "Woody has become a great friend over the years and I'm blessed to have Cam and his wife, Lauren, who have become family to my wife Makayla and I, along with our entire crew. I can't thank Todd Owen, the Chassis Pro team, and all of our sponsors and crew members enough. We're looking forward to Stafford and some other races we will have scheduled to chase checkered flags and have a fun year."

Pitkat is second on the all-time Stafford Motor Speedway wins list with 83 career victories, the most recent in 2023. He's also a two-time Stafford Late Model champion and a former SK Modified champion at the Connecticut half-mile.

Pioneers 2024 schedule released

LUDLOW – Earlier this week, the Western Mass. Pioneers have released their 2024 schedule. It includes potential participation in the U.S. Open Cup, which begins on March 19. The Pioneers have won an Open Cup match in the past.

Later, the Pioneers have their "friendly" exhibition game scheduled for May 10. They

will face 3rd Eye FC prior to the start of their USL-2 League schedule. Their opener for the regular season is against the Boston Bolts on the road May 14. Their home opener is scheduled for May 18 against Pathfinder FC of New York.

The schedule continues through July 13 and includes a total of 14 games.

RACE ■ from page 7

area around Maple and High Streets were lined with patrons. Bars and restaurants were filled with people going in and out, the Mummies gave their performance, and children and others were able to participate in the Kids Walk and Fun Run prior to the "main event" taking place at 1 p.m.

This year's race, the 47th running of the tradition, will take place this Saturday, March 16. Once again, many will be looking to add their name to the list of winners of the 10K.

In 2023, it was the ideal day for Jenna Gigliotti, an Amherst woman who won the 10K Road Race for the second consecutive year. She crossed the finish line at 35:29.

This year's male and overall winner was Michael Norberg, who also is from Amherst. He finished with a time 30:50. He was more than 30 seconds ahead of the second-place finisher, Bradley Mish, of Hadley.

There were more than 5,000 participants in this year's event, which is part of a big weekend in Holyoke, going along with the parade that took place on Sunday. It also is viewed as a practice course for runners participating in more races later in the year, including the Boston Marathon. There are harriers who will run 6.2-mile course multiple times to simulate 26.2-mile marathon distance, including participating in the main race.

Of the more than 5,000 harriers signed up, 3,813 registered finishes.

Benjamin Lasky, of Ludlow, was a top lo-

cal finisher, coming in 14th at 33:41. Lasky has been a top 10 finisher in the past.

The race continued traditions of participants running for various charities and other causes, in honor of deceased loved ones, and of course, the running of the race in costume.

The current cost, as of press time, to enter the race, is \$35. The two-mile walk price was \$25 as of press time, but was expected to rise on March 13.

The weather, as of press time, is expected to be warmer than in previous years, near 60 and sunny.

Registration open for QV 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 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 Easthamp-

ton 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 discussion 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.



The first wave of harriers are off in the 2023 St. Patrick's Road Race in Holyoke.

FILE PHOTO



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SQUIER & CO. is looking to hire an oil truck driver. \$40,000-\$60,000 full time. Squire will provide CDL school for the right candidate! Email: **squiereoil@verizon.net. Call 413-267-3184** or visit us at 5 Squier Ave., Monson, MA. Monday-Friday.

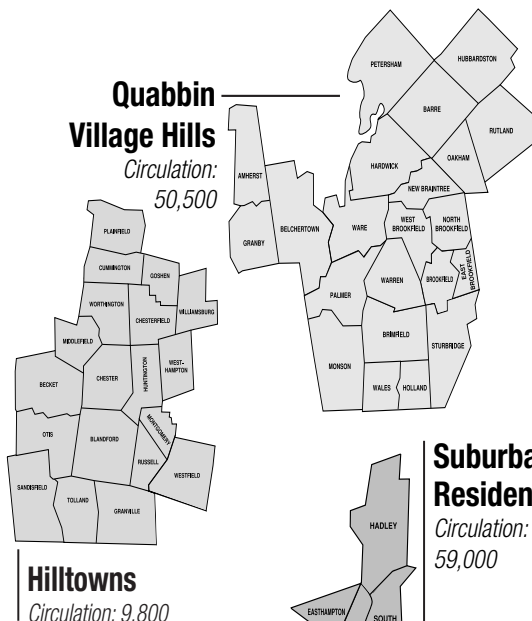
The Town of Huntington is seeking a part-time **HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT** for 16 hours per week. Applicants must be proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, and Outlook. Hours are flexible, but must be worked during the regular highway department hours of Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. to assist the Highway Superintendent. Application and complete job description are available online at **www.huntingtonma.us** or by emailing **admin@huntingtonma.us**. Position is open until filled. Town of Huntington is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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FOR RENT



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This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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Public Notices

AGAWAM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St., Agawam, MA on **Monday, April 8, 2024 at 6:30PM** for all parties interested in the request of John & Jessica Velez, who are seeking a Special Permit in accordance with the Town of Agawam Zoning Ordinances Ch. 180, Section 8.1 to allow for the keeping of chickens at the premises identified as 59 Simpson Circle.

Doreen A. Prouty
 Chairperson, ZBA
 03/14, 03/21/2024

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 1 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 PUBLIC HEARING AGAWAM CITY COUNCIL

The Agawam City Council will hold a public hearing on **Monday, April 1, 2024 at 7:00 P.M.** in Veterans Hall located 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, Agawam (Parcel ID K4-1-7) from Business A & Residence

A-2 to entirely Residence A-2 (ZC-2024-1). This public hearing will also be live-streamed on the Town of Agawam's website at www.agawam.ma.us and televised on Cable Access Channel 15. ZC-2024-1 is available for public inspection by emailing the office of the City Clerk for an electronic copy at vgioscia@agawam.ma.us.

BY ORDER OF:
 Rosemary Sandlin
 City Council President
 03/14, 03/21/2024

LEGAL NOTICE PUBLIC HEARING AGAWAM CITY COUNCIL

The Agawam City Council will hold a public hearing on Monday, April 1, 2024 at 7:00 PM in Veterans Hall located at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. The purpose of this hearing will be to hear an Ordinance to amend Chapter 180 and Chapter 114 of the Code of the Town of Agawam as sponsored by Mayor Christopher Johnson (TOR-2024-2) regarding Class 1 and Class 2 licenses. This

public hearing will also be live-streamed on the Town of Agawam's website at www.agawam.ma.us and televised on Cable Access Channel 15. TOR-2024-2 is available for public inspection by emailing the office of the City Clerk for an electronic copy at vgioscia@agawam.ma.us

BY ORDER OF:
 Rosemary Sandlin
 City Council President
 03/14, 03/21/2024

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

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given by Langonet 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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 03/07, 03/14, 03/21/2024



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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.

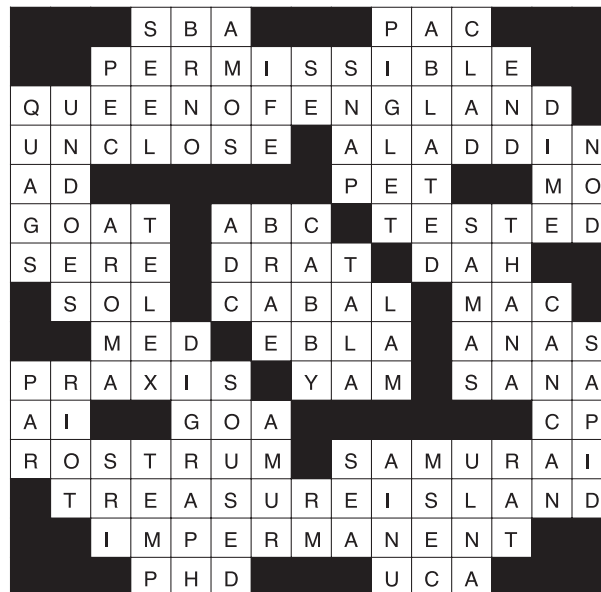
Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

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- 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



LIBRARY ■ from page 1

of them took it as to build the tallest tower of anyone there.”

Malvezzi described that many of the children were looking around to get inspiration from how others were building their towers and to compare sizes of the towers.

While there was no official prize for building the tallest tower, Malvezzi found that didn't dissuade the children's enthusiasm.

“The only prize was the satisfaction that you managed to build the tallest tower, which seemed to be enough,” Malvezzi said. “They seemed plenty happy with that. By the end the towers were getting just as tall as they were, so that made them very happy.”

Malvezzi has done spaghetti towers before, as a team building exercise at Westfield State University.

“I thought it would be fun to kind of see how little ones who don't have the same understanding of shapes could approach it,” Malvezzi said.

She was impressed by how quickly the kids caught on to the building techniques, including which shapes are stronger, how to make a weaker shape stronger and what materials are best to use in different places on the tower.

The only advice she had given the children was to try breaking the spaghetti into smaller pieces to help make it stronger, everything else they figured out through their own experiments.

“A lot of them ended up going with multiple spaghetti strands into one marshmallow, so that way the lines were a little stronger,” Malvezzi said. “Also some of them realized that the fruit snacks were stronger and lighter than the marshmallows, so they used more of those to help lessen

the weight on it as it got taller, which was very impressive for kindergarten to second graders.”

The kids and their guardians seemed to greatly enjoy the event. Malvezzi mentioned that several of the adults came up to her at the end and mentioned that they hope to bring the idea into their own homes.

“They liked how easy and accessible it was because all the things that I used were right in their pantry,” Malvezzi said.

She hopes to do a similar event in the future for children in an older age group, as she thinks they could enjoy it as well.

To learn more about the programs available at the library, go to <https://www.agawamlibrary.org/>.

In the month of March they plan to celebrate Mr. Roger's birthday on Mar. 20, and they plan to do a two-part animal paper mache event, on Mar. 20 and 27.



Second Grader Om Batteriwala enjoyed building his tower, and the snacks that came with it.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

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. 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.



Shuttle for St. Patrick's Day

HOLYOKE – The City of Holyoke and the Tourism Advisory Committee are pleased to announce the details of the Road Race and St. Patrick's Day Shuttle bus services. Thanks to funding from the Mass Gaming Mitigation Grant, the OPED team and Tourism Advisory Committee is pleased to announce shuttle services for the Road Race and St. Patrick's Day Parade. The Shuttle will run hourly from the MGM Casino to City Hall in Holyoke. The MGM Casino offers free parking so just park your car and enjoy a safe ride to the festivities in Holyoke. Pick up will be at MGM Springfield at MGM Way in front of South End Market, and drop off will be at the Holyoke City Hall parking deck on Dwight St. Shuttle Services will be provided by Michaels Limo. The shuttle will be a 14 passenger ADA minibus. Shuttle Bus details are available via [https://www.exploreholyokey.com/event/free-shuttle-service-from-mgm-](https://www.exploreholyokey.com/event/free-shuttle-service-from-mgm-casino-to-holyoke-city-hall-during-2024-st-patricks-celebrations-in-holyoke/)

[casino-to-holyoke-city-hall-during-2024-st-patricks-celebrations-in-holyoke/](https://www.exploreholyokey.com/event/free-shuttle-service-from-mgm-casino-to-holyoke-city-hall-during-2024-st-patricks-celebrations-in-holyoke/).

On Road Race day, March 16 and Parade Day March 17, The bus will run on loop at the following times:

- 10 a.m. leave MGM to City Hall
- 10:30 a.m. leave City Hall to MGM
- 11 a.m. MGM to City Hall
- 11:30 a.m. leave City Hall to MGM
- Noon MGM to City Hall
- 12:30 p.m. leave City Hall to MGM
- 1 p.m. MGM to City Hall
- 1:30 p.m. leave City Hall to MGM
- 2 p.m. MGM to City Hall
- 2:30 p.m. leave City Hall to MGM
- 3 p.m. MGM to City Hall
- 3:30 p.m. leave City Hall to MGM - last shuttle

For more information, please contact the Office of Planning and Economic Development at (413) 322-5655, email vegaa@holyokey.org or visit online at brazeaum@holyokey.org.

Celebrate St. Patrick's Day

Starting with the **ROAD RACE RECOVERY PARTY** the right way at

McCarthy's Pub

Specials Available Sunday 10am-Noon
Fried Egg served on Corned Beef Hash, with Grilled Cornbread, Bloody Marys, Mimosas & More!

Saturday, March 16
Moody Creek
7-10pm

Sunday, March 17
St. Patricks Day
Arwen King
The Piping Plover
4, 6 & 8 pm
The Willies
7-10pm

5 East Walnut St., Belchertown
413-323-6420
mccarthyspub.net

IRISH SPECIALS
ALL DAY SATURDAY & SUNDAY

CORNE BEEF & CABBAGE
Guinness Beef Stew
Irish Meat Pie
Shivering Shamrock Drink Special
Harp, Guinness & Wormtown
Irish Red on tap!

OPEN
St. Patrick's Day
10 a.m. - Midnight

Take a chance to win our **Wagon of Cheer** to support **SPRINGFIELD SHRINERS**

For Our Menu and Events check us out on