



SENIORS
Upcoming activities
PAGE 3



CULTURE
Art exhibit
PAGE 3



SPORTS
Summer soccer
PAGE 6

AGAWAM

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E-bike ordinance now in full effect

Bikes should remain off sidewalks

By Quinn Suomala
Correspondent

AGAWAM – The Agawam Police Department is enforcing the recent e-bike ordinance to ensure pedestrian safety.

The ordinance was passed during the July 5, 2025 city council meeting. City Councilor Dino Mercadante proposed and sponsored the ordinance.

The Agawam Police Department recently reminded Agawam residents of the ordinance, as this is the first full summer it will be enforced.

Mercadante felt it was needed to protect Agawam residents.

"It's necessary because the influx of e-bikes now in town... has become a real problem and before we get somebody killed and say we should have done something, let's be proactive," he said.

Mercadante especially was concerned about children riding the e-bikes or getting harmed by other e-bike riders.

"It has become a necessity to add some teeth to what the state already has," Mercadante said. "It gives our law enforcement another tool to work with."

The council unanimously supported the resolution in the hopes that it would be preventative of e-bike accidents.

"I'm glad we're taking some action now before there is any major issue with electric bicycles," Councilor Gerald Smith said.

The police are reminding Agawam citizens of this ordinance as summer kicks off and students are out of school, leading to increased e-bike traffic.

Already the police department has seen an increase in e-bike use, even from last year, and they want to take preventative action to avoid accidents and injuries.

The police department hopes the ordinance will help with e-bike education.

"The ordinance is just about safety," Lt. Dan Bonafilia said. "It helps to clear up any confusion about the rules."

Bonafilia mentioned the ordinance is only clarifying for Agawam residents, but also for the police department, so everyone can be aware of proper e-bike safety.

The ordinance reminded residents of requirements for e-bike riders. The first requires all riders to wear a helmet, no matter their age.

Mercadante was concerned about the amount of young teens riding e-bikes without helmets, and believed that this ordinance would allow additional prevention of this dangerous occurrence.

E-bikes are also not allowed on sidewalks in Agawam. All e-bike riders are required to remain on the road or the bike lanes.

Additionally, the police would like to remind people that passengers are only allowed on e-bikes if the bike is designed for them. Individuals are still welcome to attach child seats or trailers to the bikes if needed.

Furthermore, they ask all e-bikers in Agawam to avoid speed-modifying alterations to their bikes and to not ride more than two abreast.

The goal of these update ordinances is to prevent e-bike related accidents and injuries. With e-bikes on the rise, especially with school out, the police department wanted to ensure that everyone would remain safe.

"We don't want to take e-bikes away from anyone, it's about making the rules clear and preventing injuries," Bonafilia said.

Any bike that has working pedals, has a motor under 750 watts and has a top speed under 20 mph qualifies as an e-bike.

Violations of the ordinance can result in a fine of up to \$50.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA
Dr. Randi Lebar and Adult Services Library Associate Kristen Frost at Dr. Lebar's talk, "Music and Memory".

Agawam Public Library hosts 'Music and Memory' program

By Christina Gioscia
Correspondent

AGAWAM – On Monday June 22, Agawam Public Library hosted Dr. Randi Lebar's presentation, "Music and Memory". This talk dove into her personal story of how the piano became so much more than an instrument for Lebar's mother Eliane when she was diagnosed with dementia. This presentation touches the hearts of those who have known someone with dementia and those who are open to learning new things about community members we interact with every day. The "Music and Memory" presentation tells the story of how Elaine



"Music and Memory" information display at the presentation on June 22 at Agawam Public Library.

Lebar went viral playing piano on TikTok and became a representation for those with dementia on social media.

Lebar shared how her idea of posting her mother playing piano on TikTok began.

"At the time it really was about Covid; that was my focus. So, that was the initial thing," Lebar said. "But,

over time I realized that to another degree, it was just the dementia concept, that you can have dementia and still be a person and interact and be a contributing member of society, even from behind the locked doors of a memory care unit. So, I think it sort of morphed into that kind

MUSIC | page 10

Senior Center, library to be designated as cooling centers

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – Excessively oppressive weather was expected for late this week and is expected to last into next week. Thursday, July 2 and Friday, July 3 were expected to be among the worst heat and humidity with Thursday, July 2 forecasted to have an air temperature of 100 degrees or more, resulting in a heat index of feeling like near 110 degrees.

Town officials are advising residents to take caution and stay indoors or in another cool location when the heat is oppressive as it can be very dangerous if exposed for a lengthy period of time.

For those who have an issue finding access to air condition, the town will utilize two of its buildings as a cooling center. However, both locations will not be open on Friday, July 3 due to the observance of the Fourth of July holiday. Cooling centers in the community are also not available on the weekends.

According to a press release earlier this week from Mayor Christopher Johnson, Agawam Senior Center will be open for anyone who needs to stay cool on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesdays, the hours are 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

The second location is Agawam Public Library. It will be open as a cooling center Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Look to the town's website and other advertisements local for hours for next week, as well as future heatwaves this summer.

For those looking for some

COOLING | page 10

Summer concert series, KidsFest are underway

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM – Weather permitting, the 2026 SummerFest, sponsored by the Agawam Parks and Recreation, Agawam Rotary Club, and Agawam Cultural Council, got underway at School Street Park.

For many years, the SummerFest has featured weekly concerts held at the park for residents to enjoy. The events were previously held at the old Veterans Green in front of School Street Park. Now, both the concerts and Veterans Green are now located at School Street Park. The park has a beautiful band shell for performances and has been hosting the events for more than a few years now. The pavilion also serves as a great backstop for people looking

to watch the concerts under cover.

This year, there are 10 events scheduled. There are nine concerts scheduled from Wednesday, July 1 to Wednesday, Aug. 19. There is also this year's National Night Out, which has become a major tradition in town where all of the town's public safety officials are featured and celebrated. The town turns out with several of the town's fleet of police, fire, and other emergency vehicles for families to see and explore. Agawam Night Out is scheduled for Friday, July 24 this year and will include an outdoor movie night for local children. Hoppers is the scheduled movie for the event.

The concerts include: Cobblestone Road, Ultimatum, Project 267, Jukebox Hero'z, Bennie & the Jets, Retro Floyd,

Lindsey LaBella from Kix 100.9, Jason Hackworth from Kix 100.9, and General Gist. Concerts usually begins at 7 p.m., though the Aug. 19 performance by General Gist will begin at 6 p.m.

Another huge part of the summer events is the annual KidsFest. These events are held at 10 a.m. also at School Street Park and are geared specifically for local children. This year, there will be four events instead of the three that have been traditionally held for many years.

Events will be held Wednesday, July 1, Friday, July 17, Wednesday, July 29, and Wednesday, Aug. 12. Robert Clark, the Toe Jam Puppet Band, Airborne Comedians, and Professor Paddy-Whack are the scheduled performers

SUMMER | page 10



Matthew and Daniela Balsamo at the School Street Park Concert last year.

FILE PHOTO



Phone: 413.283.8393 • Facebook: @AgawamAdvertiserNews • Email: aan@turley.com

Adult activities in July offered at Agawam Public Library

AGAWAM – Celebrate the 250th anniversary of America at the Agawam Public Library! Join us for a Patriotic Craft Night on Thursday, July 2 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room. Just in time for the Fourth of July, we'll be making adorable red, white and blue mini-flags! Not a fan of crafting but still looking to get in the patriotic spirit? Stop by on Monday, July 6 at 6:30 p.m. for Patriotic Music Bingo in the Clini Community Room! Experience music from many decades and genres that mentions America, the Fourth of July, various patriotic symbols, or pays tribute to the armed forces and various times in our country's tumultuous history. Prizes will be awarded to those with winning bingo cards! We're excited to welcome back Jon and Li Waterman of Sultana for an evening of live music and military history on Thursday, July 16 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room. Their program Popular Music and Veterans consists of songs, history, and an accompanying slideshow pertaining to some of the experiences of veterans of World War I, World War II, the Civil War, and other conflicts alongside the history of popular music in America. Registration is required for all of these events.

Calling all history buffs and aspiring researchers! Learn the ins and outs of the history of the Revolutionary War and discover potential personal connections. Genealogist Dave Robison will

discuss Finding Your Revolutionary War Ancestors on Monday, July 13 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room. Learn where to look for records, how to interpret historical documents, and how to get started connecting with your family history! Please register to attend this event. We've partnered with Ashland Public Library for two virtual events that you won't want to miss! On Monday, July 13 at 7 p.m. on Zoom, authors Loretta Chase and Susan Holloway Scott—collectively known as the Two Nerdy History Girls—will discuss *Everyday Life in 1776*. Learn about those who lived during the American Revolution and how war would have upended their lives. They will also discuss how they conduct their research, how much of it comes out of their visits to Colonial Williamsburg, and how they incorporate their knowledge into their writing. On Monday, July 20 at 7 p.m. on Zoom, author, independent scholar, and herstoryian Gracia Collins Rich will present *The Black Experience of the Revolution*. Gracia will discuss the extraordinary efforts of Black Americans whose invaluable contributions during the Revolutionary War helped bring about U.S. Independence. Space is limited for these virtual events, so be sure to register soon!

Get crafting! This month, we have two exciting adult take and makes that will spark your creativity. Our

Needle Felted Goose Adult Take & Make will be available beginning Monday, July 13 and is great for folks looking to try out fiber arts. Our Pressed Flower Collage Adult Take & Make will be available beginning Monday, July 27 and includes everything you'll need to create a beautiful floral collage to display in your home. Please note that these kits are for ages 18 and older and will be available at the Information Desk while supplies last. 1 kit per person, please!

If you've been needing a place to get away and read for a bit, look no further than our Silent Book Club! Join us on Thursday, July 23 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room for an hour and a half of quiet reading, as a way to get away from the hectic outside world. 6 to 6:30 p.m. and 8 to 8:30 p.m. will be optional socialization time, and silent reading time will run from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Whether you'd like to join us to talk with others about your reading or just want to come in for the reading time, all are welcome! Registration is preferred for headcount but not required.

Join us for a botanical-themed Escape Room as part of our Summer Reading theme "Plant a Seed, Read"! Solve puzzles, break codes, and complete the challenge before time runs out! This event will take place on Wednesday, July 29 in the Peirce Conference Room and we'll have three time slots

that participants may register for: 2 to 3 p.m., 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., and 7 to 8 p.m. Sign up with a group during your preferred time slot or join on your own to make some new friends! This event is for patrons ages 18 and older.

Our Summer Reading Challenge has officially begun! Log your reading, complete activities, and contribute to our Community Reading Goal in exchange for raffle tickets that can be entered to win one of our grand prizes. To participate online, please visit agawamlibrary.beanstack.org. To participate in person using our paper packet, please visit the Agawam Library Information Desk. The last day of this challenge is Friday, Aug. 7.

Our regular programs are a great way for folks to pursue their interests or try out something new! 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. If you're a fan of board games and card games, then check out our drop-in Game Night on Wednesday, July 1 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room! Tea & Trivia returns on Wednesday, July 15 at 2:30 p.m. and Tuesday, July 21 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room. We'll have a couple of rounds of both Jeopardy and pub-style trivia, and prizes will be awarded to the winning teams. The questions are the

same for both sessions, so register for the time you prefer and join us for some fun! Are you a writer looking to connect with other writers? Join our Writers Group hosted by author Katherine Anderson on Thursday, July 16 at 6 p.m. in the Peirce Conference Room. There will be opportunities for peer and host feedback, learning the basics of self-publishing, finding opportunities for submission to magazines, literary journals, and presses, assembling a portfolio, and the basics of a query package for submissions and publications. Please register to attend!

If you're curious about eBooks or are seeking a free alternative to Audible, register for one of our Library Tech Classes: Learning About Libby! We'll show you the essentials on how to find and borrow new eBooks and audiobooks, along with some helpful hints and tips. We'll have an evening session on Wednesday, July 15 at 6:30 p.m. and a morning session on Monday, July 20 at 10 a.m. in the Clini Community Room. Registration is required.

This month's Virtual Author Talk Series kicks off on Tuesday, July 14 at 7 p.m. with a thrilling evening with acclaimed author Karin Slaughter. We'll chat about her North Falls series, consisting of *We Are All Guilty Here*—in which two teenage girls vanish in rural Georgia—and her upcoming sequel, *The Secrets We Hide*. Join

us for a thought-provoking conversation with bestselling author Reyna Grande as she discusses her ambitious new memoir *Migrant Heart: Essays About Things I Can't Forget*. In this newest work, Grande illuminates the hidden cost of the American Dream and the complex journey of healing that follows survival. This event will take place on Thursday, July 16 at 2 p.m. How do we make and keep friends in an era of distraction, burnout, and chaos, especially in a society that often prizes romantic love at the expense of other relationships? Dr. Marisa G. Franco explores this question and others in her book *Platonic: How the Science of Attachment Can Help You Make—And Keep—Friends*. Don't miss out on this conversation with one of the world's leading experts in human connection! This event will take place on Tuesday, July 28 at 2 p.m. To register to attend any or all of these virtual talks, please call the library or visit libraryc.org/agawamlibrary.

Thank you to the Agawam Center Library Association and the Friends of the Agawam Library for sponsoring select library programs. Agawam Public Library welcomes visitors Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. and Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. We are closed Saturdays in the summer. Please note that the library will be closed on Friday, July 3rd in observance of Independence Day.

Feline Friends raising money at EB's

AGAWAM – Feline Friends excited to be part of E.B.'s Give Back Wednesday Fundraising Program again this year. Enjoy a wonderful meal in the restaurant or participate through Take Out or Delivery on Wednesday, July 15. Feline Friends Inc. will receive 10% of the day's total food sales. E.B.'s is located at 385 Walnut Street Ext. in Agawam. Check out their menu at ebsrestaurants.com or call in your order at (413) 789-3525. We hope to see you there!

We are incredibly grateful for the response to our appeal for help with supplies. We have received packages at the professional office at 532 Springfield St. (at the corner of Cleveland St.) in Feeding Hills and at the Agawam Public Library. Please include your name and contact information for acknowledgment..

Financial donations have arrived by check at P.O. Box 174, Feeding Hills 01030 as well as PayPal and Venmo.

Thank you to those who donated in late May and the first 3 weeks of June: Glen Birk, Judith Roberts, Judy Clini, Deborah Hasty, Katie Heald, John Murphy, Joanne Lamson, The Cat Hospital and Dr. Maureen Ricksgers, Valerie Schumacher, Christine and Peter Fairman in memory of their kitty, Claire Harris, Karen Davis, Wynter Manyak, Wendy Hollis, Debra Parker, Wendi, Burton, Linda Kushin, Ida and Robert Shultz, Sylvia Rubin, Joan Eckert, Cherie Lemond, Denise Broderick, Diane Bannish-Chisolm, Steve Kiltonic, Laurene Bertera, Joanne Daurizio, Abigail Farrar, Susan Modzelesky, Tootsie the cat, Carl and Cheryl Kaufman, Deborah Facchini, Edward and

Kathy Cross in memory of Hydrox, Dan and Sasha, Daniel and Catherine Michaud in memory of Robert King, Melissa Marieb, Jeanette Landry, Bonnie Twining, Carol Roy, Jude Schwendenwien, Sheila Kida and Betty, Irene Fisher and Ken Kurowski, Krista Shea, Angela Copple, Peggy Mercadante and, as always, our wonderful monthly sponsors.

Feline Friends Inc. is a community-based, non-profit sanctuary that does not discriminate against any cat based on age, gender or disability.

More information about our sanctuary may be found on our website at felinefriendsinc.org or our Facebook page at Feline Friends Cat Sanctuary. Contact us with questions at info@felinefriendsinc.org or by phone at 413-786-5019.

HCC president, board selected for national collaborative

HOLYOKE — Holyoke Community College President George Timmons and the HCC Board of Trustees have been selected to join the second cohort of the Aspen Presidents & Trustees Collaborative.

This year-long initiative, led by the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program, brings together colleges nationwide to strengthen alignment between boards and presidential leadership and advance long-term student success.

Through this collaboration, President Timmons and HCC trustees will en-

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Senior Center announces some upcoming activities

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

Lock Box Informational w/ Agawam Fire Department

Wednesday, July 8 at 1 p.m. in the Dining Room

Join us as we learn what a lock box is, where we can purchase one and the benefits they offer to residents. The Agawam Fire Department will be here for any questions you may have.

We Are Providing Facials
Thursday, July 9

MA Licensed Esthetician, Diane Neill began her journey with skin care and cosmetics over 20 years ago. Services that will be available include:

facials, microdermabrasion treatments, masks, make-up and facial waxing such as eyebrow, lip, chin. To book a facial call Kristina on the 1st of the month for an appointment for the following month. 413-726-2836 this is a first come first serve basis. We have some availability for the July 9 facial call Kristina at 726-2836.

Craft Your Own Obituary
Wednesday, July 15 at 1 p.m.

Why write your own obit before the Grim Reaper pays you a visit? Here are a few reasons:

- you know all the details and dates of your life better than anyone else
- your family will likely be very upset when you die, so they might have trouble re-

membering and assembling all the correct details of your life

- your prior planning is a courteous and gracious gift to your family in their time of need; and,

- as a bonus, you get to choose how you'll be remembered for posterity (and future Ancestry searches!).

On Wednesday July 15 at 1 p.m. come to the Senior Center and join Lyn Dean Casey and Will Coons for a guided hands-on workshop on condensing the essence of your life into your own personal obituary (or just use it as an opportunity to gather all the facts about your life in one place).

An obituary tells friends, extended family, and community who you were and

how you are choosing to be remembered. It doesn't have to be fancy or poetic: it can be how YOU want it to be. It can be brief or long, funny or reflective, and documenting joys and accomplishments and/or hurtles and regrets. Perhaps mention those people and/or events whose presence in your life was an honor. There is no right or wrong – it's your life and your obituary – have it your way. No registration necessary. Bring a light heart, an open mind, essential facts about your life, pen and paper and if you'd like, an obituary or two that is close to your heart. Ponder your passions: how would you like to be remembered? Edit: different strokes for different folks; we all have varying attitudes and approaches to

the before, during and after process of dying and death. If this works for you, great; if it doesn't, great.

Hearing Checks with Gary
Thursday, July 16

The next New Ears hearing care clinic will take place on Thursday, July 16. Gary Winn a licensed Hearing Instrument Specialist, and owner of New Ears Hearing Care, will conduct a free hearing clinic. He will check ears for wax build-up, perform hearing screenings, and counsel people about hearing loss. Hearing aids will be cleaned and adjusted if possible. Call 821-0604 to make an appointment. Hearing checks will take place in the seminar hall.

BUNCO and Pizza
Tuesday, July 21
Have you ever played BUNCO? Now is your chance. Join Cindy and friends for a Tuesday evening of Bunco and Pizza. We will have teams of 2 or 4 per table. Be prepared to have fun and laugh. \$5 donation for pizza and snacks.

Jewelry Making with Sandy
Wednesday, July 29 at 1 p.m. in the Dining Room
We are excited to offer Jewelry Making with Sandy. Sandy will bring all the materials you need and you bring your creativity. Cost for the class is \$3 per person plus the cost of your supplies. Call Kristina at 413.726.2836

July Art Exhibit at the Agawam Public Library

AGAWAM – The Agawam Public Library is honored to host a selection of images painted by the late Lyle Pearsons (Dec. 8, 1947 – Jan. 1, 2026). After being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, Pearsons adapted to the loss of his fine motor skills by using a spatula and large palette knives to paint in a way that renewed his confidence and sense of control. Pearsons's daughter Jaime Connor states that he called this innovative technique, "Spatula-Art," and that he "found joy in the realization that his God-given creative talents remained strong and vibrant despite the challenges of Parkinson's." She views the collection as a tribute to determination, courage, and the enduring

power of creativity, revealing how life's challenges can become opportunities for transformation and discovery. Spanning every stage of Pearsons's life, these works showcase a variety of mediums and offer a personal journey through his artistic expression. Patrons entering the library are also encouraged to look at the cases on the main floor of the library, which will be housing summer reading prizes for youth summer reading. This year's theme is "Plant a Seed, Read!" and patrons of all ages can sign up by contacting the library. Participants under 18 can find out more information by contacting the Children's Desk (413-789-1550 x3), and participants 18 and

over can find out more information by contacting the Information Desk (413-789-1550 x4). Visitors are welcomed to explore these art exhibits throughout July during the regular hours of the library. The Agawam Public Library is open 9 a.m. – 9 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays, and 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Fridays. The library will be closed Friday, July 3 in honor of Independence Day. Any questions about the exhibits can be routed to the Information Desk at 413-789-1550 x4. Please contact Adult Services Library Associate, Erica LeFebvre at (413) 789-1550 x8858 or elefebvre@agawamlibrary.org if you are interested in displaying artwork at the library.

Women's Fund of Western MA awards \$195,000 in grants

SPRINGFIELD – The Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts (The Fund) is pleased to announce \$195,000 in general cycle grant awards to 17 organizations serving women, girls, and gender-diverse people across Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire counties in June. The Fund's total fiscal-year grant cycle, between August 2025 and June 2026, awarded \$450,000 in community investment grants that were distributed throughout the 4-county region. The Fund highlighted their 30-year anniversary of grantmaking to reflect on decades-long partnerships throughout Western Massachusetts, while inviting new partners to expand its network. "This is an opportunity to reflect on 30 years of grantmaking," says Kelley Bryant, Director of Grantmaking and Impact at the Fund. "The Community Investments committee, board, and staff sought to invest in close partners and new partners that sustain local communities and fuel

gender equity in Western Massachusetts." Julia Keosaian, Executive Director of Berkshire Nursing Families, adds, "This support strengthens our ability to provide free, compassionate perinatal and lactation care to families across our region during one of the most vulnerable and transformative times of their lives. Maternal and child health in the Berkshires depends on the kind of sustained, community-centered investment that the Women's Fund has championed—and we're proud to be partners in that work." Turmoil in the national funding landscape is causing instability for organizations providing direct support in the region. "This investment in our organization comes at a meaningful time...flexible funding such as this allows us to remain responsive, innovative, and grounded in our mission of supporting and uplifting our community," says Jasarah Burgos, Executive Director, Enlace de Familias / Holyoke Family Network.

Grantees from this cycle reflect The Fund's focus areas of leadership, economic security, and freedom from gender-based violence. The awarded organizations include: Amherst Survival Center, Arise for Social Justice, Berkshire Nursing Families, Community Action Pioneer Valley, Enlace de Familias/Holyoke Family Network, Flying Cloud Institute, Gardening the Community, Girls Inc. of the Valley, Girls on the Run, Neighbor to Neighbor, Northampton Survival Center, Planned Parenthood - Western Massachusetts Health Center of Springfield, Rites of Passage and Empowerment, Salasin Project, The Care Center, The Heartwing Center, and Volunteers in Medicine Berkshires. Grant funding is provided by donors and foundations that rely on The Fund's knowledge of regional gender-equity challenges and expertise in identifying promising solutions. Support gender equity and become a donor at mywomensfund.org/give-now/.

Youth field hockey signups underway

AGAWAM – Girls in grades 1-8 (26-27 school year) will learn the fundamental skills, techniques, and strategies of Field Hockey while practicing and playing in this fun program. Girls will be broken into four different divisions based on grade. New Player "Try It" day will be held on Thursday, June 18 at the AHS Stadium from 6 to 7 p.m. This is a great opportunity to try the sport and meet the coaches before registering. Registration begins in person and online Wednesday, June 10 through July 12. Effective Monday, July 13 all registrations must be done in person and fees will increase by \$25. No new player registrations will be accepted after July 20. New players or players purchasing a new uniform will need to visit the Parks & Recreation office to be sized. To ensure we have enough time to order uniforms all players will need to be sized by Monday, July 20. To access online payments and registrations log onto agawam.ma.us, then

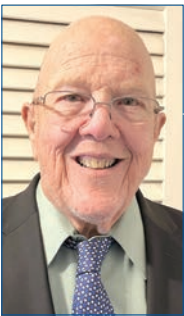
go to the Parks and Recreation Department page, then click on the "Online Payments & Registration" button, then click on agree. This will send you to the Unipay Gold site where you can select specific program registrations under transactions. Coaches will contact players at the beginning of August. Girls will meet from mid August through October. Practices will be

held in the early evenings and games will be played against neighboring communities. Players need to supply their own stick, shin guards and mouth piece. The costs for the programs are as follows: Grades 1 and 2: Returning \$100, New player \$125. Grade 3 and 4: Returning \$125, New player, \$150. Grades 5 to 8: Returning \$150, New player, \$200.



Anthony C. Bonavita, Esquire

**PERSONAL INJURY LAW
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Happy Birthday, America

Enjoy the July 4th Weekend!
from Councilman Peter McNair

Opinion

Guest Column

SOCIAL SECURITY
Matters
By Russell Gloor



When should my wife claim Social Security?

Dear Rusty:

We could use guidance on optimum dates for my spouse to begin taking Social Security.

She doesn't have enough work credits on her own, so she will be using mine for spousal benefits. I was born in 1955, and I now get \$3,886 in monthly SS benefits.

My wife was born in 1961. We currently receive about \$50,000 per year in royalties and VA disability payments that will stop upon my death.

So, with that in mind, can you suggest optimum dates for my wife to claim, based on my projected death in early 2027 or early 2030? My wife is very healthy and will likely live beyond 2040.

Of course no one can predict their own passing; these are just random dates I came up with based on probabilities with my health issues.

Signed: Planning Ahead

Dear Planning Ahead:

Life expectancy and financial need are primary factors for your wife to consider at this point, plus whether she is now working. Her Full Retirement Age for Social Security purposes is age 67 and, if she takes her spouse benefit before that, the monthly amount will be reduced by about 8.3% for each year early, and she will also be subject to Social Security's Annual Earning Test, which limits how much she can earn from working prior to reaching her FRA.

Statistically, your wife's life expectancy is about 87 that's average longevity for a woman your wife's current age. Even though she isn't eligible for her own SS retirement benefits, she can still get a spousal benefit while you are both living and will get an even higher surviving spouse benefit when you die.

That's because her spousal benefit while both living will be based on 50% of your Full Retirement Age entitlement, but your wife's surviving spouse benefits when you die will be based upon 100% of the benefit you were receiving at your death.

Generally, if you believe you will pass within the next few years and your wife isn't working, her best option

would be to claim her regular spouse benefit now.

Although she will initially get less than 50% of your FRA entitlement, that amount will be replaced automatically by her higher survivor benefit when you pass. Depending on her age when you pass, she will get the full \$3,886 monthly amount you are receiving at your death plus any COLA yet to be awarded.

If that happens before she reaches her full retirement age, her monthly survivor amount will be actuarially reduced based upon how far before her FRA it is claimed. Generally, the survivor benefit reduction will be about 4.75% for each full year claimed early about .396% for each month early.

So, to a large degree, your wife's options for spouse and survivor benefits are based on your expected longevity. If you have reason to believe you will pass within the next few years, then your wife should probably claim her spousal benefit now while you are both living.

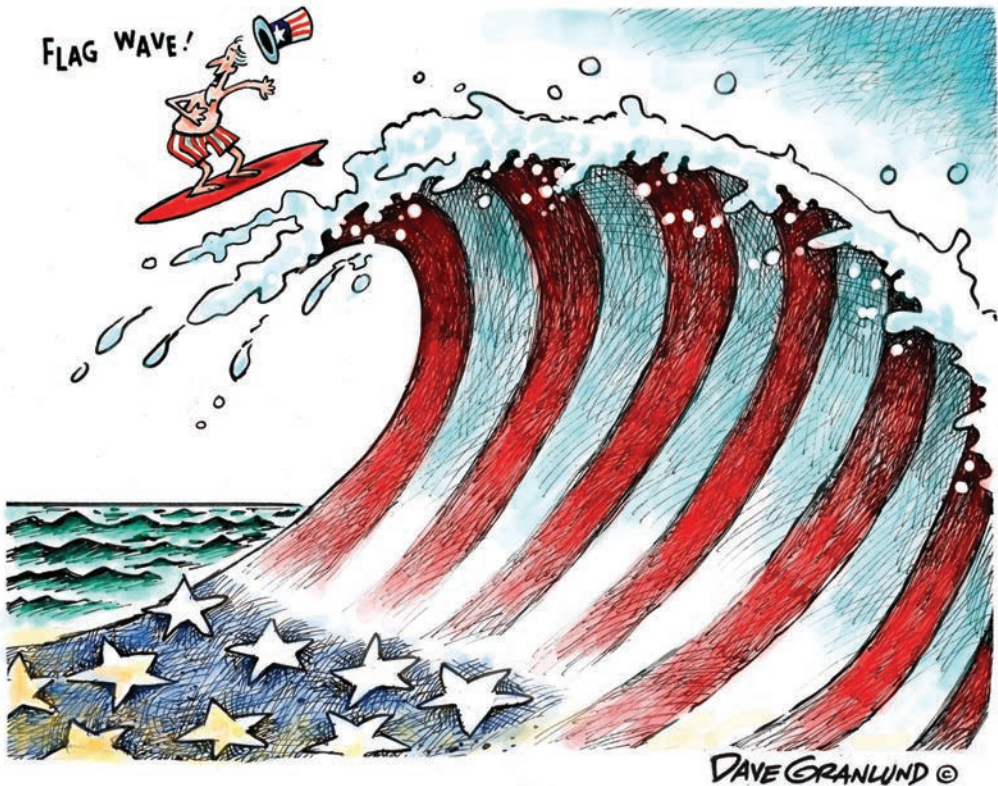
Because she is a bit shy of 65 years old, her initial SS spouse benefit will be reduced she'll get about 42% of your FRA benefit amount, instead of the 50% she would get if she claimed at age 67.

She can collect that amount until you die, at which time she will receive her survivor's benefit as your widow. If she has reached age 67 when that happens, your wife's benefit will become the same as yours was when you died, the \$3,986, plus any COLA since awarded.

And she will collect that higher SS survivor benefit for the remainder of her life which, from what you've shared, would likely be about 20+ years. Assuming her life expectancy is at least average, that is how your wife would get the most cumulative Social Security benefits over her lifetime.

As you have said, no one can predict how long they will live, but from the information you've provided, I expect that the above would likely be your wife's best Social Security strategy. And,

SOCIAL | page 5



Reminiscing brings butterflies to mind

My husband and I were sitting on the porch reminiscing.

To be honest I felt a bit melancholy. Where has time gone?

With empty nesting feeling like it's right around the corner, it's easy to drift back in time and wish just for a moment that the kids were little again.

Boy, did we read lots of books. I remember one of the girls' favorites was "Butterfly Count" by Sneed B. Collard III.

In honor of "days gone by," enjoy this column right out of the archives

The basic premise of the book highlights the North American Butterfly Association's Fourth of July butterfly count with a simple story of a mother and daughter counting butterflies at a prairie restoration site named after the girl's great great-grandmother Nora Belle.

When Nora traveled west as a child, "regal fritillaries by the thousands danced over the bluestem grasses, setting the prairie afire with butterfly wings" yet today they are gone, "their prairie homes are farms and houses now." The story ends with mother and daughter finding the rare butterfly in an undisturbed area of the preserve, the tiny cemetery in which her great great-grandparents are buried.

Reading the book got me thinking about what we could do as gardeners to encourage healthy butterfly populations. According to the North American Butterfly Association it isn't enough to simply choose specific flowering "nectar" plants to attract butterflies, we must also choose plants that will feed caterpillars—that

way we garden with a trash bag, fill it with stones and add water. Dew will collect on the rocks in the morning and slide down the cracks.

Butterflies can land on the rocks and sip water from the crevices. Put a narrow band of sand around your pond and this area will serve double-duty as a "puddling station," a place for male butterflies to imbibe salts and minerals in preparation for mating.

Another important feature in a butterfly garden is a basking station. To be able to fly, these solar powered creatures must warm up.

In fact, Mikula reports that their flight muscles must achieve 83 degrees before lift-off!

Light colored stepping stones placed about the garden will reflect the sun, allowing the insects upper and lower wing surfaces to heat up at the same time.

After researching this article I realize just how little I know about butterflies. Luckily, some of the plants mentioned above already grow on my property, and butterflies often frequent the premises.

For more information on or to participate in the North American Butterfly Association's butterfly count consult their website at www.naba.org.

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

Line a shallow hole in the





in my
BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer

John Kunhardt of Belchertown took this photo of a northern yellow warbler near Lake Wallace in Belchertown.

Northern yellow warblers are small, evenly proportioned songbirds with medium-length tails and rounded heads. They are 4.7 to 5.1 inches long. For a warbler, the straight, thin bill is relatively large.

Northern yellow warblers are uniformly yellow birds. Males are a bright, egg-yolk

yellow with reddish streaks on the underparts. Females are also yellow but appear slightly duller.

Both sexes flash yellow patches in the tail. The face is unmarked, accentuating the large black eye.

People may look for these warblers near the tops of tall shrubs and small trees.

They forage restlessly, with quick hops along small branches and twigs to glean caterpillars and other insects.

Males sing their sweet, whistled songs from high perches.

Northern yellow warblers breed in shrubby thickets and woods, particularly along watercourses and in wetlands. Common trees include willows, alders and cottonwoods across North America

In winter these warblers inhabit a variety of wooded habitats including mangroves, deciduous forests and tropical evergreen forests, as well as gardens, town plazas, second growth, brushy pastures, hedgerows, agricultural lands and plantations.

Their song sounds like "sweet-sweet-sweet, I'm so sweet."

Yellow warblers usually build their nests in shrubs or small trees, typically 3 to 10 feet above the ground. The nest is often placed in dense foliage, making it difficult for predators to spot.

They commonly select wil-



Northern Yellow Warbler

PHOTO BY JOHN KUNHARDT

lows, alders or other shrubs near water. The surrounding leaves provide camouflage and protection from harsh weather.

A typical yellow warbler clutch contains about three to five pale greenish or bluish white eggs with small brown or gray speckles.

The female incubates the eggs for roughly 11 to 12 days, rarely leaving the nest ex-

cept to feed. Once the chicks hatch, both parents help feed them.

Feeding mealworms

After seeing a pair of bluebirds, I started putting out mealworms on the picnic table every day. I figured black bears would not bother with mealworms.

I was right and the birds

AGAWAM
ADVERTISER NEWS

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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.

BACKYARD | page 5

SOCIAL ■ from page 4

for the record, I admire you exploring your wife's options in advance. I hope this answers your question, but rest assured we are always here if you need any further information.

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 amac-foundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amac-foundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

BACKYARD ■ from page 4

ate them up quickly. Yes, the bluebirds came for the mealworms, but so did two catbirds and a male robin.

The other day the pair of catbirds landed on the table as I spread out the mealworms. I've noticed them check the table for mealworms before I put them out. **Red-shouldered hawk**

A woman in Montgomery reported a red-shouldered hawk in her yard. It's one of the most distinctively marked common hawks with barred reddish-peachy underparts and a strongly banded tail.

Wild turkey encounter

My daughter, Paula, was walking her dog, JoJo on the rail trail in Gilbertville along the river. A hen turkey was hidden on the side of the trail. She states, "When JoJo and I ran by, she flew up. One of the babies panicked and started running after mom flew off, which caused mom to charge at us making a bunch of noise."

She states, "JoJo and I sprinted a good 20 feet before she decided we weren't a threat anymore."

She continues, "But this

was definitely the closes encounter we've ever had. JoJo now ranks turkeys in the 'scary' category along with Canada geese."

Brimfield birds

A Brimfield resident emailed, "A pair of yellow-bellied sapsuckers spent a few days visiting a native

dogwood tree in the yard awhile back. And we have seen a few warblers, a common yellowthroat checked me out when I was working in the garden yesterday. We have at least two male hummingbirds visiting the yard and feeders and at least one female."

He stated, "I saw a female rose-breasted grosbeak collecting nesting material so I'm going to look for a nest. Several years ago I found a grosbeak nest near our shed."

Osprey

The Brimfield resident stated in his email, "The Osprey nest in Warren looks like the chicks have hatched based on the behavior of an adult at the nest yesterday. In the past it is usually mid June before I see chicks in the nest. When they are very young osprey chicks mostly lay down in the nest waiting

to be fed."

He reported four great blue heron nests at the pond I visit in Warren where the Ospreys nest.

Bird count

The Brimfield resident also stated, "The Allen Bird Club of Springfield does a spring bird count each year in mid May. We use the Christmas Bird Count count circle, I have covered Ludlow since 1989. I only managed 50 species this year, partly because my hearing isn't what it use to be."

He stated, "I did manage to find a Tennessee and Parula warbler, about a dozen yellow-rumped warblers, two common loons, one each solitary and spotted sandpiper and a black-billed cuckoo. I hadn't seen a cuckoo in a few years."

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowne@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005. The Palmer office has a new phone system and I will be getting an extension where messages may be left. I will publish the number as soon as it is set up.



25th Continental Regiment members from left: Maureen Richard, Joseph Potter, Rob Keenan, and John Richard, will return to the historic Thomas Smith House in Feeding Hills on July 4 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. as part of the Agawam Historical Association's commemoration of the United States Semiquincentennial.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Historical Association hosting July 4 event

AGAWAM – The highlight of the Agawam Historical Association's yearlong commemoration of the United States Semiquincentennial will take place on Saturday, July 4 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the association's historic Thomas Smith House, 251 North West Street, Feeding Hills. The Smith house, built ca. 1757, and listed in the National Register of Historic Places, is one of the few surviving Agawam structures extant during America's fight for independence. Present on the Fourth will be the 25th Continental Regiment, who will model Revolutionary War military life and conduct musket drills throughout the day. Continuous demonstrations of blacksmithing, open fire cooking, tinsmithing, basket weaving, flax spinning, 18th century fashion and textiles by the 25th Continental Regiment and members of the Green Valley Homestead living history group will also take place. Sheep, ducks, and rabbits will be present on the grounds, and younger visitors will be able to partake in 18th century children's activities. Other activities that day will be an archeological dig on the

grounds, a display of artifacts marked for the association's America250 time capsule, a public reading of the Declaration of Independence, and a community bell ringing at 2:00 pm, continuing an 18th and 19th century tradition of ringing bells in celebration of freedom and patriotism that was made official in 1963 when President John F. Kennedy signed a congressional resolution designating Independence Day "National Bell Ringing Day." Attendees are encouraged to bring a bell of any sort to join in. Visitors are encouraged to provide letters to future Agawam residents describing 21st century life for inclusion in the time capsule, which will be sealed later this year and not opened for another century. Those wishing to read a portion of the Declaration of Independence should contact the association by email at 1855@agawamhistory.org by July 1. The Thomas Smith House and Delmore Hawthorn Garage will be open for tours during this event, which is free, open to the public, and supported in part by a grant from the Agawam Cultural council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cul-

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

ACAA 'Call for Art' for festival

AGAWAM – Agawam Community Artists and Artisans (ACAA) is inviting artists and artisans to participate in its Sixth Annual Pioneer Valley Art Festival.

The Art Festival will be held on Friday, Aug. 21, and Saturday, Aug. 22 at the Polish American Club in Feeding Hills. Show hours are from 2 to 8 p.m. on Friday, and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday.

The ACAA is encouraging artists, artisans, and writers to submit their work for review. Among the artistic mediums included are watercolor, acrylic, oil, mixed media,

sculpture, photography, ceramic, stained glass, wood, fashion, textile, and jewelry.

All work must be original and handmade by the artist or artisan, of professional quality. Prints and giclees will be accepted. No kits, food, soap, candles, or AI-generated work will be accepted.

Tent space is available on the paved parking lot for \$50.

Students from any area high school are accepted free of charge, and must have a tent set up.

The Pioneer Valley Art Festival is highly promoted through local TV stations;

Agawam Media Channel 15 and 1074HD; Agawam Cultural Council website; newspapers; town forums; Mailchimp; the ACAA website, www.agawamarts.com; and the ACAA Facebook page, that has over 850 followers.

The week before the festival, there will be over 20 street signs placed around Agawam.

Further information, including registration forms, can be obtained by contacting Ceil Rossi at email: tocarefree2@hotmail.com.

Crafters wanted for fall craft fair

LUDLOW – Crafters Wanted for the Rosary Sodality's St. Nicholas Craft Fair and Raffle on Saturday, Nov. 14, 2026, at Christ the King Church located at 41 War-

saw Avenue in Ludlow from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The cost is a non-refundable \$40. fee for an 8-ft table, which will be provided by the church.

To reserve a table or for more information contact Debbie Martell at 413-547-8739 or Lorraine Bernier at 413-519-7658. Light refreshments will be available.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. ___ chat

5. Statue near the Pyramids

11. A process to change the look

14. Herb

15. Think about excessively

18. Bass vocal part

19. Supreme Allied Cmdr. of NATO

21. A major division of geological time

23. New Zealand parrot

24. Cognitive contents

28. Lump of yarn

29. Atomic #109

30. Let go of

32. Indian title of respect

33. Whereabouts unknown

35. Electronic data processing

36. Drivers' licenses count

39. Snakelike fishes

41. They precede C

42. Popular personal computers

44. Intermediate community stage in ecological succession

46. Wings

47. Indicates position

49. Pleasantly smooth or soft

52. Jeweled headdress

56. In slow tempo

58. ___ Falls

60. Reassertions

62. Eras

63. Hyphen

3. Opinion or belief

4. Sheep in their second year

5. Intensities of sound

6. Indicates support for

7. Expression of laughter

8. OJ trial judge

9. Pointed ends of pens

10. True bugs genus

12. Lawyers argue theirs

13. Body parts

16. Closes tightly

17. World Heritage site in Nigeria

20. Islamic calendar month

22. Commercial

25. "Westworld" actor Harris

26. They ___

27. Religious guilds

29. Woman (French)

31. Parts per billion (abbr.)

34. Brew

36. Spiritual leader

37. Indigo bush

38. Burn with a hot liquid

40. Older citizen

43. Scad fish genus

45. Morning

48. Line passing through the center (abbr.)

50. Double S-shaped curve

51. Small, thin person

53. Older

54. Mars crater

55. Humanities

57. Word element meaning ear

58. To the ___ degree

59. Residue

61. It cools your home

SPORTS

Brownies pick up first win of summer

AGAWAM – Last Wednesday evening, Agawam girls summer soccer defeated Ludlow 5-1 at Agawam High School's turf field for their first win this summer. Agawam was scoring early and often in

the game, jumping out to a 3-0 lead in the first half. Agawam improved to 1-4-1, but still has a long way to climb in the standings. The Brownies are off for the holiday week and return to action early next week.



Clockwise from above: Bella Santaniello dribbles up the field after making a play on defense; Gabriella Ramos controls play near midfield; Cecelia Litz plays the ball off her body; Samantha Izzo chases after the ball; Kaylen Paquette sends a pass away; Kaylen Paquette sends a pass away; Goalie Kayleen Sullivan picks up the ball ahead of a shot.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Ron Silk picks up win in modifieds event at Thompson Speedway

THOMPSON, CT — A beautiful afternoon greeted the new and returning fans, teams and supporters at Thompson Speedway Wednesday night. Rookie Charles Beal led the start of the Street Stock main event with outside polesitter Mike Viens going around on lap one. Back under green, Jarrod Soucy stole the lead as Al Stone III and Ryan Lineham joined the picture up front. Veterans Stone and Lineham motored under Soucy by lap six with Ryan Lineham taking the win over Al Stone III and Soucy holding on for third. Rookies Mikey Flynn and Andrew Brousseau brought the Thompson Sunoco Modifieds to green before Rob Schultz made contact with the backstretch wall to call

out the early caution on lap two. Brousseau battled hard with Keith Rocco from then on with the rookie facing the multi-time track championship veteran. Rocco and defending champion Todd Owen made the move under Brousseau before the halfway point and that is how they ran under the twin checkered flags at the end of 35-laps. The Late Models were next to take the track with Jared Meteras and Travis Hydar putting on a show out front. The two went toe-to-toe as defending champ Jake Johnson and Icebreaker winner Matt Lowinski-Loh joined in for a four-way battle. Hydar and Johnson were next to scuffle with Johnson powering under the rookie but the Stafford champion

was far from finished. Hydar kept glued to his tail, making a move to the inside as he tried to lead lap twenty until losing it in turn three. Hydar held on and kept three but left Jake Johnson to take the Wednesday night win over sophomore Late Model racer Jared Roy and veteran Jared Materas. The Pro Truck Challenge returned to Wednesday Night Racing action at Thompson Speedway with Randy Burr quickly taking control at the front of the field. Through a pair of quick-spin cautions, Burr proved to be the better restarter in the field, launching away each restart all the way to the 35-lap win over Adrien Paradis and Tyler Chapman. The SK Light Modifieds

got off to a shaky start before Todd Douillard and Daltin McCarthy kept things under green out front. Before too long, John O'Sullivan and Kevin Davis entered the picture under Douillard and began to chase down McCarthy. While the chase continued, Douillard's day ended off turn two with a spin into Danny Gamache to end their nights on lap 10. In the final restart O'Sullivan pulled away but Davis came back with a vengeance to take the win ahead of O'Sullivan and RJ Marcotte at the line. The Monaco Modified Tri-Track Series rounded out Wednesday's racing program at Thompson Speedway with Noah Korner and Mike Christopher Jr. fighting hard for the lead in the opening laps.

Content to ride it out, veterans Ronnie Williams and Ron Silk followed the leaders before slowly picking them off with the turn three slingshot underneath. After blowing the engine in his primary car in practice, Jon McKennedy ran home to Chelmsford to grab the back-up car and just made the tail of the starting field. By the lap 19 caution for a single-car spin in turn two, McKennedy sat tenth on the grid. It continued to be the Ronnie and Ron show out front with Williams leading Silk around the 5/8-mile oval until the lap 39 caution sent the field pit-side for fresh Hoozier rubber. Patrick Emerling would use the superior pit stop to take the restart lead but Williams, McKennedy

and Silk stayed nose-to-tail behind him. One final restart with 14 laps remaining left this talented gaggle of cars to fight it out to the end. Ultimately it was Ron Silk who took down the \$10,000 win with Patrick Emerling across the line in second followed by Ronnie Williams, Austin Beers and Jon McKennedy to round out the top-five. Thompson Speedway is back in action in just two weeks on Wednesday, July 8 with Twisted Tea Winged Wednesday! The lightening fast New England Supermodified Series (NESS) visits the Thompson highbanks alongside the Thompson Sunoco Modifieds, Late Models, SK Light Modifieds, Street Stocks and Thunderstock Crown Vics with a 6 p.m.

Sports

New England Mutiny shut out by Vermont Green FC



Goalie Chloe Lazier sends a free kick away.

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW— Even though the New England Mutiny had already been eliminated from the USL W playoffs, they still had a chance to influence the race for first place in the Northeast Division entering the regular season finale.

Had the Mutiny pulled off an upset victory against Vermont Green FC, the Hudson Valley Crusaders would have finished at the top of the Northeast Division table.

However, it was Vermont Green FC players and their rowdy supporters doing all the celebrating following a 3-0 shutout win over the Mutiny at Lusitano Stadium last Saturday night.

“We wanted to play the spoiler role in today’s match,” said New England Mutiny midfielder Avery Klingensmith, who’s from Belchertown. “We were hoping to make the playoffs in our first season playing in this league, but it’s always a lot of fun trying to impact another team’s season.”

Vermont Green FC captured the inaugural USL W League Northeast title with a 6-0-4 overall record.

They’re scheduled to host the Eastern Conference playoffs this weekend

One of the Vermont Green’s ties came at Lusitano Stadium against the Mutiny (1-1) on May 26.

Vermont Green squeaked



Above: Brigid Moore winds up for a free kick.
Right: Avery Klingensmith is closely pressured by an opponent.

out a 2-1 home win in the second meeting between the two squads at the beginning of June.

The Mutiny finished their season with a 2-6-2 overall record.

“We lost a couple of close games this season,” Klingensmith said. “We also had a lot of new players, and it was a rebuilding year for us. We always tried to do our best in every game.”

Kate Howarth and Megan Cunningham made their

first starts of the season in last Saturday’s match.

“I played with both of them in the past and it was a lot of fun having them back on the field again today,” Klingensmith said. “They’re a big part of this organization.”

Howarth, who also played for the Orlando Pride of the National Women’s Soccer League, is the Mutiny’s all-time leading goalscorer and point-scorer.

Klingensmith is also one

of the Mutiny’s veteran players. She joined the squad after graduating from Belchertown High School in 2022.

“It has been a great journey playing for this team,” said Klingensmith, who graduated from American University in May. “I only live about 15 minutes away and this place is very special to me. I’m hoping to play for this soccer team again next year.”

Klingensmith is planning to play for a professional



Addyson Earl tries to outrun an opponent.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



soccer team in Greece beginning in August.

The other players from Western Mass. listed on the Mutiny roster are Mila Dillard (Chicopee), Hope Santiniello (Agawam), and Tennessee Murphy (Monson). None of those players played in the final match of the regular season.

During the opening half of last Saturday’s match, the Mutiny had two free kicks, but both attempts were

saved by Vermont Green goalie Olivia Shippee.

The visitors from Burlington took a 1-0 lead during the 28th minute following a goal from Georgina Clark.

Emily Mara, who assisted on Clark’s goal, booted the ball into the net three minutes later.

The score remained 2-0 until the 73rd minute when Lauren DeGroot netted another goal for Vermont Green.

Valley Blue Sox drop third straight game, falling to Danbury

HOLYOKE – The Valley Blue Sox dropped their third consecutive game after suffering a 5-2 loss to the Danbury Westerners on Saturday night. The Blue Sox had won their two previous matchups against Danbury but struggled to get on base early in tonight’s game, which contributed to the outcome.

The top of the first inning came and went for the Blue Sox as Danbury’s starting pitcher, Cole Gibson, retired the batters in order, giving the Westerners a chance to set the tone. For Valley, Andrew Oppenheimer made his season debut, joining the team due to

personnel changes in the Blue Sox’s bullpen.

Postgame, head coach John Raiola touched on having players come onto the team in the middle of the season, but made it clear that he has to rely on those who have been here from the beginning.

“It does take some guys here and there to come in and replace some guys that we lost,” said Raiola. “Our core is our core [and] they are all here for a reason...they know what it takes to be successful at this level.”

Oppenheimer began the bottom of the inning by walking the lead-off hitter, Jack

Lutte, who advanced to second when Kyle Garbowski grounded out. Collin Mowry then hit an RBI double with Lutte in scoring position, giving Danbury an early 1-0 lead.

Gibson continued his impressive start in the second by retiring the batters in order once again, but this time Oppenheimer followed suit, quickly regrouping from his first inning.

Valley still had trouble finding a way on base in the third, and Danbury kept capitalizing on the Blue Sox’s shortcomings as Noel Rivera got walked, advanced to second, and scored on a wild pitch, putting Valley

behind 2-0.

The fifth inning had Valley getting two men on base when Eddison Esquivel hit a single out to center field, and Nick Tomasetto was walked. Unfortunately, the next three hitters were retired by Gibson, ending Valley’s chance at a scoring opportunity.

Danbury did not waste any time starting the bottom of the frame as Peter Link hit a long homer out to center field, extending the deficit to 3-0. However, Anthony Grabau responded with a home run of his own during the sixth, leading the team in the home run category and getting Valley

their first tally of the game.

The Blue Sox finally got the momentum on their side with Trevor Harmon getting walked and moving to second off another Esquivel single. Nick Tomasetto hit a single of his own and sent Harmon home, bringing Valley within one run of a tie game.

Owen Basso replaced Oppenheimer in the bottom of the sixth and ended up loading the bases after hitting Ronan Donohue with a pitch and walking Michael Delph and Gavin Donohue. Basso then threw a wild pitch that allowed Ronan Donohue to score Danbury’s fourth run.

There were no runs scored in the seventh, and unlike Danbury, Valley was not able to get on the board in the eighth. The final run of the game was another home run from the Westerners as Gavin Donohue hit the ball out of Rogers Park, putting a late Blue Sox comeback out of reach.

Valley’s focus now shifts to their next game, and Coach Raiola spoke about what he hopes to see from his team when they play the Sharks.

“More compete, more fight, more energy,” said Raiola. “Tomorrow’s a new day...and [an] opportunity to put together a more complete game.”

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Sports

Playoffs hopes still alive after Pioneers shutout

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—Had the Western Mass. Pioneers failed to secure a victory in last Friday night’s match against AC Connecticut, their playoff hopes would have vanished for the first time since they entered USL League Two in 2019.

The Pioneers kept their postseason dreams alive a little bit longer thanks to a hard earned 1-0 shutout win at Lusitano Stadium.

“We didn’t get the result that we wanted in our last match on Tuesday night, and we had a tie here last week,” said Pioneers assistant coach Tomas Duben. “It was very important for us to get the three points and the win in tonight’s game. We’re still battling for a postseason berth.”

Duben took over the head coaching duties from longtime Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari, who spent last week-end coaching a Western United Pioneers U-16 girls’ team at a tournament in Virginia.

Since 2024, Duben has a 3-0-1 record as the Pioneers interim head coach.

“My playing career ended a couple of years ago because of a knee injury,” he said. “I really enjoyed playing for this soccer team. I’m very grateful that Federico gave me this coaching opportunity and I’m still learning.”

The Pioneers improved to 6-2-2 (20 points) following the home shutout victory, solidifying their hold on third place in the Northeast Division. They trail first place Vermont Green FC (10-0-1, 31 points) and second place NEC (10-1-1, 30 points). Only the top two teams in the Northeast



Division qualify for the league playoffs.

Western Mass. finished at the top of the Northeast table in both 2019 and 2021. They made it all the way to the National Semifinals in 2021. They’ve finished in second place during the past four seasons.

Between 2010 and 2018, the Pioneers only qualified for the

USL PDL playoffs once.

AC Connecticut (1-10-0) had several scoring chances during the first twenty five minutes of the opening half, but Pioneers goalie Ben Alexander made the saves which kept the match scoreless.

“Ben played very well in tonight’s match,” Duben said. “The defense also gave him a lot of support back there.

Alexander returned to action after missing a couple of games due to an injury.

It was the Pioneers’ fourth 1-0 win of the regular season. They also played a scoreless draw in a road match against Black Rock FC at the beginning of June.



Left: Riley Priddy makes a quick pass. Above: William Fauth watches his pass move away.

The Pioneers, who have a 3-1-1 home record, took advantage of a mistake made by AC Connecticut goalie Asger Hemmer-Hansen to take a 1-0 late in the first half.

Alfred Baafi put a shot into the back of the net giving the Pioneers a 1-0 lead at the end of the first half.

“The goalie attempted to clear the ball, but I stole it away from him,” said Baafi, who scored his third goal of the season. “Then I put a shot into the wide open net, which felt really good. We’re still hoping to make the playoffs”

Baafi, who’s from Techiman, Ghana, is a first-year member of the Pioneers.

“The atmosphere at this stadium is always outstanding,” he said. “We get plenty of support at our home games.”

Baafi is also a member of the men’s soccer team at High Point University in High Point, North Carolina.

Two years ago, Baafi was a member of the Seacoast United Phantoms, which captured the USL-League Two National Championship title.

“It was an amazing feeling after my team won the championship game two years ago,” said Baafi, who’s going to be a senior in the fall. “I just needed a change and decided to play for the Pioneers this year. I’m

also hoping to be drafted by a MLS team.”

The Pioneers had an opportunity to score another goal at the start of the second half.

Martin Echarren sent a pass into the box to Juan Galindrez, whose shot attempt skipped wide of the goal.

The Western Mass. squad also had several more chances to score, but the score remained 1-0.

The Pioneers are scheduled to host Black Rock FC at 7:30pm on Friday night.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Clockwise from above, let: Jaiden Williams goes for the throw-in; Matiwas Rumley goes to meet the ball; Martin Echarren looks up the field; Alfred Baafi makes a backwards pass.



SUMMER ■ from page1
for this year’s KidsFest.
According to the Parks and Recreation Department, shows for the SummerFest could either be cancelled depending on the circumstances, or if there is time to move the show, it could be held at the Polish American Club in Feeding Hills. KidsFest events could be cancelled in the event of rain.
To check on the status of events, please call Parks and Recreation at (413) 821-0514. They may also possibly advertise cancellations on social media.



Joe Couture and Ellen Davilli enjoying a evening out at School Street Park at a previous concert.

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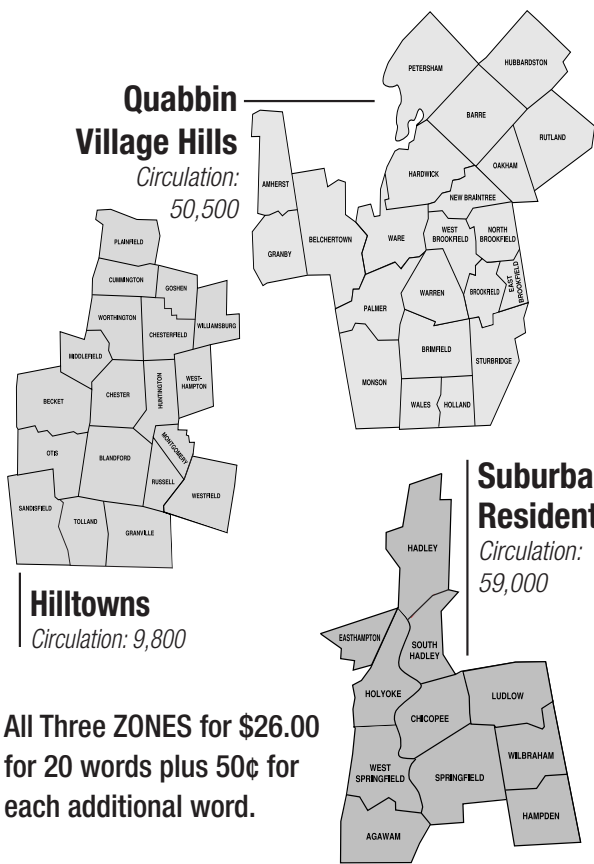
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Pair opens new vintage store

By Quinn Suomala
Correspondent

AGAWAM – Karen Cabana and Kara Phadael opened a new vintage store in Agawam.

The store, called Karen & Kara's Vintage Vibes and Curiosities sells a wide variety of items including kitchen ware, glassware and jewelry.

Selling vintage items has been a dream of Cabana's for a long time. Prior to opening the store she had been looking to set up a stand at a local store. Then, the opportunity opened for her to purchase her own space.

"My first instinct was 'oh my gosh, no, that's too much,' but then I said 'well, don't be negative,'" Cabana said. "I thought about my friend Kara and I jumped up from my desk, ran over to where she sits, and I said to her, 'do you want to go into business with me?'"

Phadael had also long been interested in vintage items. She had already had some experience selling pieces she had found, but she was interested in expanding further.

So, when Cabana asked, Phadael quickly agreed.

Three days later, they rented the space and started preparation for opening the shop. They have yet to regret the decision.

"It's a job that doesn't feel like a job," Phadael shared. "I can't wait until it takes over my life."

Both Phadael and Cabana are grateful for the welcome they have received from the people of Agawam.

"The community has been really welcoming, and it's pretty amazing," Cabana said.

Already they have several customers who they think will become regulars. They also make sure to always greet repeat customers with new items.

"We are constantly bringing in some new stuff, even if we have to take things out that didn't sell to make room



Karen & Kara's Vintage Vibes and Curiosities has opened in Agawam.

for the new items," Phadael said. "So every time you walk into our shop, you're going to see things you didn't see last time."

Phadael and Cabana think that their success is, at least in-part, due to their prices.

"We want to let people enjoy vintage items at affordable prices," Cabana said.

Additionally, they take a lot of pride in the environment of their store.

"We wanted Karen & Kara's Vintage Vibes to be different from the stereotypical antique shop," Phadael said. "We want people to feel comfortable browsing, gathering inspiration, and enjoying the experience—not just shopping."

They also shared their gratitude to the employees at Cooper's Gifts. Cabana and Phadael share a building

with Cooper's Gifts and all of the employees have been very welcoming.

"The staff at Cooper's have been great," Cabana said. "They helped us learn how to style a window because we had never had to style a front window before. They met us here early on days they didn't even have to work."

Caban and Phadael look forward to establishing themselves further in Agawam as the months go by. They also hope to potentially expand to a second store in the future so they have more space to display their items.

Karen & Kara's Vintage Vibes is open on Fridays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. To keep up to date on the store, go to their website at <https://kkvintagevibes.com/>.

Obituary

Robert J. Cecchi, 1944-2026

Robert J. Cecchi, 81, of Feeding Hills, passed away unexpectedly on Tuesday, June 9 following a tragic accident while on the 2026 Hot Rod Power Tour. He was traveling in his vintage '37 Plymouth Hot Rod with his beloved wife, Clarice, doing what he loved. Born on October 1, 1944 in Springfield, Rob was the son of the late Erminio and Anna Cecchi, of Feeding Hills. He grew up on the family farm, a place that shaped his character and would later become his life's work.

As a second-generation farmer and proud owner of E. Cecchi Farms, Rob leaves behind a remarkable legacy of hard work, perseverance, and dedication to serving the local community. Through his commitment to providing fresh produce and flowers, he touched the lives of generations of families throughout the region. Leaving school at an early age to help raise a family and run the farm, he was instrumental in its growth and success. Rob was never daunted by challenges, whether from Mother Nature or the ever-changing economy. He simply accepted them as the nature of the business; "If farming was easy, everyone would do it."

Though he "retired" years ago, retirement never quite seemed to suit him, and in recent years, he could still be found tinkering in his garage, fixing tractors and trucks, welding parts, or offering advice - whether it was requested or not. He had a natural talent for trouble shooting mechanical problems, and his sons kept him busy with a never-ending list of machinery and tractors

that needed attention.

Through his example, he instilled a strong work ethic and sense of responsibility in his children and grandchildren that will continue on for generations. It brought him great joy to see his sons grow up working alongside him and carry on his life's work. Rob was deeply rooted in the community; he was an active member of the Agawam Chapter of The Lions Club and supported local food banks through contributions from the farm.

When he wasn't working on the farm, Rob could be found adventuring with the woman he loved the most, Clarice, his wife of 22 years. He loved the open road, and enjoyed traveling the country with Clarice on road trips and weekend drives, frequently stopping at casinos, visiting Harley dealerships, or enjoying a meal at one of their favorite restaurants. They loved to include friends and family in their trips when possible, and would often make new friends along the way. Spending winters in Punta Gorda, FL in recent years, they enjoyed the sunshine, going for bike rides, square dancing, and gardening. They were members of Harley Davidson clubs in both locations, and Rob will be missed greatly by their club members and neighbors.

Rob was an avid collector and lover of vintage tractors and trucks, agricultural tools and equipment, and a pig enthusiast, developing an impressive collection despite only having acquired the hobby later in life. Rob and Clarice attended many annual "pig conventions" and even hosted one on the farm.

Above all else, Rob loved his family and friends, and they all loved him back in equal measure. He was fondly referred to by his children as "Pop" and by his grandchildren as "Nono". Though he was at times a man of few words, he didn't need many to convey his feelings for the people

he loved. It was a quiet, unspoken love that could always be felt by those closest to him. He would drop anything to help a friend or family member, and frequently lent his handiness to helping take on a new project. He had a great sense of humor, which was often on display at family gatherings or on his many escapades with Clarice. Rob's grandchildren will forever remember the many Friday night pool nights, flea market visits, and road trips with him and Clarice, who worked as a team to ensure every occasion was unique and exciting, often including games, contests, or costumes.

Rob's legacy will live on in the family he cherished, the farm he devoted his life to, the community he served, and the many lessons he has passed on through his example.

Rob was predeceased by his first wife Emily Cecchi. He is survived by his loving wife, Clarice Cecchi, his children, David (Laurie), Bobby, and Michael (Michelle) Cecchi, step-daughter, Jenny Lafond, his sister, Carol (Jim) Kaleialoha, and his grandchildren, Dillon, Joseph, Megan, Bailey, Bethany.

In honor of Rob's wishes, there will be no public services or calling hours. Donations can be made in Rob's memory to the Agawam Lions Club.

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 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.

DEATH NOTICE

Robert J. Cecchi
Died June 9, 2026



MUSIC ■ from page1

of representation, and I had lots of comments on my thousands of comments on my TikTok's. Lots of comments that she can't have dementia and play piano that well. She can't have dementia and have a sense of humor. All these things. So that's when I started recording some of her dementia. And showing that, yes, this woman really is lost in space and time, until you get her to a piano.

Lebar's mother walked into a room and began to play for people, the energy in the room shifted and people seemed to wake up, "That is honestly a physical thing to watch. It is a natural part of humanity, going back millennia, that people will respond to rhythm and sound and people will tap their feet and it creates a unison, cause everybody's doing the same thing. And it just wakes people up; it's just magical."

COOLING ■ from page1

outdoor relief, Agawam's Spray Park is open now at School Street Park. It operates daily from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and is available to all visitors because it was created using funds from the Community Preservation Act Fund.

Perry Lane Pool is also now available for limited

A large portion of Lebar's presentation discussed ways to gently lie or distract in order to keep the peace, she tells us why she believes this method works well, "Mostly that book and then watching some of the more experienced aids in my mother's memory care unit, who knew how to do it. Who knew how to distract, divert attention, those kinds of things. It's not a natural thing to lie. But when you see the positive impact of it, and really the car keys thing was for me that was a switch flipping in my head because I'm like, 'oh this worked like right away' and it didn't embarrass her."

Adult Services Library Associate Kristen Frost wanted to have the presentation at Agawam Public Library

"The journey of Randi and her mom Elaine is one that anyone who knows someone with dementia will be familiar with," Frost said. "Randi presents their story in such a

compassionate and relatable way, so that anyone who may be experiencing something similar will connect with. The Music and Memory helps others realize they are not alone in dealing with the stages of dementia a loved one is experiencing. Randi's message is ultimately encouraging to others, demonstrating that there are pathways to connect with someone in a meaningful way throughout their dementia diagnosis. Alzheimer's Awareness Month is a perfect time to showcase this kind of information."

Lebar is dedicated to spreading all the information, tips and tricks she learned through her journey with her mother to communities everywhere to provide some answers and comfort for those going through similar journeys with their loved ones. For more information about upcoming events at Agawam Public Library visit the library's website.

Johnson also said all residents should do their part and look out for their friends and neighbors, including checking on elderly residents who live alone or are otherwise vulnerable.

The summer is very early, it is more likely than not that cooling centers will be utilized at more points between now and September.

hours. It is available Monday through Friday from 4 to 6 p.m.

Campers at the Perry Lane day camp utilize it during the daytime. The pool is also open for residents from 12 to 5 p.m. on Saturdays and Sunday.

Updates for all of these locations can be found on the town's website at www.agawam.ma.us.

Public Notices

**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. HD24P2583EA
Estate of:
Patricia M Maynard
Date of Death: 10/25/2024
CITATION ON PETITION FOR ORDER OF COMPLETE SETTLEMENT**

A Petition for Order of Complete Settlement has been filed by **Clark P Maynard of Feeding Hills, MA** requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including the allowance of a final account, a determination of heirs at law and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition.

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 07/31/2026.

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.

WITNESS, Hon. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: June 29, 2026

Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
07/02/2026

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield MA, 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD03P185476TP1
In the matter of:
Hortense H. Bergeron
Date of Death: 01/01/1900
CITATION ON PETITION FOR ALLOWANCE OF ACCOUNT**

To all interested persons:
A Petition has been filed by: **Bank of America, N.A. of Springfield, MA / Timothy J Ryan of Springfield, MA** requesting allowance of the thirty-seventh to the forty-second account(s) as Trustee and any other relief as requested in the Petition.

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before 10:00 a.m. on 07/30/2026.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an Affidavit of Objections within thirty (30) days of the return

date, action may be taken without further notice to you.

Witness, Hon. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: June 17, 2026

Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
07/02/2026

Town of Agawam Legal Notice

The **Agawam Planning Board** will hold a public hearing on Thursday, July 16, 2026 at 6:00pm and the **Agawam City Council** will hold its public hearing on Monday, August 3, 2026 at 7:00pm at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. The purpose of these hearings will be to hear the petition of Mayor Johnson & Council President Russo for a proposed zoning amendment for "An Ordinance Enacting a Temporary Moratorium on Data Centers in the Town of Agawam." The City Council's public hearing will be livestreamed on the Town of Agawam's website at www.agawam.ma.us and will also be televised on Cable Access Channel 15 or Channel 1074. Copies of the proposed zoning amendment can be obtained from the Planning Department between the hours of 7:30am and 3:30pm at the Agawam DPW, 1000 Suffield Street, Agawam, MA or by emailing the Office of the City Clerk for an electronic copy at vgioscia@agawam.ma.us.

By Order Of:

Violet Baldwin, Chairman
Agawam Planning Board
Anthony Russo
City Council President
07/02, 07/09/2026



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- Real Estate: For Sale, For Rent & Vacation Rentals
- Help Wanted: Part Time & Full Time Career Opportunities

Call to place your classified ad:

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