



# AGAWAM

## ADVERTISER NEWS

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

March 19, 2026 | Vol. 48, No.3 | \$1.00

www.agawamadvertisernews.turley.com

# Designs revealed for next phases of school project

By **Brendan Rooney**  
Correspondent

AGAWAM — Last week, the Agawam High School Building Committee held a community forum from the town's senior center on Mar. 11, which offered latest developments revealing that as of this moment, a tentative move in-date for students, and faculty for the com-

munity wing is set for Jan 2027 and will cap off phase 1, something Mayor Chris Johnson told the attendees, while reiterating the "project is on time and budget due to the support of all parties involved."

The new facility is designed to accommodate approximately 1,100 students and 120 staff members. It replaces a building that is

more than 70 years old and in need of modern facilities. The new school will feature academic pods, sloped roofs, and a community wing with a new auditorium and cafeteria. Exterior safety measures include a loop road, key card access, and a secure turf courtyard, which will act as a bridge between the academic and community wing buildings.

As of this moment the project is in the range of being \$230 million, and it was noted prior that the state is providing just under \$97 million in funding for the project, with Agawam residents covering the remaining costs through a tax increase of approximately \$500 per year for the next 30 years, with a bit of hope coming through the inclusion and implementation

of the potential Longroad Energy BESS (Battery Storage project) which looks to tentatively turn on in 2029, the same year that the bond payments will become due for the new high school. Back on Jan 12th during a community forum Johnson told attendees, "While this won't pay for the entire cost because it's a bigger bill, it's going to make a huge dent in what the

bond cost will be for the high school, and its impact on the tax rate," but that remains to be seen, as many await additional updates on that project come to light.

**Welcome to Phases 1 and 2**  
Further connecting the dots, the mayor then kicked off the visual presentation by offering a glimpse into

SCHOOL | page 6

# Agawam takes part in Colleen Gathering

By **Brendan Rooney**  
Correspondent

HOLYOKE — The city hosted this year's Colleen Gathering at the Wyckoff Country Club on Sunday, March 8.

The gathering featured the 2026 Colleens and their courts from Holyoke, Chicopee, Agawam, West Springfield, Springfield and Westfield, along with the 2026 award recipients from the surrounding communities. Festivities included a luncheon, raffles, and performances from the Black Rose Academy of Irish Dance, along with the Colleens and their courts, who also got to show off their Irish step dance moves.

Before the presentation kicked off, remarks were



2026 Colleens assembled.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY BRENDAN ROONEY

COLLEEN | page 10

# ACAA helps local Parish Cupboard

AGAWAM — The Agawam Community Artists and Artisans (ACAA) recently presented a check to the West Springfield/Agawam Parish Cupboard.

Carolyn Maloney, ACAA Vice President, presented the donation to Bob Fastie, Parish Cupboard Executive Director; Jeanna Mischia, Parish Cupboard Board member; and Katie Maloney, Parish Cupboard Vice President.

The ACAA, which in-

cludes members from throughout the Pioneer Valley and Northern Connecticut, supports the Parish Cupboard's work to fight food insecurity in Agawam and West Springfield through donating a percentage of the net proceeds from art classes they hold. In addition to financial donations, the ACAA also holds an annual food drive through its members.

The ACAA also supports food pantries in Southwick

and Westfield.

For more information about ACAA art classes, events, and its mission to support our communities, visit [www.agawamarts.com](http://www.agawamarts.com).

If you would like to support the Parish Cupboard you can join them for the Crop Walk on Sunday, April 26, starting at the Agawam Congregational Church at 12:30 p.m.; and the U.S. Postal Food Drive on Saturday, May 9.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Carolyn Maloney, Agawam Community Artists and Artisans Vice President, presents a donation to (left to right) Bob Fastie, West Springfield/Agawam Parish Cupboard Executive Director; Jeanna Mischia, Parish Cupboard Board member; and Katie Maloney, Parish Cupboard Vice President.

# Lions Club holds Irish dinner

AGAWAM — On Wednesday, Mar. 11 at Agawam High School, Agawam Lions Club hosted their annual corned beef and cabbage dinner. The club ran a raffle including goodies such as playing cards and coloring books. Tickets were five dollars for six. Agawam Lions Club Chairman Harry Camyre and William Waters shared with us that the money raised from events the Lions Club holds such as the dinner goes to local charities and organizations. Some of these include Girl Scouts,



TURLEY PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA

Bonnie Waters, William Waters and Harry Camyre at the Agawam Lions Club's corned beef and cabbage dinner.

LIONS | page 6



Tim Gaynor, Mel Gaynor, Tony and Dave Coulombe at the Agawam Lions Club corned beef and cabbage dinner.



# Sensory Street coming to Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade

By **Brendan Rooney**  
Correspondent

HOLYOKE – A new addition is coming to the 73rd Annual Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade, as the St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke is partnering with the Miracle League of Western Mass (MLWM) and Magic for Maddie to introduce 'Sensory Street' along this year's parade route, which offers a lower-stimulus viewing option for visitors with sensory sensitivities.

Providing insight into how this came together was Holyoke City Council President Tessa Murphy-Romboletti, who explained that the inspiration came from a trip to Ireland last year.

"Last year, a group of city officials and Parade Committee members took a trip to visit our sister city of Tralee, Ireland. We marched in their parade and saw that their parade offered a 'sensory-friendly' area for spectators, and we thought it was such a great idea," Murphy-Romboletti said.

She explained that she pitched the idea to the Parade Committee, and they followed through.

"Our 2026 Parade President (Jim Wildman) and volunteers took the initiative and made it come to fruition, with the support of some amazing sponsors,"



Logo and graphic from the social media post.

Murphy-Romboletti said.

It was also revealed that Wildman then reached out to Kerry Parsons, a board member for the MLWM, who loved the idea.

"We're so excited, because this is such an incredible inclusion to the parade," Parsons said, something that Murphy-Romboletti also bestowed praise towards.

"This addition is a great way to make sure everyone gets to enjoy the parade, including families with children and individuals who may not love the big noises that can happen during the parade," Murphy-Romboletti said. "Simply, it's just another way for our city to say, 'you are welcome here.'"

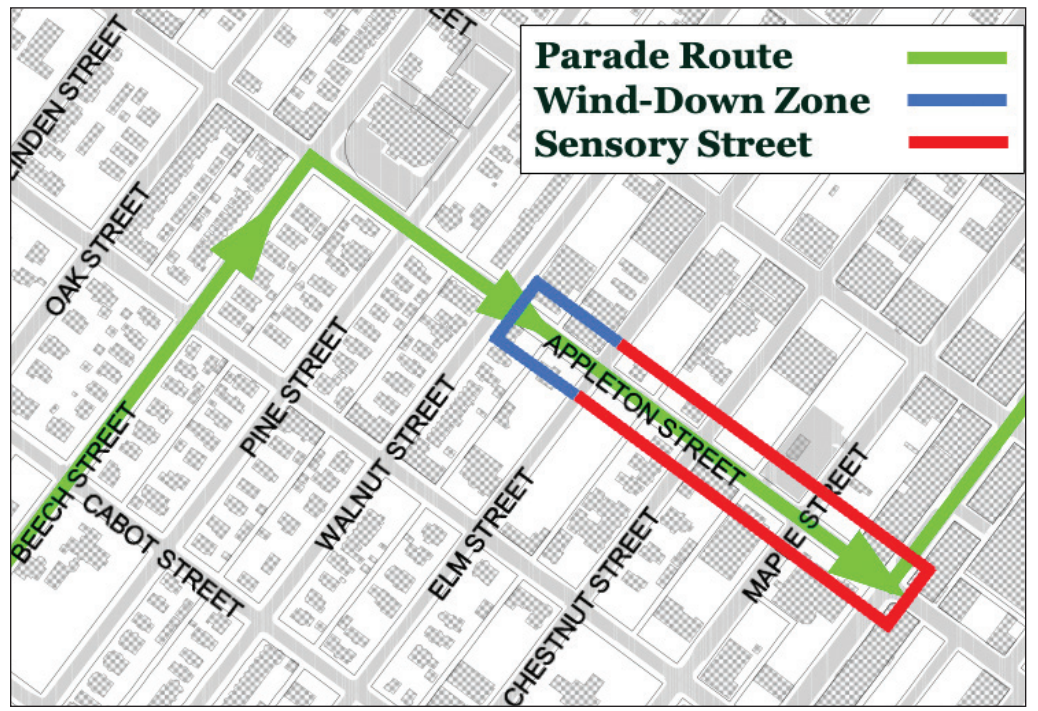
Echoing similar thoughts

was Wildman.

"This is a huge step for us, because I don't believe there is another St. Patrick's Day Parade that does this type of activity, and to have this area be inclusive for all these kids and adults who have issues with all the lights, sirens, and the noise, and for them to come in and join us is heartwarming," Wildman said.

Wildman added that the social media response and reaction to the announcement has been beneficial and surprising.

"For example, this past week, we had our social media go out, and we had almost 500 likes and close to 1K comments within 24 hours," Wildman said. "We gained interest and traction



Map of the Sensory Street Designated Zone. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE HOLYOKE ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE COMMITTEE

from groups we've never heard of, who have shared the announcement, that are all talking about coming, and so we're hoping for a very, very good first year, and for people to show up and enjoy this with their families."

According to details, the full Sensory Street zone runs from Appleton Street, Elm, Maple Street, and the wind-down begins to take shape at Walnut Street before the traditional parade experience returns on High Street. Both zones will be marked with signs along the route and

highlighted on the official parade map.

No reservations are required to access Sensory Street, and the zone will be open to all spectators. Offering an in-depth analysis of what families can expect was Murphy-Romboletti.

"During the couple of blocks of 'Sensory Street,' folks can anticipate no emergency or flashing lights, no sirens or amplified alarms, bands will feature strings only (no percussion or brass), as well as reduced loud or sudden vehicle noise,"

Murphy-Romboletti said. "I think it's great that we can join others in these efforts because true inclusivity isn't about taking away an experience from anyone else; it's about creating new opportunities that encourage bringing more people into the fold."

The new initiative is believed to be the first of its kind for any major event held in Western Massachusetts.

The Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade kicks off later this month on March 22.

## Grange seeking vendors

AGAWAM – Do you have an overabundance of craft supplies and don't know what to do with them? Community Grange #382 located at 47 North West Street in Feeding Hills is holding a vendor craft supply sale on Saturday, Apr. 18 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Table rental is \$20 for an 8-foot table with two chairs or \$15 for a 6-foot table with 2 chairs. Hurry, table space is limited. Please contact Pauline at psonowich@gmail.com for information.

## Full bird feeders can attract bears

AGAWAM – The Allen Bird Club of Springfield, MA reminds area residents that early spring means hungry bears. If you enjoy feeding birds during the winter, it's now time to bring feeders in at night or to put them away entirely until next December. Black bears have an excellent memory and will return to feeders where they find easy meals. When that happens, bears can become a nuisance. In the worst case scenario, they may have to be euthanized.

An excellent way to

feed birds year-round is by planting native fruit and seed bearing plants that provide food for wildlife. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's new citizen science initiative, Garden for Birds, offers regionally-tailored tips on the best plants to choose to help struggling wildlife thrive. This program is free and participation can be cancelled at any time. Information on how to turn your yard into a bird-supporting habitat can be found at gardenforbirds.org.

## Hampden DA holding annual St. Patrick's Day party on Friday

SPRINGFIELD – Hampden District Attorney Anthony D. Gulluni is kicking off his re-election campaign with his annual St. Patrick's Day Party on Friday, Mar. 20 from 5 to 8 p.m. at the John Boyle O'Reilly Club, 33 Progress Avenue in Springfield. Tickets are \$25 per person and will be available at the door.

Now a long-standing tradition in Western Massachusetts political circles, the annual St. Patrick's Day Party has become a major networking event for elected officials, candidates and civic leaders from across

the region. This year, as DA Gulluni is up for re-election, the event provides a great way to kick off his campaign year while connecting with supporters and community leaders. The event serves as a fundraiser for Gulluni's campaign and consistently draws prominent local political figures for an evening that blends policy conversations with celebration.

The festive gathering will feature live Irish music, Irish step dancing and traditional food, creating a lively backdrop for informal conversations among leaders shaping

the future of the region.

"This event has always been about bringing people together," said DA Gulluni. "St. Patrick's Day is a chance to celebrate heritage, strengthen relationships and connect with the community in a setting that is welcoming and fun. It has grown into a night that many people mark on their calendars every year."

The St. Patrick's Day Party is open to the public and has become a highlight for those looking to engage with local political and civic leadership in a relaxed, social setting.

## Junior Women's Club offering scholarships

AGAWAM – The GFWC Agawam Junior Women's Clubs offers scholarships to graduating AHS and home school students who live in Agawam/Feeding Hills.

Please consider applying through our website ~ easy to do with all electronic applications. Download

the application form, save and rename, and submit it.

We offer two separate applications ~ one general and one for field of education.

The April 1 deadline will be strictly adhered to. For more information, go to <https://www.agawamgfwc.com/scholarships>

## ACAA 2026 New England Mosaic project underway

AGAWAM – The Agawam Community Artists and Artisans' 2026 New England Mosaic project is officially off and running.

This year's Mosaic theme is "New England Treasures." Net proceeds from the project fund scholarships for Western Massachusetts high school and college students pursuing an education in visual arts.

The 2026 Mosaic project kicked off recently at eight local libraries and the West Springfield Senior Center.

The Mosaic effort invites

the public to paint/create a small 6x6-inch canvas. Last year over 200 artists participated. The returned canvases are assembled onto a 24-foot Mosaic display and are sold at two events in August.

Whether this would be your first canvas or if you are a seasoned artist, we invite you to pick up a free canvas at any of the

following libraries: Agawam, West Springfield, Westfield, Southwick, East Forest Park, East Longmeadow, Longmeadow, and Chicopee; or

at the West Springfield Senior Center. Details are included with each canvas. You can paint, draw or apply anything to a canvas that illustrates what you love about New En-

gland. Canvases need to be returned by May 15.

Whether you create a canvas or not, please join us at our Mosaic Unveiling on Wednesday, Aug. 5, from 5 to 7 p.m., at the Agawam Municipal Golf Course. There, you can view the Mosaic, perhaps see a canvas you would like, and support our scholarship.

The Mosaic will also be on display at the sixth annual Pioneer Valley Arts Festival, to be held on Aug. 21 and 22 at the Polish American Club in Feeding Hills.



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## Opening on CPA Committee

AGAWAM – Please be advised that there is one (1) at-large opening effective Apr. 30 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](mailto:bbard@agawam.ma.us)

# Annual CROP Walk set to take place April 26

AGAWAM – The Agawam/West Springfield CROP Hunger Walk will take place on Apr. 26 to help neighbors facing hunger around the block and around the world. With recent cuts to federal nutrition, healthcare, and humanitarian aid programs, organizers say this year's Walk is more urgent than ever. A portion of funds will support the Parish Cupboard, which serves people from Agawam, Feeding Hills and West Springfield. The

balance of money raised will support CWS (Church World Service) programs worldwide.

Across the United States, reductions to key safety net programs - including SNAP (food stamps), Medicaid, and the Child Tax Credit - are pushing more families to seek help from community food programs. At the same time, the withdrawal of U.S. foreign assistance has shuttered lifesaving services abroad, leaving organiza-

tions like CWS to keep vital food, health, and shelter programs running in refugee and crisis-affected communities.

Here in West Springfield, Agawam and Feeding Hills, the annual CROP Hunger Walk helps to stock the Parish Cupboard with emergency groceries and supports the lunch program. Globally, donations sustain emergency food assistance, healthcare access in refugee settings, climate-smart agriculture,

and long-term solutions that strengthen food security.

Faith communities, school and civic groups, and local businesses can all participate in the Apr. 26 event. To register or donate, visit <https://events.crophungerwalk.org/chw/event/agawamma>. Groups can also form a walk team online. Promotional resource packets will be available at the Mar. 7 Parish Association meeting at Grace Lutheran Church, 1552 Westfield Street in West

Springfield from 9 to 10 a.m. Materials are also available by contacting Diana Forfa at First Congregational Church in West Springfield. For more information, please email [drforfa@hotmail.com](mailto:drforfa@hotmail.com) or call 413-739-6608.

Those who can't walk can donate or sponsor a walker - every step and dollar helps! The local event raised over \$11,000 in 2025. Organizers hope to surpass that total this year to meet the growing need.

## Residents wanted to serve on ConComm

AGAWAM – The Town of Agawam is seeking dedicated residents to serve on the Conservation Commission.

The Conservation Commission plays a vital role in protecting our community's natural resources, including wetlands, open space, wildlife habitats, and water resources. Commission members review applications, participate in site visits, help guide local

environmental policy, and work to preserve the natural character of our town for future generations. Conservation Commission meetings are held on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 6 p.m.

This is a volunteer position and a meaningful way to contribute to the future of our community.

If you are interested, please submit a letter of interest to Mayor's Office.

## AHA names scholarship for Marilyn Curry

AGAWAM – The Agawam Historical Association is proud to offer one (1) \$1,000 scholarship to an eligible graduating senior of Agawam High School in memory of Marilyn P. Curry. Curry moved to Agawam in 1964 and lived there until her death in 2021. She was deeply committed to the preservation of history in her adopted hometown, as the longtime chair of the Agawam Historical Commission, a trustee of the Captain Charles Leonard House, twenty-term president of the

Agawam Historical Association, and town historian. The Marilyn P. Curry History Room in the Agawam Historical & Fire House Museum was dedicated in her honor in 2025.

Applicants must be a graduating senior of Agawam High School and intend to continue their education enrolling at an undergraduate level college/university or technical/trade school in the fall of 2026. Applicants must follow all application requirements to be considered. All application materi-

al must be received no later than April 10, 2026. In addition to the monetary award, the scholarship recipient will also receive a four-year family membership to the Agawam Historical Association.

The Agawam Historical Association, a private, non-profit organization created in 1962, preserves and promotes the rich history of Agawam and Feeding Hills through informational programs at its quarterly meetings, educational events at the historic Thomas Smith House, and its collection of

artifacts and records at the Agawam Historical & Fire House Museum.

Scholarship applications may be obtained through the Agawam High School Guidance Office, or by visiting the Agawam Historical Association website: <https://www.agawamhistory.org/scholarship>.

For more information, please contact Agawam Historical Association Scholarship Committee chair Alan Rogers at 413-789-6017, 413-207-1575, or [alan@urbureau.com](mailto:alan@urbureau.com).

## Gloria McLellan Scholarship now accepting applications

AGAWAM – The Agawam Community Artists and Artisans (ACAA) have kicked off their annual scholarship fundraising program, designed to be awarded to high school and college students from Western Massachusetts who are pursuing further education in Visual Arts.

Deadline to apply for the Gloria McLellan Memorial Scholarship is May 1. Students can apply at [www.agawamarts.com](http://www.agawamarts.com).

Anthony Nguyen of Springfield, Sarah McDonald of Longmeadow, and Charles Santiago of Chicopee were each awarded \$1200 scholarships last year.

The scholarship is named after Gloria McLellan, a local artist and one of the founding members of ACAA.

Funds for the scholarship are raised through the ACAA's New England Mo-

saic Project, which has just launched in local Western Mass libraries. Through the libraries, anyone can pick up a blank canvas, apply art to it, and return it by May 15. The canvases become part of a 24-foot Mosaic display. The canvases are sold at two events in August with net proceeds going directly to the scholarship.

Scholarships will be awarded in June for the 2026 fall semester.



## AHS Class of 1970 planning reunion

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

Gale Sullivan: [GalePSullivan@verizon.net](mailto:GalePSullivan@verizon.net) Holly Cloran: [PohnerHolly@gmail.com](mailto:PohnerHolly@gmail.com) Scott Macey: [mace1459@comcast.net](mailto:mace1459@comcast.net) Gail Donais: [GCDonais@cox.net](mailto:GCDonais@cox.net) Shirley Porter: [ShirleyPorter525@gmail.com](mailto:ShirleyPorter525@gmail.com)

## ACC hosting magic show on March 28

AGAWAM – The Agawam Congregational church invites the community to a very special Magic Show on Saturday, Mar. 28 at 3 p.m. The show is \$5 for adults and \$3 for children and teens, and it is for people of all ages (not just children).

Their guest Magician is David Reed-Brown, of Simsbury, CT, who gives people hope through the art of Magic, especially in tough times.

Along with the astounding, fun magical wonders, he shares meaningful stories that inspire and touch the heart. He is well-known in the region having performed thousands of shows, including 50+ for the Big E, First Night Hartford (twice),

many shows for companies, community organizations, weddings, all-night graduation parties and private events. He has also "appeared" at Jeff McBride's Wonderground in Las Vegas.

Reed-Brown has been an Instructor at McBrides Magic & Mystery School in Las Vegas for over 8 years, where faculty train many of the magicians you see on TV, online and in theaters around the world.

Come create amazing memories for a lifetime with great people, and (adults) connect with your inner 11 year-old-again.

Agawam Congregational Church is located at 745 Main St in Agawam. The event is designed for people of all ages.

## Senior Center hosting Murder Mystery Show and Dinner Fundraiser Tuesday

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

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

The storyline follows Dr. Frigmond Zoid, who claims to have developed a miracle cure capable of transforming people who believe they are some-

one they are not into their "true" selves. While the treatment may seem promising, complications arise—especially when some patients would rather remain superheroes than return to normal life. Guests will enjoy an evening of humor, intrigue, and audience participation as the mystery unfolds.

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

Tickets are \$50 per person and must be purchased in advance. Tickets are available at the Aga-

wam Senior Center or by calling 413-786-8010 and leaving a message. No tickets will be available at the door. Seating is limited.

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



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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 2026-2027 school year beginning March 23, 2026.

- 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 the ECC Perry Lane 3-year-olds 8:30am-11:10am and 4-year-olds 12:10-2:50 pm.
- 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."



Contact Us  
**(413) 821-0597**

# Opinion

## Guest Column

### SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor

## When will I get full credit for delaying my Social Security retirement?

**Dear Rusty:**

The time is nearing that I want to move from my current Social Security survivor benefit to my own SS retirement benefit at 70 years of age.

I have been looking more deeply into the application of Delayed Retirement Credits and I have read that DRCs accumulated in the year that I turn 70, September 2026, will not be effective when I actually turn 70. Rather, those DRCs won't be paid until the following year. Can you verify that this is correct? I presume that if the DRC's are not applied at age 70, that they will be applied sometime after the first of the year and any increase will be paid retroactively.

**Signed: Retiring Soon**

**Dear Retiring Soon:**

The Delayed Retirement Credits you speak of have accumulated at the rate of 8% per year (.667% per month) since you reached your SS Full Retirement Age, which means that at age 70 your monthly SS benefit will be about 129% of the amount you were entitled to at your FRA of 66 years plus 4 months.

However, your understanding of how DRCs will work for you at age 70 is not correct. If you claim for your Social Security retirement benefits to begin in September 2026 (the month you turn 70) you will receive all DRCs, you have accumulated up to that point in time. In other words, you will get your full age 70 benefit amount immediately, including all DRCs earned until then, effective with your first SS retirement payment, which you will get in October 2026. What you

have likely read about is that DRCs work a bit differently for those who claim SS after their full retirement age, but before their 70th birthday month.

For those who claim mid-year but before age 70, only DRCs earned through the end of the preceding year are initially applied and DRCs earned during the current year are not paid until the following January. This results in a loss of some SS benefit between the time benefits start and the following January, because only the amount earned as of the end of the previous year are first paid, and the full number of DRCs earned during the current year are applied in January.

But, as is the case for you, when benefits are claimed to start in the month you reach 70 years of age, all DRCs earned up to the month of your 70th birthday are immediately applied. Congratulations on selecting a strategy which will maximize your monthly Social Security benefit.

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](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.



## Guest Column

### On the look out for a nice lawn

I'll be the first to admit that I don't have an especially nice lawn. Looking out the window further proves it.

It is early in the year and all, so the shades of brown I see are pretty common, but there are some lawns that are greening up nicely while mine is definitely not.

My mind always goes to thoughts of green as we approach St. Patrick's Day. I wonder if that's why my Irish dad enjoyed caring for his lawn so much?

One of his spring rituals was to rake it. I remember him out there working his way across the yard a little at a time, making pile after pile of dead grass, leaves and small sticks.

This was the just the first job in a season's worth of work aimed at growing good turf. Chances are that once the ground dries a bit you'll be out there too, clearing the lawn of winter debris and enjoying some long awaited sun on your back.

Find out what else you can do (and I should too) to achieve an attractive green-

# In the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid

scape with a minimal commitment.

Don't mow so low, or as often. Mowing at a height of about three inches will encourage a healthy lawn. Why? Taller grass shades out developing weed seedlings.

It also makes large, established weeds more susceptible to mower damage (the more surface area of the weed that is removed, the more weakened it becomes.) High mowing also fosters deep root growth. Deep roots sustain the lawn during periods of drought.

Keep mower blades sharpened for the cleanest possible cut.

Water efficiently and effectively. If you set up sprinklers each season to water the lawn for you, take some time early in the season to position them so that water isn't wasted on sidewalks or driveways.

Mark the location and set up will be a no-brainer each time.

To grow best, grass requires an inch of moisture each week, more if your soil is sandy. Do the tea cup test to determine how much water your sprinklers emit and at what rate. Simply place a tea cup or other container on the lawn and turn on the sprinkler, check every five minutes or so until water reaches the inch mark.

Now you can set a timer, or turn off the sprinklers manually knowing your lawn has gotten its weekly drink. Most people know that early morning is the best time to water the lawn. By watering early in the day less moisture is lost to evaporation.

Grass is also less prone to fungal diseases because it has a chance to dry before nightfall.

Know your soil. A friend of mine who knew a lot about turf once told me that if I were to apply one thing to my lawn each season it should be lime. Grass can't grow well, or fight off diseases or bugs for that matter, if it isn't

GARDEN | page 5



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Subscriptions

[www.turley.com](http://www.turley.com)

\$35 per year pre-paid (\$40 out of state)  
Newsstand \$1.00

WEB

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#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

All letters are subject to editing for content and length. The deadline is Monday at noon. Please send letters to Agawam Advertiser News, care of Turley Publications Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, or e-mail [aan@turley.com](mailto:aan@turley.com).



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## your health

By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN  
Guest Column

There's a lot of medical misinformation out there, much of it promulgated by non-medical individuals based on nothing more than assumptions and unwarranted conclusions.

But what if you could find published, peer-reviewed answers to your medical ques-

tions, written in everyday language? Good news. You can!

One of the speakers at the recent New England Patient Advocacy Conference I hosted at Assumption University in Worcester was Erika Warren, a partner in a new venture called Incite-

### A medical library at your fingertips

ful Med (IncitefulMed.com), just launched earlier this year. I wanted to share it with you because, as I like to say, knowledge is power. Inciteful Med lets you research a medical question and come to doctors' appointments ready to have a meaningful discussion.

This is a beneficial use of artificial intelligence and machine learning. Inciteful Med is updated weekly with peer-reviewed research that appears in such online sources as PubMed, a service of the National Institutes of Health.

"We provide patients and doctors with the latest literature in an easy-to-understand format, helping doctors and patients make informed choices," Erika says.

Like my patient advoca-

cy practice, Inciteful Med grew out of a personal experience. Erika's partner, Mike Weishuhn, had a family member with a potentially serious health issue. Rather than taking the wait-and-see approach the doctor had advised, he used his skills as a data engineer to find a paper published in the U.K. that gave them new information and a reason to seek a second opinion.

"It showed us two things," Erika says. "First, the importance of advocacy and, second, the difficulty of finding reliable, personalized information. That experience changed everything for their family and sparked our mission to make medical research accessible, so more patients and families can

shape their care and change their lives."

And so Inciteful Med was born.

Anyone can use the website anonymously to research up to five questions a day. Creating an account lets you ask an unlimited number of questions.

Users can also upload their medical records to have them analyzed and receive personalized results from the latest research. For their users' peace of mind, the company will soon be HIPAA-compliant.

The website is free to use for now. Wishing it to remain independent, they don't want advertising dollars from pharmaceutical companies.

HEALTH | page 5

## Agawam Advertiser News welcomes letters to the editor

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

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

#### Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper

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

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

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The Agawam Advertiser News (USPS 001-170) is published every Thursday by Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, Mass. 01069. Telephone (413) 283-8393, Fax (413) 289-1977. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, Mass. 01069.



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# Town rolling out the 'Great American Rain Barrel'

AGAWAM – The Town of Agawam is excited to announce they have partnered with The Great American Rain Barrel Company, offering Rain Barrels for sale to Agawam residents.

A rain barrel collects water from the roof when it rains and stores it for use during dry weather to water house plants or outside plantings. Collecting water in a rain barrel is an excellent way to save some of the runoff and take the pressure off our water supply and stormwater management systems. By using the

rainwater on your gardens you are helping to replenish your groundwater and benefit our water supply. Collected rainfall is especially valuable during droughts or dry conditions. It contains more nutrients and less salts than tap water, so it's great for plants.

"Installing rain barrels to downspouts that are draining to driveways, walkways and other areas that flow directly into our streets and stormdrains can greatly reduce the amount of runoff entering our wetlands, rivers, and streams" said Mayor

Christopher Johnson. "This program not only helps keep our waterways clean from contaminants picked up along the way, but helps homeowners reduce their water footprint and usage. It's a win, win for everyone".

According to the US EPA, 30% of daily water use is outdoors. The EPA also states that rain barrels could save the average homeowner 1300 gallons of water annually. A 500 square foot roof can fill a properly installed 50-gallon rain barrel in approximately one hour. One

full rain barrel will water a 200-square-foot garden.

The 60-gallon Great American Rain Barrel will be available in four colors; Earth Brown, Forest Green, Nantucket Gray, and Terra Cotta. Prices will range between \$80 to \$89. Each barrel will contain a spigot, drain plug, debris screen, removable lid, overflow elbow and instructions inside the barrel. Residents are encouraged to read ordering instructions and product information available on website before ordering.

Rain Barrels may be

ordered by visiting [www.greatamericanrainbarrel.com/community](http://www.greatamericanrainbarrel.com/community) Residents should choose Agawam under the Community Program section to view product options. Deadline to order is midnight April 5th. Residents should arrange to pick up their orders at the Department of Public Works 1000 Suffield Street on Thursday, Apr. 16 from 3 to 5 p.m.

For additional information please call the Department of Public Works at 413-821-0600 or email [recycle@agawam.ma.us](mailto:recycle@agawam.ma.us).



## Opinion

### Letter to the Editor

# Councilor's fears about golf course loan justified despite early loan repayment

Dear Editor:

At the Mar. 2 council meeting, we voted to return \$100,000 from the Golf Stabilization Fund to the Capital Stabilization Fund, the repayment of a loan that had been a source of significant contention across our community.

The loan was controversial for several reasons. The golf course had just completed a five-year lease-to-own agreement, meaning they already owned an entire fleet of golf carts, yet were requesting money to purchase a brand new fleet. I was sent an email with 2020 council meeting minutes, which included letters from area golf courses speaking out against the original agreement, noting that

the carts were only five years old, still had useful life, and that the industry standard is to cycle through carts gradually rather than replace entire fleets at once. Adding to the concern, past loans made to the golf course had not been repaid. Loans from both 2014 and 2020 went unpaid, and local golf courses had noted for years that the town was subsidizing a municipal enterprise fund that was supposed to be self-sufficient.

I created a video questioning whether the town should loan the golf course money, and it resonated deeply with the community, and for good reason. At the time, people were facing the potential loss of SNAP benefits, the threat of disruptions

to Social Security payments, and the daily struggle of affording groceries, housing, and an Eversource bill that grew more difficult to pay every single month. Against that backdrop, a golf course, widely seen as a luxury, was asking for taxpayer money to replace equipment it already owned. The research I conducted showed that buying entirely new fleets every five years is not what successful courses in the area do. Gradually replacing carts is both more common and more fiscally responsible. Given the financial environment our residents were living in, it is not surprising that the video struck a chord.

When I spoke out at the following meeting, I was met

with condescension. After the loan was approved, I made a second video discussing the decision, offered a brief explanation of what an enterprise fund is, and included footage from that meeting so residents could see and hear for themselves what was said. There were multiple opportunities for the councilors who responded to legitimate concern with dismissiveness to reflect on that response. Instead, I was called a liar online, and it was stated during council meetings that things were being misrepresented. It became clear to me that certain councilors would prefer I be compliant and stop asking questions. I am sure it was greatly disappointing when I squeaked in as the

11th councilor.

Once elected, I continued to ask questions about the golf course loan. I am genuinely happy and relieved that the town was paid back early, as that was always the hope. But I am not surprised that the councilors who characterized me and others as liars felt the need to use this moment to act as if this wasn't the outcome we were all rooting for. This could have been an opportunity for reflection and grace, as it was for one councilor who acknowledged that a past loan had gone unpaid and simply praised the current leadership for following through. Instead, two councilors chose a more juvenile approach, with one declaring that everyone who

questioned the loan was a naysayer who caused trouble. Residents who actively participate in their democracy deserve better than that.

I want to be clear: residents who engage with their local government by asking questions and holding elected officials accountable should never be met with name calling, condescension, or dismissal. Civic participation is something we should be encouraging, not punishing. I would ask those councilors who responded with defensiveness to instead consider why the community responded the way it did, and to use that reflection to do better. The residents of Agawam deserve nothing less.

Christine Rickmon

### HEALTH | from page 4

It may one day become donor-supported like Wikipedia or offer subscriptions.

Neither Erika nor Mike has a medical background, and they stress that patients should use the information on Inciteful Med in collaboration with their health-care providers.

"Mike's and my background is in education technology, providing tools for teachers trying to help students learn and feel confident. In many ways, Inciteful Med is similar to that work, but for patients and doctors," she says. "Inciteful Med inspires confidence. People want to be heard and supported and know their ques-

tions aren't dumb."

Inciteful Med can also be consulted by providers, who can't possibly be familiar with all of the latest research and clinical trials. Information can take years to move from the researchers' labs to your bedside.

"Our health-care system makes it hard for even dedicated doctors to keep up," Erika says. "Different priorities, red tape and slow adoption of new technology mean important medical advances take too long to reach patients."

Here are some ways to make Inciteful Med work for you:

- Given a new diagnosis? Ask Inciteful Med about the symptoms associated with

your diagnosis and if the symptoms could be associated with a different condition.

- Prescribed a new medication? Ask Inciteful Med if the drug has been shown to be an effective treatment for your condition.

- Concerned about the safety of a vaccine? Ask it to show you the latest studies.

- Experiencing a side effect after a medical procedure or medication? Ask whether what you're experiencing is a known side effect and what the risks are.

- Interested in finding out if there are new treatments for your condition? Ask Inciteful Med to tell you about any recent advances or clinical trials.

In addition to answering

your initial questions, the website returns a number of related questions you may want to ask, letting you delve further into the research.

I often talk about making the most of the time you have with your doctor – coming prepared with written questions and specific concerns. Taking a few minutes to do research on IncitefulMed.

com could give you a place to start the conversation with your providers.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, R.N., a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of [www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com](http://www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com), which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. A Monson, MA

resident, she is the author of "How to Be a Healthcare Advocate for Yourself & Your Loved Ones" and her new book, "Advocating Well: Strategies for Finding Strength and Understanding in Health Care," available at Amazon.com. Contact her at [Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com](mailto:Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com) to set up a free phone consultation.

### GARDEN | from page 4

getting the nutrients it needs.

Many nutrients are bound up until the pH is corrected. Get a soil test and specify on the order form that you wish to grow grass, as results for flower or veggie gardening may differ.

Based on the results of your test, recommendations will be made as to the type of lime to use and at what application rate. For more information contact the UMass Extension or [www.umass.edu/plsoils/soiltest](http://www.umass.edu/plsoils/soiltest).

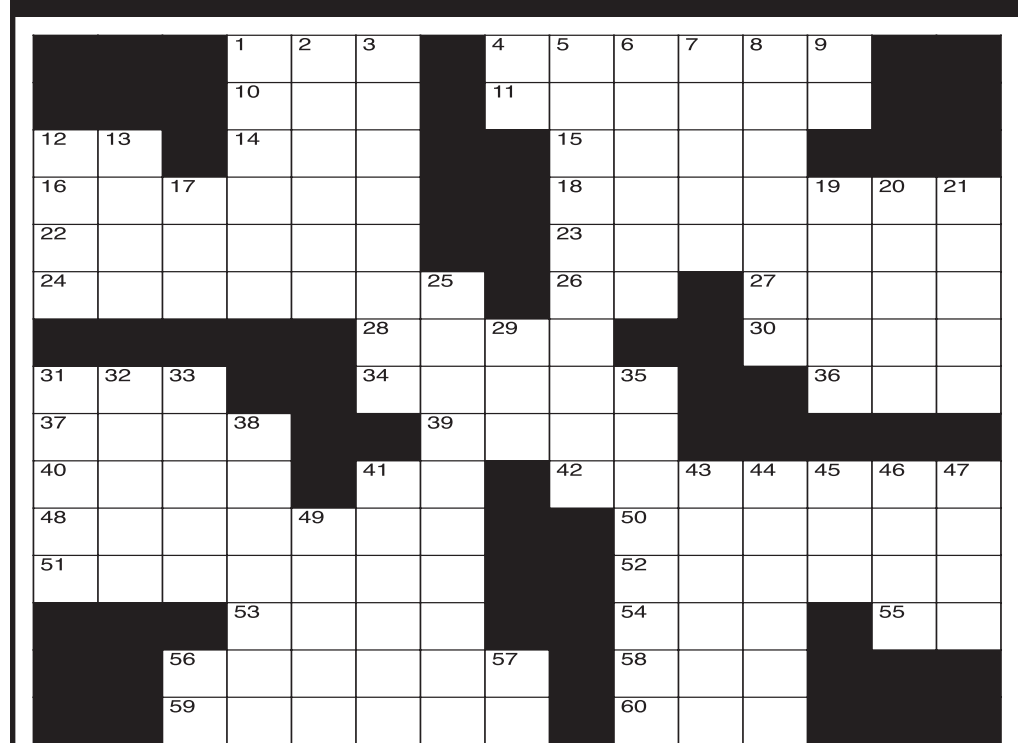
Here are some interesting grass facts: Did you know that according to a poll (sponsored by Briggs and Stratton) 64% of homeowners wish they had a better lawn? Or that 63 million households own at least one lawn mower?

The Professional Lawn Care Association estimates that a well-maintained lawn can increase the value of a home by up to 20%.

This was probably of little concern to Presidents Washington and Jefferson...

they were the first to have lawns as we know them today but they were maintained by sheep!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 34 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to [pouimette@turley.com](mailto:pouimette@turley.com) with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.



#### CLUES ACROSS

- Inclined to do
- Sketches
- Book of Chronicles (abbr.)
- Atomic #58
- Dorm official
- Small Eurasian deer
- Southern constellation
- Workers' groups
- Former
- Excellent
- Romance language related to Spanish
- Reference
- Equally
- Dirty towels
- A cargo (abbr.)
- Ammunition
- You get one in summer
- Slang for trucks with trailers
- Swiss river
- Exchange rate
- British School
- College teacher
- Foreign Service
- Horse gear
- Cost to fly
- A salt or ester of boric acid
- Mocking
- One who bird-watches
- Concluding passage
- A major division of geological time
- Equally
- A way to produce
- Soak
- Laughed loudly and harshly
- Affirmative

#### CLUES DOWN

- Moist species phalonia \_\_\_
- Quantum of energy
- Break the law
- Location of White House
- Official cancellation of a decision
- Where rockers work
- Cut of beef: \_\_\_ mignon
- Nocturnal burrowing reptile
- Atomic #62
- Genus of evergreen shrubs
- Flowering plant of the legume family
- Inches per minute (abbr.)
- Tropical fruit
- Hot fluid beneath the earth's crust
- James \_\_\_, painter
- Popular dessert
- Payment (abbr.)
- Cuisine style
- Genus of true flies
- City in western France
- Arrogance
- One holding a position of command
- Weekday
- An evening party
- Print errors
- Not good
- Egyptian Sun god
- East German town
- Olfactory property
- Atomic #37
- "Pollock" actor Harris

CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE 9



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# Community shredding day set for April 11

AGAWAM – The Town of Agawam has announced that it will host a free document shredding event for residents on Saturday, Apr. 11 from 9 to 11 a.m. at the DPW Annex, 1000 Suffield Street. Weather permitting. Event will be cancelled if raining.

Valley Green Shredding will provide an on-site mobile shred unit to securely and confidentially shred residential documents for free. In an

effort to service as many Agawam residents as possible, residents are asked to limit their confidential documents to two standard size boxes or two recycling bins per vehicle. All three-ring binders and binder clips should be removed. Paper clips, staples, spiral bound notebooks are all acceptable. Participants are asked to place all materials in the trunk, bed trunk, or cargo area of the vehicle and



to please stay in the vehicle upon arrival.

For additional information please contact the Department of Public Works at 821-0624.

# Agawam Rotary Club now accepting scholarship applications

AGAWAM – The Agawam Rotary Club is now accepting applications for four scholarships the club offers annually. The awards cover a diverse range of interests and include vocational/technical training, cultural arts, the legal profession, and assis-

tance with attending college.

With the exception of the Ray and Reita McCarroll Memorial scholarship which is awarded to graduating seniors from both Agawam and West Springfield, the awards are limited to residents of Agawam.

A full description and application for each of these scholarships can be found at the Agawam Rotary Club's webpage at agawamrotary.org. Click on "Scholarships" at the top of the home page. Please note that applications must be received by Apr. 1.

# Women needed for state commission

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women is currently seeking candidates for the Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women, one of 11 Regional Commissions across the Commonwealth that strives to represent women and girls in the areas of equality and opportunity.

The mission of the Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women (HCCSW) is to provide

a permanent, influential voice for women and girls across the county that facilitates and fosters community and inclusiveness. The Commission stands for fundamental freedoms, basic human rights, and the full enjoyment of life for all women and girls throughout their lives.

HCCSW represents all cities and towns in Hampden County which include Agawam, Blandford, Brimfield, Chester, Chicopee,

East Longmeadow, Granville, Hampden, Holland, Holyoke, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Monson, Montgomery, Palmer, Russell, Southwick, Springfield, Tolland, Wales, West Springfield, Westfield, and Wilbraham.

To apply for the Hampden County Commission on the Status of Women and to submit a resume, please visit: <https://masscsww.org/about/regional-commissions/hampden-county/>



Sandy Haskins, Mario Cardinale, Bev Tetreault, and Ron Wieners at the Agawam Lions Club's corned beef and cabbage dinner.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA  
Jack Sarat and Nancy Neilson pose for a photo.

### LIONS ■ from page 1

Boy Scouts, and Agawam Senior Center. They also raise money for a scholarship fund that helps students at Agawam High each year. Turnout for the event was wonderful with many community members attending to support the Lions Club.

### SCHOOL ■ from page 1

the project with various schematics and floor plans, before offering insight into what will follow upon completion of the 1st phase, before pivoting to providing a small glimpse into the second phase.

"Currently under construction is the community wing of the project, and that is slated to be done by the end of this calendar year, and we should be occupying it, no later than next Jan 2027," Johnson said. "So then you will start to see demolition of the existing gyms transpiring and some of the property moving east to clear the space for phase 2, which is the academic wing." The mayor then revealed that the current old industrial arts area of the school will be renovated into a new early-childhood center, something that won't be included under the MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority Grant).

#### Renovations incoming

In addition Johnson explained that in Phase 2.5, he coined, will see the restoration of various sporting fields, "This is when you see the athletic fields, such as the existing Baseball practice field, and the two softball diamonds and the track which will all be added, and to note the new practice field will be restored to have a new turf field, meaning we will now have two turf fields, and these changes will take place in the final stage of the project, taking place after demolition of the existing building is completed," Johnson said. "All of these elements will make high school athletics run smoother and more efficiently."

The mayor then revealed that the look and perception of the new institution is to follow along the lines of a college campus.

"We weren't looking to build a big monolithic, brick structure like many of the high schools in the area," Johnson said. "We wanted diversity, we were looking for diversity of exterior

materials, diversity of roof structure, and we wanted to make this an inviting place to be around." He also revealed that the inclusion of a sloped roof was implemented anywhere it possibly could be, due to the stability and longevity, as all parties stressed they want this building to last.

The mayor then passed along the mic to Kent Kovacs, principal architect at Flansburgh Architects, who used a series of slides to go through some of the interior areas. The slides showcased what the academic pods will look like, as well as some of the major areas in the community wing, before reflecting on the role of community feedback, and citing that this is an incredible project in the process.

"I want to note that we have listened to all of the feedback from the students and the teachers because their feedback was instrumental, because they laid the foundation for how this school should function, not just today but also in the future, and were really proud of that," Kovacs said. "I also want to add that this is an amazing project, and when we talked about this collegiate style campus, and that's what you're seeing tonight, if we put the lens of the MSBA, who is your grant funding partner, beautiful buildings don't have to cost more." He then continued his thoughts by adding, "This building is fitting, just aligned within the average cost of high school projects, it's not indulgent, and we have been resourceful over the last 18 months to make this something that is attainable, and fall in the range of an average high school project, and that's something we're all proud of," Kovacs added.

#### Deep Dive into the Community Wing

As noted previously, the community wing is set to be a 2-story building and will be ready for teachers and students in January 2027. It is expected that attendees on the first day doors open will



LARGE GROUP INSTRUCTIONAL



Concept art of the new auditorium.



Concept art of the community wing entrance.

be greeted with new locker rooms, physical education areas with a fitness center, a new gym on each floor, and an electronic Hall of Fame display showcasing the historic athletic achievements of the high school and its program since its inception. In addition, special education offices are also embedded in this wing, along with the auditorium, cafeteria, and woodworking and advanced manufacturing. On the second floor will be academic pods, a media center, a library, and an upper-level balcony with access to the auditorium.

Kovac then shifted his focus and provided insight on what the new Pre-K center will possess and contain.

In addition, the new Pre-K center will replace the cur-

rent Early Childhood Center (ECC), and there will be 10 pre-K classrooms, along with all the support areas needed, including offices and the relocated Family Resource Center, along with its own access for its own dedicated drop-off and pickup, along with a new play area.

#### Academic Wing

The new building will also feature three academic hubs. Each classroom will have room for 24 students, and they will have built-in case work for plenty of storage. Additionally, there will be a satellite STEM learning space with teacher instructional and office space, and a community room that offers unlimited creative space for all. The estimated move-in date for the community wing is set for 2028. Additionally,



Concept art of the new turf courtyard.



Concept art of the existing 1996 addition staying put.



Concept art for the new gyms.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY BRENDAN ROONEY

the 1996 addition to AHS is also being retained, along with the implementation of a turf courtyard that will bridge both buildings.

In concluding the presentation, Kovacs told attendees, "This is a complete transformation of what you currently have, and I think everyone in this room can see that and it's quite wonderful," Kovacs said. Echoing similar thoughts was current principal Jim Blain.

"I'm super excited, and just like the mayor said, this has been a 3-year project, of what the architects, project managers, and the Fontaine brothers have taken of what we determined was important, of meeting with students, teachers, and parents, of having this collegiate campus style look, and it's now coming into focus is super exciting," Blain said. "It's just super exciting to see what we

believed was important is actually coming to life. He then emphasized that the project was a critical necessity for the district's future, citing that the current building wasn't up to code, making way for the new building.

"It was 100% needed, we had leaks in the roof, rooms that had poor temperature, and poor learning conditions, and it wasn't ADA compliant, and it was impacting student performance, and perception of their school and their community." He then added, "I feel this is going to be state of the art, and in our opinion, 'elevate the expectations for their learning, based on the space we provided for them.'"

Full completion of the high school project is expected to be completed in 2028, which will include the complete demolition of the old building and new athletic fields, as mentioned before.



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# SPORTS

## Agawam 8 bests 7 for title

AGAWAM – In the Suburban League championship matchup, Agawam 8 defeated 7 to capture a title in a community showdown that took place at Jabish Brook Middle School in Belchertown.

Luke Loughlin heads down the court for Agawam 7.



Agawam 8 poses after winning the championship.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY  
Jake Quinby takes the pass for Agawam 7.



Agawam 7's Nolan Laniel sends a pass away.



Ryan Oyler sends a pass away for Agawam 8.



Agawam 8's Braden Ochoa makes a line for the hoop.



Agawam 8's Vinny Albano powers for a shot against pressure.

## Wrestling season nets many championships

By Gregory A. Scibelli  
gscibelli@turley.com

The high school wrestling season has come to an end, with many individuals and teams in Western and Central Massachusetts bringing home titles.

At the All-State Tournament held on Mar. 1 and 2 right in Springfield at the MassMutual Center, Agawam High School girls wrestling captured the All-State title with 86 points. Ludlow was 11th overall at 46 points. Stella Christopher captured the All-State title at 165 pounds, defeating Jordyn Reynolds of Greater Lawrence. Gabriella Ramos was a runner-up at 145 pounds. For Ludlow,

Ella Libiszewski was the runner-up at 114 pounds.

In the mixed-gender all-state event, Agawam would place 16th with 33.5 points. Minnechaug scored 26 points and both teams crowned an all-state champion. Jordin Agosto was Agawam's all-state champion with a top finish at 144 pounds. Minnechaug's Kai Ly also took an all-state title at 138 pounds.

Ludlow High School captured the Division 3 state girls wrestling championship with 97.5 points, crowning four state champions. Quabbin Regional High School was ninth overall with 36 points. South Hadley finished with 18 points and Holyoke with 16 points in the meet.

Ludlow's champions were Libiszewski at 114 pounds, Samantha Bertini at 120 pounds, Ellianna Williams at 145 pounds, and Riley Morais at 152 pounds. Quabbin had one champion with Kailynn Schuster scoring the win at 138 pounds.

Agawam took second place in the Division 2 state girls tournament, scoring 94.5 points. Christopher had the big performance by placing first in the 165-pound bracket. Ramos placed second at 145 pounds and Madison Minalga also had a runner-up finish at 185 pounds.

In the Division 2 state championship, Agawam was the second-best finisher from Western Mass., finishing

fourth overall with 96 points, and crowning one runner-up in the field. Minnechaug was a distant 14th with 52 points. The Falcons' Ly won the state championship at 138 pounds, while Agawam's Ryan Sexton placed second.

In the Division 3 state championship, Holyoke placed ninth overall with 69 points, Ludlow was 25th with 28 points, Quabbin 26th with 27 points, and South Hadley and Belchertown also registered points in the competition. Holyoke would place two wrestlers as runners up. Steven Santiago was the second-place finisher at 120 pounds and Parker Brunelle was the runner-up at 285 pounds.

## HCC women's basketball season comes to a close

HOLYOKE – Earlier this month, Holyoke Community College Women's basketball saw their stellar season come to a close on Sunday afternoon, Mar. 1, falling to top seed CC of Rhode Island in the New England (Region XXI) championship game. The #2 seed Lady Cougars played well in their attempt to win a regional title but were on the wrong end of the 86-51 final score.

Holyoke had a tremendous season overall, finishing in second place in the regular season New England standings before their runner-up finish in the regional championship tournament. Their postseason and title game appearances were the program's firsts since the 2010-11 campaign. Women's basketball finishes the year with an 11-4 regional record and a 15-8 overall record. They were 13-4 against fellow NJCAA teams. Eight players from this year's squad can return to play next season.



Annastacia Dixon sends a pass away.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI  
Tatiyana Zuniga heads across the court.



Mileidy Rosado heads into the paint.



Johnays Andrades gets the open layup.

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**SEEKING 8-20 PEACEFUL ACRES** in Central MA for pet memorial sanctuary. Especially interested in lease-option, phased sale, or seller financing. Respectful, serious inquiry. Patrick **508-735-3232** | [founder@rainbow-meadow.org](http://founder@rainbow-meadow.org)

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

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

To qualify for the scholarship students must be a graduating senior of Agawam High School or a college student who graduated from Agawam High School and is planning to attend an institution of higher learning in the Fall. Applicants must be majoring in or planning on majoring in one of the following: botany, environmental engineering, environmental science, earths systems, forest management, natural resources, plant soil and insect science, sustainable agriculture, sustainable horti-

culture or food and farming, turf grass science and management, landscape design and management technology, clean energy, technology studies: waste water or other environmental related studies.

The recipient will be awarded a \$1,000 scholarship at the clubs annual May meeting. Completed applications along with transcripts and references must be submitted to Denise Carmody, 40 Primrose Lane, Agawam MA 01001 by April 1.

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

# Senior Center announces upcoming activities

AGAWAM – Here are some upcoming activities happening at the Agawam Senior Center. Some require registration or confirmation. Information in the details below:



### Stroke Support Group

Thursday, March 26 at 10 a.m. in the Conference Room

“Hello everyone my name is Carol Swenor and I had a stroke 42 years ago, I am here today I believe in the power of credit and sheer experience. Living with the effects of a stroke can be challenging, but none of us have to face it alone. This group is a place to support one another, learn from each other and remind ourselves that we are more than

our stroke. I volunteered at Mercy Hospital for over 15 years, while I ran a support group for stroke victims it was very successful. I hope you will join me as we can discuss ways to help one another. Call Kristina at 726-2836 to register.

### Jewelry Making with Sandy

Monday, Mar. 30 at 9:30 a.m. in the Garden Room

Join Sandy as she helps

craft some of the most beautiful bracelets, earrings and necklaces. Cost is \$3 for the class plus supplies. Please call Kristina at 413-726-2836 to sign up.

cer, and dementia through diet. Discover how healthy food choices and lifestyle habits improve daily function, mood, and long-term well-being. Call Kristina at 726-2836 to register.

### The Power of Food & Nutrition

Tuesday, Mar. 31 at 1 p.m. in the Garden Room

Free Presentation by Big Y's Consulting Dietitian, Kathy Jordan, MS, RDN, CPT Join me as we discuss how to use food and nutrition to increase energy and vitality, prevent illness, and live healthier, longer lives. Learn about food choices and nutrition as fuel and support for your body & brain. Realize the role of diet in reducing risks for heart disease, diabetes, can-

### German Language and Culture Experience

Monday, Apr. 6 at 10 a.m. in the Garden Room

Have you been interested in learning a NEW language and about a new culture? Now you have the opportunity to do so. We are looking for 5 or 6 participants who want to learn to speak German and learn more about its culture, community and population. Call Kristina at 726-2836 to register. Starting Monday, April 6 at 10 a.m. in the Garden Room.

# Public Notices

**Agawam Conservation Commission Notice of Public Hearing**  
The Agawam Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, March 26, 2026 at 6:00 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 MSR Properties, LLC for work to be performed at 699 Silver Street, subject to the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act.  
By Order of  
Henry A. Kozloski, Chairman  
Agawam Conservation Commission  
03/19/2026

**Agawam Community Preservation Committee PUBLIC HEARING**  
**April 1, 2026 at 6:00PM**  
Agawam Community Preservation Committee will hold its annual public hearing at the Agawam Senior Center Veterans Hall, 954 Main Street on **April 1, 2026 at 6:00PM**  
03/19, 03/26/2027

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court**  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413)748-7758  
Docket No. HD26P0479EA  
Estate of: John Fisher  
Date of Death: 12/21/2025  
**CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION**  
To all interested persons:  
A Petition for Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Robin Fisher of Suffield, CT requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.  
The Petitioner requests that Robin Fisher of Suffield, CT be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.  
**IMPORTANT NOTICE**  
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/13/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must

file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.  
**UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE**  
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.  
WITNESS, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court.  
Date: March 09, 2026  
Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate  
03/19/2026

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court**  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413)748-7758  
Docket No. HD26P0531EA  
Estate of: Patrick A Jewett  
Date of Death: 01/29/2026  
**CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION**  
To all interested persons:  
A Petition for Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Karie Jewett of Agawam, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.  
The Petitioner requests that Karie Jewett of Agawam, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.  
**IMPORTANT NOTICE**  
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court**  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413)748-7758  
Docket No. HD26P0504PM  
In the matter of: Patricia Michaels Of: Agawam, MA **RESPONDENT (Person to be Protected/ Minor)**  
at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/09/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.  
**UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE**  
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.  
WITNESS, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court.  
Date: March 12, 2026  
Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate  
03/19/2026

**CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF CONSERVATOR OR OTHER PROTECTIVE ORDER PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, §5-304 & §5-405**  
To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Norman Michaels of Longmeadow, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that Patricia Michaels is in need of a Conservator or other protective order and requesting that Norman Michaels of Longmeadow, MA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Conservator to serve **Without Surety** on the bond.  
The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is disabled. that a protective order or appointment of a Conservator is necessary, and that the proposed conservator is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court.  
**You have the right to object to this proceeding.** If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 a.m. on the return date of 04/07/2026. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.  
**IMPORTANT NOTICE**  
The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make deci-

sions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.  
Witness, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court.  
Date: March 10, 2026  
Rosemary A. Saccomani Register of Probate  
03/19/2026

**Agawam Conservation Commission Notice of Public Hearing**  
The Agawam Conservation Commission will meet on **Thursday, March 26, 2026 at 6:05PM** 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 Cory & Typrowicz for property located on 15 Barbara Ln.  
By Order of  
Henry A. Kozloski, Chairman  
Agawam Conservation Commission  
03/19/2026

**ADVERTISING SALES HELP WANTED**  
Do you want to work in your community helping local businesses connect with their customers?  
Do you want a career supporting local journalism, which tells the unique stories of our communities?  
If so, then join our team! Turley Publications is looking for an outgoing, energetic person interested in selling advertising for our community newspapers. The right candidate will assume an established territory with a portfolio of customers.  
You must be a self-starter with excellent communication and organizational skills. Basic computer skills are required. Previous print sales experience is preferred but we will train the right candidate.  
We are a locally owned family business, offers a competitive commission structure, 401k, and health plan.  
Send resume & cover letter to:  
Jamie Joslyn  
24 Water Street  
Palmer, MA 01069  
Email: jamie@turley.com

## ADVERTISING SALES HELP WANTED

- ▶ Do you want to work in your community helping local businesses connect with their customers?
- ▶ Do you want a career supporting local journalism, which tells the unique stories of our communities?
- ▶ If so, then join our team! Turley Publications is looking for an outgoing, energetic person interested in selling advertising for our community newspapers. The right candidate will assume an established territory with a portfolio of customers.

You must be a self-starter with excellent communication and organizational skills. Basic computer skills are required. Previous print sales experience is preferred but we will train the right candidate.

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*Agawam Advertiser News*  
**OBITUARY POLICY**

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place. The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

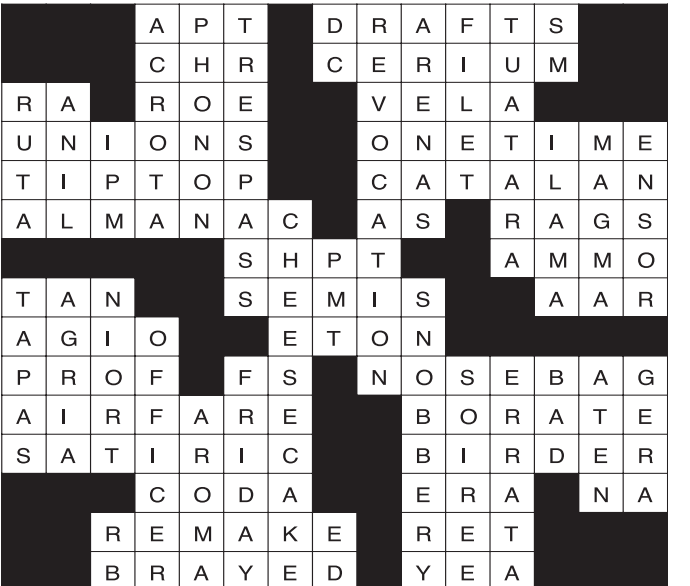
*Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.*

## PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

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

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

**visit www.publicnotices.turley.com**



## March activities available for adults at library

AGAWAM – March is National Craft Month, and there's no better way to celebrate than by joining other artists and crafters at our Bring Your Own Craft Day! Our shopping days will take place on Friday, Mar. 20 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m., and Saturday, Mar. 21 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Clini Community Room. Attendees may fill one bag and take one larger carry out item. If you're interested in making art but aren't sure where to begin, check out our Stitched Journal Workshop on Monday, Mar. 30 at 6 p.m. Local artist Lisa Hersey will guide participants through the process of creating a pamphlet stitch journal with a pocket on the back. This is a beginner friendly class and no prior bookbinding skills are necessary. This event will take place in the Clini Community Room; please register to attend.

Can't get enough music? We're thrilled to welcome back singer/songwriter Matt York on Monday, Mar. 23 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room for Bob Dylan and Johnny Cash: Songs & Stories. York will perform songs and tell stories about these two musical icons and the important role their friendship played in the trajectory of folk and country music, creating a new lane of music that we now think

of as Americana. Please register to attend both of these events.

Preparing for job interviews can feel overwhelming, especially if you've never had the chance to practice in a real-world setting.

If one of your goals this year is to focus on your well-being, then the library is the place to be! Qigong for Spring is a weekly class held throughout the season that will help you harness the expansive energy of spring to build strength and flexibility while balancing mind, body, and spirit for a fresh new year. With similarities to yoga and tai chi, Qigong is an ancient healing art that blends fitness, breathwork, and meditation. Classes are drop-in and will meet on Tuesdays at 11 a.m. in the Clini Community Room beginning Mar. 3 and ending June 23. Join us for weekly Chair Yoga at 9:05 a.m. on Wednesdays in the Clini Community Room. Led by yoga instructor Heidi Taberman, these drop-in classes are perfect for folks of all fitness levels. Instructor Siubhan Clark returns for Root to Rise Sound Healing, a restorative sound bath experience designed to support grounding, stability, and gentle expansion. Through layers of therapeutic sound, you'll be guided into a deeply relaxed state that helps set-

tle the nervous system, anchor awareness in the body, and create a sense of inner support. From this place of grounding, the sound journey gradually invites subtle uplift—encouraging clarity, renewed energy, and a feeling of steady forward movement without force.

Did the 2026 Winter Olympics inspire you to focus on your fitness? Then you're invited to join us for a special event with the Hydrow Team, comprised of an Olympian, a Paralympian, a U.S. National Champion, and a former Division 1 rower. Meet the Hydrow Athletes: Rowing, Motivation & Performance will take place on Thursday, Mar. 19 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room. Come hear their stories, learn about the sport of rowing, and discover what it takes to stay strong, focused and motivated. Attendees will have an opportunity for hands-on experience using one of the Hydrow rowing machines, and there will be a fun mini-rowing competition with prizes. The Agawam Public Library Walking Group will be held at the Riverwalk in Agawam on Saturday, Mar. 28 at 9 a.m. for a morning session of movement and motion. Led by librarian Kristen Frost, this group is a great way to increase your daily step count and get some fresh air and

exercise. We will meet at the Borgatti Field parking area (257 River Road, Agawam). Please register to attend both of these events.

Are you a writer looking to connect with other writers? Join our Writers Group hosted by Katherine Anderson on Thursday, Mar. 19 at 6 p.m. in the Peirce Conference Room. This in-person workshop is open to writers of all levels and genres. Registration is required.

Do you need help using digital library resources like Libby, Hoopla, or Kanopy? Book a One-on-One Library Tech Help Appointment with librarian Erica LeFebvre to get started! We'll have three 45-minute appointments on Monday, Mar. 23 from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. To book an appointment, please visit bit.ly/APLTech.

Welcome to the Astral Library, where books are not just objects, but doors to new worlds, new lives, and new futures. Join us for a special conversation between award-winning journalist Shoshana Walter and bestselling and award-winning author Barbara Kingsolver as they chat about Walter's book Rehab: An American Scandal. This event will take place on Tuesday, Mar. 24 at 2 p.m. To register attend these virtual author talks, please call the library or visit library.org/agawamlibrary.



## Tax work-off program returning this year

AGAWAM – The Town of Agawam is accepting applications for the 2026 Senior Citizen/Veteran Property Tax Work-Off Program from Feb. 23 to Mar. 10. This initiative allows eligible seniors, age 60+ and veterans to earn credit toward their property tax bills by working in the Senior Center or Veterans Office. “We are committed to supporting our senior citizens and veterans through this meaningful program,” said Mayor Christopher Johnson. “This initiative not only assists our residents in managing their property taxes but also fosters a strong sense of community involvement and civic engagement.” Eligible tasks may include administrative

duties, cemetery headstone restoration, and other municipal assignments.

Applications must be picked up at the Council on Aging/Senior Center, located at 954 Main Street in Agawam.

A lottery will be conducted on March 11, 2026, if applications exceed available spots. If the senior/veteran declines participation based on placement then another senior/veteran will be chosen in their place until positions are filled or applications are exhausted whichever comes first.

For questions or to submit applications, contact Cindy Sullivan, Executive Director of the Council on Aging, at 413-732-2835 or csullivan@agawam.ma.us.

## Programs for kids, teens at APL

AGAWAM – This March, the Agawam Public Library is excited to present some great programs for kids and teens, including Baby Storytimes for infants & their caretakers, weekly crafts, a Teen Crafternoon and so much more. All of our programs are free and open to the public. Some programs do require pre-registration. To register, go to our website agawamlibrary.org or call us at 413-789-1550 ext. 3.

### Family Take and Make Crafts - For all ages

First day of the week and Thursdays - While supplies last - Drop-in & pick up. A new Take & Make craft will be available the first day of each week and again on Thursdays.

**March 23 and 26:** Bookworm Mask

**March 30:** Sheep Paper Doll

Grow, play, and learn – This program is provided by Pathways for Parents. Wednesdays and Fridays Ages 0-2 at 9:30 a.m. Ages 3-5 at 10:30 a.m. - Drop-in.

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

**Make Shrinky Dinks – For grades 5-6**

**March 25** at 6 p.m. - Reg-

istration is required

Come design your own keychain or earrings on special materials, then watch it shrink before your eyes.

**Music with Mr. Liam - All Ages**

This program is provided by Pathways for Parents.

**March 21** at 9:30 a.m. - Registration is required

Join us for an energetic show filled with drums, the ukulele, puppets, and comedy as Mr. Liam (Liam Hurley) plays old favorites & silly parodies!

**Open Lego Building – For grades 1-4**

**March 24** at 4:30 p.m. - Registration is required

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

**Pre-K pals - For ages 2 - 5**

This program is provided by Pathways for Parents.

Mondays in March at 11 a.m. - Registration is required

Each week, we will focus on an area of development and provide fun activities to support your child to learn through play.

**Special Saturday Drop-In Craft**

Basketball Sign Craft - For All Ages

**March 28** - All Day - While supplies last - Drop-in and pick up.

Kids can create a basketball sign to hang up at home.

**Teen After School Drop-in - For grades 9-12**

Every Monday the Agawam Public Schools are in session (new day) 2 to 3 p.m. in the Activity Room. Stop by the library after school and visit the Activity Room. Play our Nintendo Switch, try out the air hockey table, eat snacks, or just hang out! No registration necessary.

**Teen Crafternoon - For grades 7-12**

**March 25** at 2 p.m. visit the Teen Space for some crafting time. Do our suggested craft or use our materials do make something totally different.

**Teen Take and Make Craft - For grades 7-12**

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

**Teen Trivia Thursday - For grades 7-12**

Every Thursday the Agawam Public Schools are in session at 2 to 3:30 p.m.

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

**Toddler Time - For 19 mo. - 36 mo.**

**March 30** at 9:30 a.m. - Drop-in.

Join us as we read stories, sing, & play together.

### COLLEEN ■ from page 1

provided by Dave Haslam, a member of the Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Committee and chairman for this year's Colleen Gathering, along with 2026 Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee President Jim Wildman, who offered a bit of insight into the behind-the-scenes process of the event and revealed that every year, the parade president of the St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke selects a city to host the Colleen Gathering in early March.

“Normally, we try to set this up throughout the regionals every year and have it be different,” Wildman said. “And it's always a great day. It brings all the Colleens and all the committees together, and it gets them all in one place, and lets them just have a day of fun and relaxation, before the next two weeks, which get really busy and hectic leading up to the parade weekend. I'm also looking forward to enjoying the Parade, and just getting ready for the lead up to things, it's great to see the weather getting better, and can't wait for the parade weekend.”

### Assemble the Colleens

Every Colleen and their courts introduced themselves to the attendees, and first to kick off was the Holyoke contingent, which was led by the 2026 Grand Colleen Jadyn Lois Christie, who touched upon the importance of the gathering, while celebrating her Irish heritage, and previewed what she was looking forward to on Parade day.

### Holyoke

“I felt today's event went so well, and bringing all the communities together, and getting to dance, and hang out with everyone was just incredible to be a part of and watch,” Christie said. “As Grand Colleen, it's such an incredible honor getting to represent my Irish ancestors, and to ensure their history is always remembered, is just a special moment to reflect on.”

She also brought focus to the inclusion of the new Sensory Street addition to the parade.

“I'm really looking forward to seeing how the Sensory Street designated area is in action, because it's

such a great concept, which will invite so many new faces and families who haven't had the opportunity to come to the parade due to other intellectual disabilities, and it's just great to see a sense of inclusivity on the biggest stage possible, which brings the community together, regardless of ability,” Christie said.

Rounding out her court were Paige Brady Leahy, Bridie Bowler, Anna Mary Evans and Olivia Rose Royland.

### Agawam

Next up was Agawam, who was led by 2026 Colleen Ava Levesque, and her court Zoie Leopardi, Samantha Machos, Hannah Newsome, Summer Smith and Madelynne “Maddie” Szemela.

Levesque shared this was a moment she had waited all her life for.

“To, actually, be the Colleen is insane; it's been extremely competitive, all the girls are talented, and it's such an honor to represent my Irish heritage. And this event has been a great way to network, and everything has been amazing, and I can't wait till Parade Day,” Levesque said.

### Chicopee

Following afterwards was Chicopee, who was introduced by 2026 Colleen Charlotte Rae Fields and her court: Mila Dillard, Gracelyn Jarry and Shannon Caloon. Fields said that her highlight of the gathering was getting to know all of the other Colleens and she's excited for Parade Day, discussing what it means to be an ambassador for the Chicopee community.

“Everyone is really nice and sweet, and it's great to see everyone share the same morals that we do,” Fields said. “I can't wait to see everyone in the crowd, and to take in the moment with my court, in front of everyone, is going to be really exciting. Also, being an ambassador means a lot to me, and I'm really excited to hopefully help bring this community together and just better Chicopee as a whole.”

### West Springfield

Representing West Springfield were 2026 Colleen Siobhan Erris Ginty and court: Grace Kennedy Atwater, Saoirse Bacon, Ava Dominguez, Kenzie Candon, and Kellen Ross, who were

also in attendance and partook in the festivities.

### Westfield

In attendance for Westfield was 2026 Colleen Reese O'Connell, who led her court into the spotlight as Gira Curran, Maggie Leen, Savanna Mazeika and Angelica Madison Racette followed behind.

### Springfield

Finally, the last ensemble was Springfield, represented by 2026 Colleen Anna O'Toole, who is from Wilbraham, and a Minnechaug Regional High School senior, and her court Anna Flanagan, Siobhan MacDonnell, Emma Westbrooks, and Sophia Dow.

O'Toole expressed what this honor truly means to her and revealed a deeper meaning.

“I'm very excited to be this year's Springfield Colleen, and it honestly means more than just a title to me, because I get to represent my grandparents and their heritage, and I wouldn't be here today if it weren't for them,” O'Toole said. “Also, I want to add that representing Springfield is so great because all of the little kids get to look up to me, and say she's unafraid to represent her heritage, so why can't I do the same thing, and that means the world to me because I want to be a good role model, and ambassador for the community.”

She also provided insight into what this title means to her hometown of Wilbraham.

“So, as you know, under the umbrella of Springfield Colleen and my court, we also get to represent the other contingences such as East Longmeadow, Longmeadow and Wilbraham, and being from Wilbraham, it's great because I get to be a liaison of my school, being Minnechaug, and to be able to represent my school pride and heritage within Springfield is pretty cool,” O'Toole said.

### Parade Day is almost here

Officially now only under two weeks away, and fast approaching is the 49th Holyoke St. Patrick's Road Race, which kicks off on Saturday, March 21 and closing out the holiday weekend is the 73rd Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade on Sunday, March 22.

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