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AGAWAM

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Historical Association celebrates America's 250th



By Christina Gioscia
Correspondent

AGAWAM - On Saturday July 4 at the Thomas Smith House, Agawam Historical Association hosted a fun and educational event to celebrate the 250th birthday of the United States of America. This event included reenactors from the 25 Continental and Green Valley Homestead Living History Group. These

reenactors allowed attendees to view how people ate, dressed, and lived during this part of our history. The reenactors had historically accurate games set up as well which attendees were encouraged to ask questions about and try out for themselves. Refreshments were provided on this hot summer day. There was a reading of the Declaration of Independence presented by Agawam

Historical Association President David Cecchi and a few of the reenactors. The 25 Continental group presented two musket firings throughout the day.

"There's not really any town sponsored, you know, celebration," Cecchi said. "So, all this year really, all our events are tied in with the 250th. We wanted to do something big. This country, you know, where things are right



Left: Green Valley Homestead Living History Group members Shante White and Holly Echert. Above: Reenactors doing metal work.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA

now. We need a reason to celebrate. We're still, you know, working words a more perfect union. So, it's just a work in progress. And I think its, people need to know there's a reason to celebrate. You learn from your mistakes right. You know, people as parents, you always learn from your mistakes, same with the country. So, hopefully we can figure things out and move forward in a good way."

Cecchi's point that this event is to bring people together in celebration stood out with the large number of attendees that turned out to this event to come together in unity and celebrate the 4th of July.

Cecchi then shared a couple upcoming events, "In August, we have reenactors from Fort Ticonderoga coming out with oxen." This event will also take place at the Thomas

Smith house.

Treasurer of the Agawam Historical Association Katy Krause talked about why celebrating today, especially for the 250th birthday of America, is so important to her as a citizen and also enjoyer of history.

"I think it is a once in a lifetime opportunity that I

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Local author Angela Grout and Adult Services Library Associate Kristen Frost.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA

Local author makes appearance at Library

By Christina Gioscia
Correspondent

AGAWAM - On June 29, local author Angela Grout gave a presentation at Agawam Public Library on her newest book, "A Bean in My Breast." Her book tells the story of a woman going through breast cancer, coming to terms with her sickness and dealing with her loved one's reactions. Grout

mentioned in her presentation that grief and death are uncomfortable and difficult topics of life that people often avoid in conversation. Her book discusses these universal yet taboo subjects, bringing them into the light to be discussed.

"I think sometimes we think they're uncomfortable

AUTHOR | page 12

FY2027 budget unanimously approved, now in operation

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM - The Agawam City Council meeting of June 15 had a very busy agenda and went for more than four hours, a rarity in recent member for the legislative body of the town.

Residents often hear the discussion and debate on the upcoming fiscal year budget at one of the June meetings, with the new operating budget scheduled to begin in July.

However, this year, the other controversial topics taking such a long time to go through along with a very effective budget proposal led city councilors to very quickly and quietly unanimously approve the FY2027 budget.

Many communities in the region made headline during the last few months because

they had to go through budget override votes, or like in the case of South Hadley, major budget cuts after an override vote failed.

However, Agawam appears to be in good fiscal shape, with a healthy amount of free cash and no major cuts made to basic services. There was also no proposal for an override required.

"It was prepared with a mindset of being as fiscally conservative as possible while maintaining existing essential services," Mayor Christopher Johnson in his memorandum to the city council. "Upon completion of the high school project, Agawam residents and businesses will be facing a significant tax increase to meet the financial obligations of that project. The administration has tried to be forward looking given that fiscal reality.

In that vein, we have tried to keep annual tax increases to only 2.5% over the past couple of fiscal years. This budget continues that trend with only a 2.5% increase in taxes.

The overall increase in the general fund portion of the operating budget is approximately \$4 million, a 3.4% increase over FY2026.

This year's budget for the Agawam Public Schools will be \$55,105,348, an increase of less than 3% from the previous year. Public safety will have an increase of approximately 5.75%, and public works will increase about 5%.

The general fund budget, including the year's included capital improvement expenses is \$123,329,975. Building maintenance and the police department have the largest budgets after the school budget. The fire department is next.

One major issue that Johnson noted in his budget proposal is that compared to previous years, the proposed local aid is significantly decreasing from the state level. The project aid is about \$142,000 compared to more than \$1.17 million the previous year. The highest local aid in recent years came in 2024 when Agawam received a little less than \$3 million. Aid has slashed since then, but none more than the massive cut this year.

"The level of local aid from the Commonwealth is shrinking fast," said Johnson.

City councilors did not have any discussion at the June 15 meeting after receiving a June 1 public hearing presentation. The nine councilors still present at the meeting approved the budget, which is now in effect.

Donations sought for new 100-year time capsule

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM - As part of its year-long celebration of the 250th anniversary of America's birth, the Agawam Historical Association is now seeking donations for a time capsule, which will be closed for 100 years.

The association has already collected a number of

items, including some local historical items from Agawam's history, a flag that has flown over Mt. Vernon, the home of first president and father of the country George Washington, this year's AHS yearbook, and a collection of poetry.

However, more items are sought for the capsule and the contributions are very open-ended as to what can

sent to the Historical Association.

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.

The Historical Association continues to hold a series of events throughout the year

to celebrate America 250. Anyone wishing to make a contribution to the time capsule should contact cecco@davidcecchi.com.

The Historical Association will likely make an announcement later this the exact date for a ceremony when the final time capsule items will be inserted and then sealed for a future generation to unearth in the year 2126.



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Eversource prepared for extreme heat

With extreme heat, excessive humidity, and the potential for isolated thunderstorms in the forecast across New England this week, Eversource continues to closely monitor the grid and is prepared as always to address any issues that may arise, particularly with significant increases in energy demand expected as customers crank up air conditioners and other appliances to stay cool. During the summer months, Eversource customers in Massachusetts use about 20% more electricity to keep cool when the mercury soars, and even more if excessive heat continues for a prolonged period. While high electricity usage during a heat wave can put a strain on the electric system, the energy company is ready to meet the increased demand, as well as respond to any damage caused by strong thunderstorms that always have the potential to emerge with this kind of heat and humidity in the forecast.

“Our system operators are constantly monitoring the grid and are able to reroute power and shift other resources as needed, and our

field crews are ready to respond to any potential outages or damage caused by strong isolated thunderstorms or other heat-related issues,” said President of Massachusetts Electric Operations Doug Foley “Here in New England, constrained energy supply regularly poses an affordability challenge, which is compounded by the spike in electricity demand that we typically see during heat waves when millions of customers have their cooling systems working overtime. This further highlights the need for additional supply resources in the Northeast to ensure reliable and affordable power for customers during all types of weather, especially the extreme conditions we’re expecting.”

The region’s independent grid operator, ISO-NE, forecasts sufficient energy supply to meet peak demand in New England this summer but also indicates that very hot and humid weather could create challenging operating conditions. With the region’s already-constrained supply resources further stressed during peak summer de-

mand, there is always the potential for localized system issues as customers rely heavily on air conditioners and other appliances to stay cool, as well as related impacts driving up the cost of energy in the regional wholesale supply market. While Eversource customers who receive energy supply from the company would not experience immediate bill impacts from increasing supply costs on the daily market when demand significantly increases because the company’s customer supply costs are fixed for six months, this market volatility still drives up long-term supply costs and impacts both affordability and reliability across the region.

During the high heat this week, Eversource anticipates activating its ConnectedSolutions demand response programs, which help to reduce demand on the local electric system during high-use periods when electrical equipment is heavily stressed and at higher risk of failure. Residential and commercial customers enrolled in ConnectedSolutions opt in to allow Eversource to adjust

their thermostats or dispatch their batteries, while some commercial customers also proactively curtail consumption, in order to reduce overall energy usage during periods of high demand. The program leverages customer flexibility that can serve as a local resource – sometimes referred to as a virtual power plant – by reducing demand during peak energy events or shifting demand to other times when the system is less stressed.

“Our ConnectedSolutions program is a nation-leading model for implementing virtual power plants, which is benefiting residents and businesses throughout the region with a more reliable grid during times of high energy demand,” said Eversource Vice President of Energy Efficiency and Electric Mobility Tilak Subrahmanian. “Partnering with our customers on this program allows us to help ease the strain on the electric grid during days of high energy use like we’re expecting this week. Customers’ flexibility – allowing us to adjust their thermostat or take other steps when need-

ed to ease stress on the grid – is not only a benefit to those enrolled in the program who receive incentives, but to all customers who rely on the electric system for dependable power during all types of weather.”

Eversource reminds customers that increased energy usage always results in higher energy bills. Even if their thermostat is set at the same temperature all summer long, customers will use more electricity when it’s 95-degrees outside as opposed to 80-degrees because the system is working much harder to maintain that temperature.

Things customers can do to manage energy usage this summer:

Keep air conditioners as warm as comfort allows. For every degree higher on the thermostat, the air conditioner will use 1-3% less electricity.

Maintain air flow. Keep air vents and heat pump vents clear of obstructions such as furniture, curtains, and rugs.

Operate major appliances during the cooler parts of the day. Energy is conserved

by using appliances that create heat, like clothes dryers and dishwashers, early in the morning or late in the evening. There is also less demand on the electric system during these times.

Keep blinds closed to prevent unwanted direct sunlight from entering a home through windows. Using curtains, shades, and blinds can lower indoor temperatures by up to 20 degrees.

Switch to ENERGY STAR® certified LED lights. The energy-efficient bulbs run cooler and last up to 25 times longer than incandescent lights.

Set ceiling fans to rotate counterclockwise and at a higher speed in the summer to circulate the air more effectively, creating a cooling, wind chill effect. Remember, fans cool people not rooms, so turn the fan off when leaving the room.

To learn about the many energy saving programs available, visit Eversource.com. Customers are also encouraged to visit Eversource.com/BillHelp to learn more about payment programs available to help.

Velis files bill related to data centers

HOLYOKE — As Massachusetts continues to navigate rising utility demands and the accelerating growth of the data-center industry, State Senator John C. Velis today announced the filing of a comprehensive amendment to ensure that data centers—not residents, local communities, or small businesses—bear the full cost of all electricity and water consumption.

The amendment, which inserts a new section into M.G.L. Chapter 164, establishes firm ratepayer protections, water-use safeguards, and full financial accountability for any data center operating at or above 20 megawatts. These legislative efforts come after continued public advocacy from Senator Velis on this issue.

“Massachusetts must continue to be a national leader in technological advancement. But innovation cannot—and will not—come at the expense of our residents,” said Senator Velis. “Families are already feeling financial pressure, and no community should be asked to subsidize the staggering electric and water needs of these massive facilities. This

amendment makes one thing clear: data centers must pay their own way.”

Key Provisions of Amendment #140 – Data Center Cost Responsibility

The newly filed amendment requires:

Full electric-infrastructure cost responsibility — Data centers must cover all direct and indirect utility system costs associated with serving their facilities. No portion may be shifted onto ratepayers.

Binding cost-recovery and financial-assurance mechanisms — Each data center must enter enforceable agreements and provide financial security to guarantee full reimbursement of utility infrastructure and service costs.

Transparency and reporting standards — Electric distribution companies must separately track and report all data-center-related expenses, engineering studies, and cost-allocation analyses.

Mandatory water-compatibility reviews — Before any municipal contract is approved, a facility must obtain a Water Compatibility Statement certifying that its usage will not jeopardize local drinking-water reliability.

Drought-response requirements — Data centers must adhere to local and state drought-management mandates, reducing water usage during declared drought periods just as large industrial users must.

Annual public-supply reporting — Facilities must provide annual summaries of total withdrawals, reclaimed-water use, and estimated consumption to local water suppliers.

Filed to legislation being taken up by the Senate this week, the amendment from Senator Velis will be considered during the Senate’s debate tomorrow. Senator Velis also noted he will continue to pursue this issue regardless of the amendment’s outcome.

“This amendment is about fairness, accountability, and ensuring that Massachusetts communities are never left footing the bill,” Velis added. “I’m grateful for the collaborative work done so far by state agencies, municipalities, and my colleagues in the legislature, and I will continue pushing for balanced, responsible oversight of data-center development statewide.”

ACAA awards scholarships

AGAWAM – The Agawam Community Artists and Artisans (ACAA) recently award four \$1,000 scholarships to Western Massachusetts students who are pursuing a career in visual arts. The students who were honored are: Alec Piepergerdes, of Westfield who will be attending North Carolina State University and studying Graphic and Experience Design; Abby Austin of Southwick, who will be attending The Pratt Institute and studying Illustration and Communications; Aiden Cortis of Wilbraham, who is currently entering his senior year at Endicott College and studying Graphic Design; and Avia Robinson of Southwick, who will be attending

Westfield State University as a double major in Fine Arts and Criminal Justice. To find out more about our recipients and the Gloria McLellan Scholarship visit www.agawamarts.com.

The Gloria McLellan Memorial Scholarship is funded by two main events held by ACAA during the year. The first is the New England Mosaic Project, where over 250 6”x6” canvases are given out to Western Mass residents through local libraries and senior centers. Those taking a canvas can apply any type of art to it and then return it. Along with helping to fund our scholarship, this project is also part of the ACAA Mission to bring art into our surrounding communities. The canvases

then become part of a 24-foot Mosaic where they are sold to the public at two events.

The first event will be held at the Agawam Municipal Golf Course on Wednesday, Aug. 5, from 5 to 7 p.m., where the public is invited to see the Mosaic and perhaps find a canvas they might want to purchase. The second event will be the Pioneer Valley Art Show, which is being held on Friday August 21, from 4 to 8 p.m., and Saturday, Aug. 22, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Polish American Club in Feeding Hills.

All net proceeds from the sales of the canvases will go toward scholarships to be given out in 2027.

Opening for alternate on Licensing Commission

AGAWAM – Please be advised that there is an opening for an alternate on the Licensing Commission. Interested parties

should contact the Mayor’s Office at 413-726-9730 or send in a letter of interest to nporfilio@agawam.ma.us as soon as possible.

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Opinion

Guest Column



Why doesn't my Social Security record show all my military earnings?

Dear Rusty:

When I look at my earnings on my Social Security account, I see that in 1955 and 1956 have no earnings. I was in the U.S. Navy as a first officer and have my DD-214 paperwork, which shows my military service from Oct. 1954-Oct. 1958.

My Social Security earnings record shows that I had earnings in 1954, 1957 and 1958 but doesn't show that I was paid in 1955 or 1956. Shouldn't I have received Social Security credit for all my service years?

Signed: An Older Veteran

Dear Older Veteran:

First, I want to thank you for your military service.

Whether your earnings while in the military would provide you with any additional Social Security benefit depends on your career earnings after leaving military service. Here's why:

Your monthly Social Security benefit is based upon the highest earning 35 years over your lifetime with earlier years adjusted for inflation.

From those highest earning 35 years, SS develops your Average Indexed Monthly Earnings, your lifetime "AIME," which is the basis of the SS benefit you get if you claim for benefits to start at your Full Retirement Age So, if - after you completed your military service - you had at least 35 years of other employment where you earned more money than you did while serving, then your military pay won't affect your Social Security benefit.

FYI, Social Security payroll tax has been withheld from military pay since 1957, which is why your SS earnings record shows your military pay only for 1957 and 1958. Your SS record wouldn't show military pay prior to 1957 because you didn't contribute to SS from your military pay during those years.

The earnings you see in your SS earnings record for 1954 are likely from non-military employment prior to starting active duty in October 1954.

SS does provide older

veterans with "special extra credits for military service," but those credits are only a supplemental earnings amount added to your military pay record during the years you served.

It is not a bonus amount added to your monthly Social Security payment; rather it is only an amount added to your military pay record used when calculating your Social Security benefit. For those who served prior to 1957, Social Security would have no record of your military earnings during those early service years.

But when you claimed Social Security later in life, they would have asked if you served in the military and given you "special extra credit" in the form of presumed earnings for your service years. They likely asked for a copy of your DD-214 and would have added \$160 to your military earnings record for each active-duty month from October 1954 through December 1956 and additional earnings credits for 1957 and 1958.

But that doesn't mean you get a special Social Security bonus for your military service. If you have at least 35 years of civilian employment after serving in the Navy, your service years would only affect your SS benefit if those military service years were among the highest paying 35 years over your entire lifetime. And, again, please accept our appreciation for your service to our country.

The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.



Bad news and good news in this week's garden

My annual flower gardens were just starting to come into their own when I noticed some damage on the leaves.

They looked chomped on from the outer edge going in. Some leaves also had a watery brown residue on them.

Going by date, I knew the culprit already, even before digging around the base of the plant. The Asiatic Garden beetle is hard at work wrecking my plants.

Read on to learn more about this pest.

I've also got some good news. Blueberries and peas are ready for harvest. Yippee!

The Asiatic Garden beetle is a bit smaller than the Japanese beetle and is chestnut brown in color. It feeds during the night, so look for chewed foliage in gardens or planter boxes under lamp-posts, street lights or other outside lights.

Cultivate directly underneath the affected plant during the day and you will likely see the culprits scurry back into the soil. Usually they snuggle up very close to the stems an inch or so below the soil surface.

Sometimes watering at the base of the plant will bring them to the top of the soil where they can be easily collected or squished. This is one pest you don't want to have around - send them swimming in a soapy bath or you may not have any plants left!

In my experience, two plants they particularly love are coleus and calibrachoa. This year they are decimating my blue salvia.

It's pretty amazing that

ing that I really know how to have fun, but to me, this is what summer is made of! I plant my peas the end of April, so typically they ripen almost on cue each year!

I plant three seeds deep a couple of inches apart up against the interior of my garden fence where they naturally climb up with their tendrils attaching to one another and the fence. I loosen up the soil prior to planting, but I never add any fertilizer - maybe just a sprinkling of compost if I am feeling generous.

Since peas are legumes, they "fix" their own nitrogen from the air.

I do soak the seeds in an inoculant prior to planting them, however, to make the fixation happen easily and to reportedly increase yield.

If you are going to try your hand at freezing your "shell" peas, as opposed to sugar snap or snow peas, be sure to pick, shuck and freeze in the same sitting, since peas begin to lose their sweetness within hours of being off the plant.

Like anything else, we take the good with the bad. As long as there is enough good, we won't throw in the towel just yet.

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.



by Roberta McQuaid



AGAWAM ADVERTISER NEWS

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Agawam Advertiser News

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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.

Keep your liver alive for a lifetime

Tucked under your ribs next to your stomach on the right side, your liver may not be a body part you think about every day, but this three-pound powerhouse - our largest internal organ - performs a lot of important functions our bodies rely on.

And it's up to us to keep it going.

Some liver diseases are caused by genetic mutations that can be inherited. Liver health, however, is largely dependent on our own lifestyle behaviors. Let's take a moment to appreciate all our liver does for us, and how we can keep it in tip-top condition.

What does the liver do?

A lot. Your liver's biggest job is filtering harmful substances and waste from your blood. Every day, your liver filters more than 250 gallons of blood. As if that weren't enough, it also makes cholesterol, produces certain hormones, makes proteins, stores glucose to keep your blood sugar steady, and breaks down toxins and germs so your body can eliminate them.

How do you know if your liver is healthy?

A healthy liver doesn't really call attention to itself. Typically, your regular bloodwork will look at

albumin and bilirubin levels. Low albumin levels, typically below 3.5 grams per deciliter, can indicate liver malfunction. A normal bilirubin level is generally less than 1 milligram per deciliter; anything higher is associated with potential liver disease. Abnormal results in these measures may indicate further screening is needed.

A liver that's feeling poorly will make you feel poorly, too, with fatigue, swelling in feet and ankles, abdominal pain, easy bruising or bleeding, and chills. Another telltale sign is jaundice, a yellowing of the skin and eyes

caused by the buildup of bilirubin.

What can go wrong with your liver?

One of the more prevalent liver disorders is inflammation classified as Hepatitis A, B and C. Hep A is caused by contaminated food or water, not a huge problem in the U.S. but more common elsewhere in the world.

Hep B and Hep C viruses spread through contact with infected blood and body fluids through unprotected sex or needle sharing. It used to be that blood transfusions were a common source of hepatitis, but today's thorough screening



Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

methods make that very rare now. Vaccines help prevent Hep A and B. There's no vaccine yet for Hep C because the virus takes many different forms.

The most common liver disorder is metabolic dysfunction-associated steatotic liver disease (MASLD),

which is excessive fat build-up in the liver without another clear cause, such as alcohol use. Obesity and type 2 diabetes are associated with this disorder.

What does alcohol do to your liver?

Heavy drinkers and

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 acknowledg-

ment.. 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, nonprofit 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.

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.

Behavioral Health expert offers heat safety tips to help prevent serious illness

HOLYOKE — With Massachusetts experiencing another period of extreme heat, MiraVista Behavioral Health Center is reminding community members that high temperatures can pose unique health risks for individuals taking certain medications used to treat mental health conditions.

While anyone can become ill during periods of excessive heat, some psychiatric medications may affect the body's ability to regulate temperature, reduce sweating, or increase the risk of dehydration. MiraVista is encouraging patients, caregivers, and healthcare providers to be especially mindful of heat safety and to recognize the warning signs of heat-related illness.

"Many psychiatric medications are both safe and effective, but some can make it more difficult for the body to regulate temperature or maintain proper hydration," said Kenneth Richmond, MD, MSOL, FAPA, Medical Director of MiraVista Behavioral Health Center. "During periods of extreme heat, patients should take extra precautions, stay well hydrated, and

never stop taking their medication without first speaking with their healthcare provider."

Dr. Richmond emphasized that medications should never be discontinued or adjusted because of hot weather without first consulting the prescribing clinician.

"Behavioral health doesn't exist separately from physical health," Dr. Richmond added. "Something as simple as staying hydrated, recognizing the early signs of heat illness, and checking in on a loved one during a heat wave can help prevent a medical emergency. If you have questions about your medications or how they may be affected by extreme temperatures, reach out to your healthcare provider before making any changes."

Tips for Staying Safe

Drink water regularly throughout the day, even before you feel thirsty.

Spend time in air-conditioned buildings whenever possible.

Wear lightweight, loose-fitting clothing.

Avoid prolonged outdoor activity during the hottest hours of the day.

Check on family members, friends, neighbors, and others who may be more vulnerable to heat-related illness.

Know the Warning Signs

Seek immediate medical attention if you or someone you know experiences:

Confusion or unusual drowsiness

Dizziness or fainting

Severe headache

Nausea or vomiting

Muscle cramps

Rapid heartbeat

Difficulty cooling down despite being indoors or in the shade

A high body temperature or loss of consciousness

"Summer should be a time for enjoying the outdoors and spending time with family and friends," Dr. Richmond added. "With a little extra awareness and preparation, most heat-related illnesses can be prevented."

MiraVista Behavioral Health Center encourages anyone with concerns about their medications or behavioral health to speak with their healthcare provider. Those experiencing a medical emergency should call 911 immediately.

HMC wins patient experience award

HOLYOKE — Holyoke Medical Center, an independent community hospital, was recently named the winner of the 2026 Swaay.Health Patient Experience Program of the Year Award. The award was presented at the annual Swaay.Health LIVE event in Foxboro, MA.

The Swaay.Health Awards celebrate the achievements, excellence, and creativity of healthcare marketers, PR professionals, communications leaders, and patient experience advocates nationwide. Holyoke Medical Center was recognized specifically for the hospital's mobile pre-check process, which allows patients to provide their personal registration information directly and securely through cell phone, computer, in-office kiosk or iPad. The process begins with

an appointment reminder message via text or email a few days in advance with a secure link to the mobile registration.

"Holyoke Medical Center is at the forefront of using technology to improve the patient experience," says Carl Cameron, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Holyoke Medical Center and Valley Health Systems. "We are very proud of our team, those patient-facing as well as behind the scenes, for working together and creating a better, secure, more private process for our patients."

This award goes to the provider organization that puts patients at the heart of everything. It's for the program that turns everyday care into an experience that feels personal, seamless, and

respectful. Through innovative technology, compassionate design, and a commitment to truly listening, the winner proves that when patients feel heard and cared for, everybody wins.

The 2026 awards program was highly competitive, making the recognition particularly meaningful.

"Winning a Swaay.Health Award is no small feat. We received hundreds of high-quality nominations. This year's winners were truly the best of the best," said Colin Hung, Editor-in-Chief at Swaay.Health.

"Swaay.Health has always been about lifting each other up," explained John Lynn, founder of Swaay.Health. "We feel it is our duty to share the good work being done by others so that we can all learn. The 2026 winners are inspiring."

HEALTH ■ from page 4

binge drinkers are at particular risk for liver disease, but even moderate drinking can affect liver function. Alcohol stresses the liver by causing fat buildup, inflammation and eventually scarring, leading to conditions like alcoholic fatty liver disease, alcoholic hepatitis and cirrhosis.

The good news is that our livers are remarkably resilient. Going 24 hours without alcohol eases the burden on the liver, and taking a break for a full 30 days lets your liver go into full recovery mode. If you drink, try to take a 30-day break a couple of times a year, and then have a few "dry" days each week. Your liver will thank you.

How do you keep a healthy liver healthy?

A lot of the same foods in a healthy diet are also liver-friendly: lean proteins,

fatty fish, cruciferous veggies (i.e. broccoli, kale, cabbage and the like), nuts and olive oil.

Some studies indicate that blueberry and cranberry extracts may be helpful, but more research is needed. Experts warn against so-called "de-tox" treatments for livers because they haven't been through clinical trials or been approved by the FDA.

Other helpful behaviors include maintaining a healthy weight and exercising. No surprises there. Above all, limit alcohol intake and take booze breaks for a day, a week or a month.

Problems with our livers can creep up on us, causing few symptoms until significant damage has already been done. If you have a family history of liver disease, acquaint yourself with the symptoms and ask your doctor whether more screening should be done.

While liver transplants have become relatively common - more than 11,000 performed in 2024 - it's likely you can keep yours going with some smart lifestyle choices.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, R.N., a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of 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 to set up a free phone consultation.

SEPTEMBER 2026

magazine

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Mended

7. Hymns

13. Commercial transport of goods

14. Poked holes in the ground

16. They precede C

17. Branch of knowledge concerned with wealth

19. Larry and Curly's pal

20. Injured

22. Popular type of dance

23. Moon crater

25. American state

26. Places to lock valuables

28. Stalk that supports the capsule

29. Keyboard key

30. '___ death do us part

31. A type of cage

33. A place to sleep

34. Annual music awards show

36. Made over

38. Hard, stony substance

40. Incantations

41. Long-legged, wading bird

43. Breathe noisily

44. Congressman

45. Rip off

47. Golf score

48. Popular pickup truck

51. Where infants sleep

53. Music term

55. Small opening in a surface

56. Musical term meaning "very"

59. Soviet Socialist Republic (abbr.)

60. Email subject line feature

61. A British lawyer

64. Expression of laughter

65. Farmer's calendar

67. Seeds used as food

69. Eurasian shrubs

70. Periods of inactivity

CLUES DOWN

1. Hard things to kick

2. Collective of countries

3. Letter of Hebrew alphabet

4. One-time Alabama running back

5. One's sense of self-esteem

6. Of the teeth

7. Treat with care

8. Type of whale

9. Curved structure

10. Emits coherent radiation

11. One of the Gospels (abbr.)

12. Smallest interval in western music

13. Netherlands seat of government

15. Gives to charitably

18. Lout

21. Pastas

24. Release from restrictions

26. Female sibling

27. Title of respect

30. Silver coins

32. Region in India

35. Partner to cheese

37. Dark or dusky

38. Pacific Northwest tree

39. Exaggerate

42. Toddler

43. Touch lightly

46. Fundamentals

47. Jeopardies

49. Curved structures

50. Isolated, flat-topped hills

52. Forming the bottom layer

54. Reciprocal of sine

55. Genus of Old World birds

57. New York college

59. Cloak

62. Kawhi Leonard's team (abbr.)

63. Vietnamese offensive

66. "The Great Lakes State"

68. "___, myself and I"

CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE 10

Community celebrates Juneteenth holiday

By **Brendan Rooney**
Correspondent

HOLYOKE — Exactly one week ago, the Wistariahurst Museum hosted its 4th annual 'Juneteenth Celebration,' which captured the attention and focus of the Paper City on Friday, June 19.

As hundreds of attendees stopped by and were treated to a variety of activities, such as author spotlights, a storyteller, food trucks, an interactive art project, and countless vendors.

And before festivities kicked off, Holyoke Mayor Joshua Garcia took a moment to reflect upon the importance of the national holiday.

"I feel Juneteenth is the first step towards offering a space for citizens and neighbors to come together and have the ability to reflect and understand the challenges that our history contains," Garcia said. "Because the truth is I feel that it's important to remember that even though our history isn't perfect, it is now up to us to have the conversation and understand their's still plenty of work still to be done, and with Holyoke being a non-traditional city, we will always offer the opportunity to celebrate all walks of life, because no matter the background everyone is always welcome, and that's a message I will continue to provide while we pursue a better future, compared to the past we have left behind."

Echoing similar sentiments was Museum Director Megan Seiler.

"So this is our 4th year, and were really excited to have Eshu Bumpus back for storytime, we got DJ Pzo Pete back, we got Voices of Praise, and we feel it's our goal to raise the bar from the year prior, while holding onto the value of knowing it's truly a special honor to have the

platform to play host to this event, while staying true to honoring and respecting the importance of Juneteenth." She then continued her thoughts, sharing, "We all feel and want this holiday to be celebrated for what it truly is, while understanding what this represents not only to our community but the country as well, because it's important to remember that representation matters," Seiler said. "And we feel this is a day of connection as we offer and extend the invite to other organizations to have a chance to showcase their work, and celebrate actual freedom."

She then pivoted to discuss the initial along the fence line interactive art exhibit, which caught the attention of many throughout the afternoon.

"So today we are creating and allowing those here to join and partake in 'On The Fence Line' art exhibit," she said. "The process is really cool, the premise is you come up, create a painting, and then later on, on it becomes a fence line exhibit, so you can you walk can walk and learn about influential black people from the region and the country. So later on, we look to host a walkthrough that will showcase all of the art completed here today, and we can't wait to see the full result, and we hope the public feels the same."

Seiler also offered a small tease and outline of what the 5th anniversary next year could entail.

"Currently, the plan is to go bigger, as I mentioned before, and we can achieve that by finding new people to be guest speakers, offering the invitation to different music groups, and continuing to offer and promote these collaborative community art projects, but I feel today has just been incredible across the board, and I couldn't



Elder Terrence Haynes and Voices of Praise offering a live performance.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY BRENDAN ROONEY

have asked for better," Seiler said.

The celebration then kicked off as mother & son duo Theresa Cooper-Gordon(VP) and Damany Gordon(President) from Genuine Culture took the mic to introduce Pastor Bernard Smith from Bethlehem Baptist Community Church who led a live rendition of the Black National Anthem: 'Life Every Voice and Sing', which set the stage for a special moment as all attendees joined in, and added to the experience, solidifying the moment and message of unity, felt by all.

In addition, audiences were treated to a live reading from local authors H. Zahara Caldwell and Patricia Spradley, who offered their books 'The Fiercest Kind' and 'Positive on Purpose.'

Lastly, Seiler also shared an outline of the future projects and collaborations Wistariahurst has in store for the remainder of the summer, now that school is out.

"So we're looking to continue doing book clubs, which have been really great as of late, and in additional with it being Pride month, we're currently doing one



From Left to Right: Genuine Culture President, Damany Gordon, his mom holding the mic, Theresa Cooper-Gordon, VP of Genuine Culture, and Wistariahurst Museum Director Megan Seiler.

about it's a graphic novel about queer theory and queer history for Pride," Seiler said. "And I can reveal that as of this month, we will have a sensory-friendly Pride at the end of the month, which will feature a Drag Queen story hour,

which we're really excited about." She also revealed that the museum is excited to welcome back Dino Days.

"We'll be having Dino days again this year because Western Mass has some of the most dinosaur footprints in fossils in the

country, and we have some out front of our museum. So we'll be participating in the Dino trail and yeah, were also going to host additional house tours, illustrating that we have all sorts of great stuff going on all summer long, so please stop by," Seiler said.



Holyoke Mayor Joshua Garcia delivers opening remarks.



H. Zahara Caldwell reflects on the importance of Juneteenth before reading an excerpt from her book 'The Fiercest Kind.'



Local author Patricia Spradley holds her book Positive on Purpose before her booth gets filled with people.



Vendors quickly got customers and didn't let up as the community came together.



DJ Pzo Pete getting the crowd on to the dance floor.



Pastor Bernard Smith from Bethlehem Baptist Community Church takes the mic.

SPORTS

Brownies tied for bottom playoff spot

AGAWAM – Heading into the Fourth of July break, Agawam boys summer soccer has an even 3-3 record, which is good enough for a tie for eighth place in the A Division.

The Brownies have a handful of games remaining to look to increase their position and secure a playoff spot in the PVSSL playoffs. Play resumed earlier this week.



Mark Stepchuk makes a high kick to stop the ball.



Inset: Benjamin Gretchka socks a free kick away. Above: Owen Allen turns and goes after a loose ball.



Leon Privedenyuk turns play around.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPOTOS.COM



Nicholas Ghareeb plays the ball off his chest.



John Carra slips a quick pass away.

Pioneers, Black Rock battle to 1-1 draw

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—Just when it appeared that the Western Mass. Pioneers were set to close out a 1-0 shutout victory against Black Rock FC, a late lapse gave the visitors from Nashua, New Hampshire an opportunity to score the tying goal.

Black Rock FC converted a corner kick goal during the seventh minute of stoppage time and last Friday night's USL League 2 match-up held at Lusitano Stadium ended in a 1-1 draw.

The result all but ended the Pioneers' postseason hopes, eliminating them from the USL League Two playoffs for

the first time since joining the league in 2019.

"I really don't know what happened at the end of tonight's game," said Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari. "Almost everything has gone wrong for us this season."

It was the third consecutive tie between the two teams, who played a scoreless tie in the first meeting of the season on June 3. The two squads also played a 1-1 draw at Lusitano Stadium a year ago.

The Pioneers entered the final week of the 2026 regular season sitting in third place in the Northeast Division table with a 7-2-3 (24 points) overall record.

The Western Mass. squad were scheduled to play at

AC Connecticut on Tuesday night before hosting the first place and undefeated Vermont Green FC, who have already clinched a playoff berth, in the regular season finale on Friday night.

NEFC (10-2-0), who joined the league a year ago, is sitting in second place with 30 points. They only need a tie against either last place Boston City FC or the Albany Rush to officially lock up a playoff spot for the first time. NEFC defeated the Pioneers, 4-2, at Lusitano Stadium on May 23.

Black Rock FC (5-3-3, 18 points) has the chance to tie for third place if they can win their final three matches and



Santiago Blasco Gomez tries to keep the ball from going out.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPOTOS.COM

Sports

Bankers in control following Fourth of July holiday

HOLYOKE – PeoplesBank is in control of the Tri-County Baseball League once again, as the longtime playoff champions and multi-time regular season champions stand at an impressive 11-1-1 so far this season. The Bankers have 23 points for the league lead with their main rivals, St. Joseph's, tugging behind with 22 points. Teddy Bear Pools holds third place at 17

points, while Turners Falls, the Spartans, and BankESB round out the standings, all with less than 10 points. Last Monday, PeoplesBank played to their only tie of the season as they battled to a 2-2 draw with the Spartans. The game was called due to darkness at South Hadley High School. Action resumed earlier this week with games scheduled on Wednesday, July 8.



Above: Brian Hungerford tries to keep a throw from getting to the outfield.
Left: Cam Rivest, of Agawam, swings and connects.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Above: Jackson LaValley winds and fires for PeoplesBank.
Left: Rey Rivera fakes a throw after making a play.



Pete Hogan fires down to second to try and catch a base stealer.
Right: Sam Allen fields a grounder behind second base.



Springfield Thunderbirds bring in T.J. Tynan for 2026-27 season

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds announced today that the club has signed forward T.J. Tynan to a one-year AHL contract for the 2026-27 season.

Tynan, 34, skated in 67 games last season with the Colorado Eagles, posting 50 points (3g, 47a). He added another 14 points (2g, 12a) in 17 Calder Cup Playoff games as the Eagles advanced to Game 7 of the Western Conference Finals.

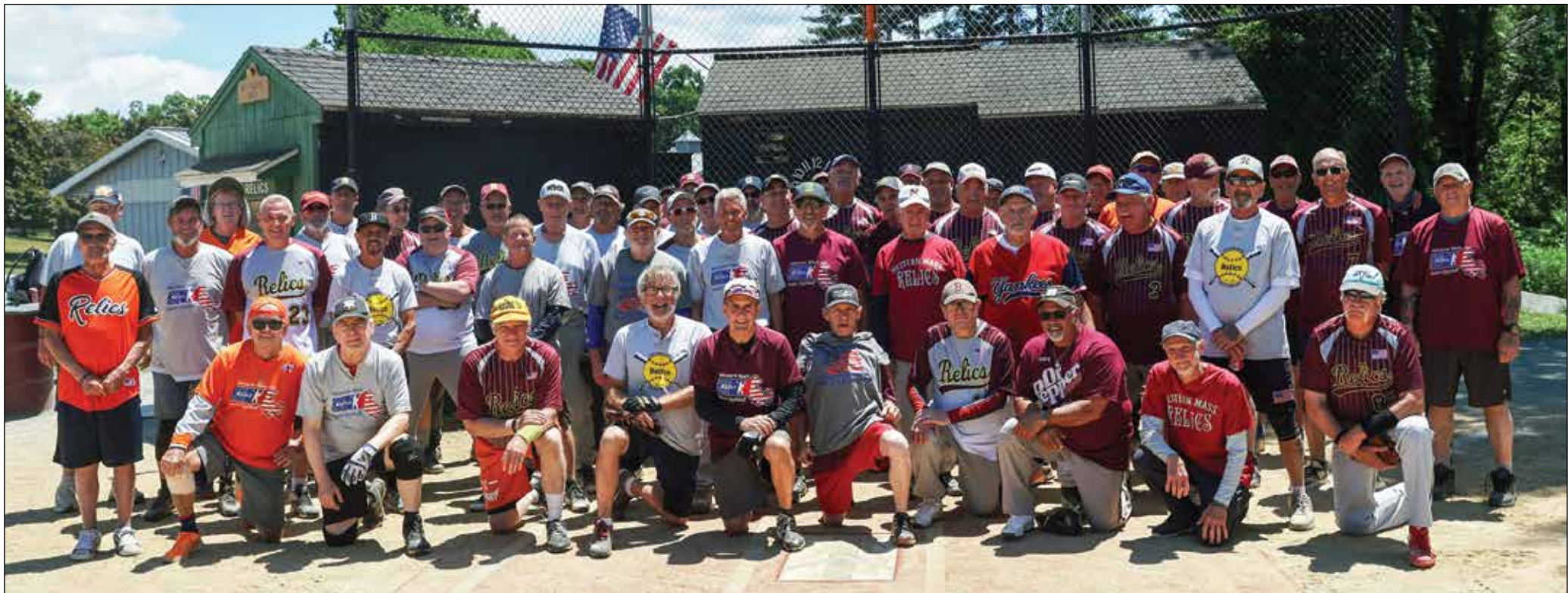
A veteran of 760 regular-season AHL games, Tynan ranks seventh in league history with 579 career assists to go along with 113 goals. The Orland Park, Ill. native and Notre Dame alumnus has eclipsed the 40-point mark 11 times in his standout career.

He has also recorded 51 points (9g, 42a) in 85 career Calder Cup Playoff games, including trips to the Calder Cup Finals in 2016 and 2019. A two-time recipient of the Les Cunningham Award as AHL MVP, Tynan posted a career-high 98 points in 2021-22 with the Ontario Reign, highlighted by 84 assists, tied for the third-most in a single season in AHL history.

He has led the AHL in assists four times during his career and enters the 2026-27 season just eight points shy of 700 for his career, a milestone reached by only 26 players in league history. Tynan's professional journey began in Springfield with the Falcons organization in 2014. A third-round pick by the Columbus Blue Jackets

in 2011, Tynan appeared in the first 78 AHL games of his career in the City of Firsts, recording 13 goals and 35 assists during the 2014-15 season. He later captured a Calder Cup championship with the Lake Erie Monsters in 2015-16.

Sports



Members of the Relics pose with Debbie DaSilva, wife of John DaSilva.

Relics host tournament to honor John DaSilva

LUDLOW – On Saturday, June 20, the Western Mass Relics, a longtime softball league for senior citizens, held their John DaSilva Tournament.

DaSilva, recently passed away, and was a huge member of the league. Members of the league had a lot of positive things to say about DaSilva.

DaSilva joined the Relics after retiring from the U.S. Air Force having served 33 years, with 29 years of active duty. The day he signed up, they

were in need of coaches, and he was talked into coaching. DaSilva was a coach every year he played in the league. He coached and played on the Diamond Dawgs.

For the league, he served as the registrar, treasurer, and chairman of the Silver Division and also was responsible for field maintenance. When he wasn't at home he could be found at the field.

DaSilva was, by nature, a fixer and a problem solver with many members. He set-

tled many disputes. He ran the draft for picking teams in both divisions and created maintained many databases.

He, along with Pat Lombardo brought back the league's yearly picnic and the annual Christmas party. There were many donations made for the picnic, which was a huge success with attendance and financially profitable to the Relics.

The tournament consisted of four teams looking to honor DaSilva's contributions to the league.

Right: The field house near the Relics softball fields.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPOTOS.COM



Above: Joe Perla sends a pitch away. Right: Former players of the Western Mass. Relics softball league Don Holcumb and Ralph Becker.



Kimmy Rivet wins Firecracker 100 at Monadnock

WINCHESTER, NH - Kimmy Rivet captured the win at Monadnock Speedway, leading both early and late en route to victory in the annual Firecracker 100 Modified main event at the high banked quarter-mile.

Her victory in the decades-old top jewel of the summer 604 Modified division was worth \$3,000. It was Rivet's first win of the 2026 racing season.

Other winners on the high banks on June 27 included Massachusetts Missile JD Stockwell, who struck late to score his fifth win of the summer in the Limited Late Models, Pure Stock blaster Michael Yeaton, who stormed to his fourth win in a row, and Pro 4 Modified ace Rob Richardi Jr., who boosted his championship points lead with his second win of the season.

Young Gun Dylan Stati won his track-high seventh 2026 feature race Saturday. Only Sofia Rego, who has since moved up to weekly Pure Stock competition,

has also won in this season's youth division.

With a huge crowd on hand, and a colossal fireworks display awaiting them at race's end, the decades-old mid-summer Firecracker 100 was again a race that will be talked about well past the current season. Rivet and rookie Kyle Kenny sat up front as the 100-lap Minkler Paving and Painting sponsored main event went green.

With a potent field of All States Material Group 604 Modifieds exploding into action behind her, Rivet quickly took charge. Ty Leclerc and reigning speedway Modified champ Tyler Leary were quickly at her bumper.

Leary rocketed up to second on lap 12, with his mirror soon filled by last week's winner Eddie Gomarlo. Leclerc, stuck at the top groove in fourth, had no idea of giving up and, behind him, fast timer Brian Robie and previous winner Andrew Brousseau, from scratch on the starting grid, were zooming to the front.

Gomarlo stormed into second on lap 19 in his Robie Motorsports car, bringing Robie with him, as this time it was Leary stuck in the top groove. He, like Leclerc before him, wasn't giving up the chase. At the halfway point - lap 50 - it was Rivet, Robie, and Leary sailing around the high banks nose-to-tail.

Robie's all-out efforts in the low line finally paid off on lap 52, as the Sunapee speedster took the lead and set sail to repeat his Open Mod victory of two weeks earlier. A strategic mistake on a lap-62 restart, though, would prove to be his undoing.

Opting to re-fire from the top groove, he had to then watch Rivet charge back to the lead and hold the top spot until the checkers waved 38 laps later over her first-ever Firecracker 100 victory. With Robie a single length back in second, Leclerc charged back up for third, Brousseau's strong night's work netted him fourth in the 100-lap main event, and Gomarlo in fifth.

Wesley Stedt may long remember Saturday's Twin State Truck Service Limited Late Model feature as the one that got away. Gunning for his first career feature win in the fast full-fendered division, Stedt, whod earlier topped his heat race, led for 23 laps in the main event before giving way with three to go..

Top points man JD Stockwell, again aboard the fastest car on the track, then took over and sped off to a five-length victory. Stedt stayed strong to score a career-best runner-up finish, and Robert Hagar, coming off a big night Friday at Claremont, was third.

Previous winner Hillary Renaud sailed under the checkers in fourth, with rookie Owen Zilinski, the early leader, fifth.

Micheal Yeaton may or may not go perfect on the summer in the Brattleboro Towing and Recovery Pure Stocks, but he's certainly giving it his best effort. Saturday, the Amherst, NH hot shoe

won for the fourth race in a row.

Top points man Jimmy Zellman took the early lead, giving way to Dylan Zullo, aboard the CJ Johnson ride, on lap six. Yeaton, blasting forward from tenth, was up to third a lap later and the next go-round was at Zullo's bumper.

Yeaton took the top spot on lap 16, then holding off the furious challenge of Kyle Begos to stay perfect at four-for-four in his new-found favorite division. With Begos finishing at his bumper in second, Zellman stayed atop the points parade with his third-place finish.

Rookie sensation Josh Brigham, who had to duck into the pits early for repairs, kept himself very much in the points chase with his fourth-place finish, and Zullo was fifth. Begos and Linsey Wenzel won the heats.

There was only one car capable of keeping Rob Richardi Jr. from taking another bow in victory lane Saturday

in the LaValley Building Supply Pro 4 Modifieds, and that was the Ryan McPartland entry.

The Green Mountain State pilot stayed glued to Richardi's bumper until abruptly exiting the track on lap 14. With McPartland suddenly done for the night, the leader then blasted off into another time zone, only to see his huge advantage evaporate with a lap-23 caution.

Still very much up to the task, Richardi again flat-footed away to score a two-length victory over steady Josh Badach. Fast Eddie, victorious a week earlier, was third in Saturday's 25-lapper. McPartland and Fast Eddie topped the heats.

Dylan Stati dominated the Doug's Auto Body Young Guns again Saturday, leading all the way in the night's caution-free 15-lapper to win his seventh in a row. Maeve Barry, faster every week, was second, and 12-year-old Mason Bezio, in his first race ever, came home third.

Sports

DRAW ■ from page 7

the Pioneers lose a match.

Each soccer team earns three points for a victory and one point for a draw.

Just like in their first meeting of the regular season meeting a month earlier, neither Black Rock FC nor the Pioneers scored a goal during the first 45 minutes of last Friday's contest.

Geronnimo Gomes had two of the shot attempts for the home side during the opening half.

At the beginning of the contest, Jackson Gould lined a shot from outside the top of the box that sailed wide of the net.

The Pioneers, who had four corner kicks in the first half, best scoring chance came during the 36th minute. That's when a shot taken by Vasco Teixeira clanged off the post keeping the match scoreless a little bit longer.

Down at the other end of the field, Western Mass. goalie Ben Alexander didn't have to make any saves during the first half.

The Pioneers finally ended the scoreless drought with a free kick goal in the 65th minute.

The duo of Ronan O'Brien and Shun Murasawa, who stepped onto the pitch together during the 60th minute, produced the Pioneers goal.

O'Brien sent the ball into the box from the right side where Murasawa headed into the right corner for his first goal of the season.

"I just focused on the ball, and I managed to score my first goal as a member of this team," Murasawa said. It was a great feeling, but we lost our focus on the last play.

Murasawa was born in Kawasaki, Japan before moving to Franklin, Tennessee with his family as a sophomore in high school. He'll be a sophomore member of the UMass Amherst men's soccer team in the fall. He was recruited by UMass volunteer assistant coach Takehiko Nakamura.

Murasawa's roommate at UMass as a freshman was



Left: Owen Allen turns and goes after a loose ball
Above: John Carra slips a quick pass away
TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHTOS.COM



Above: Benjamin Gretchka socks a free kick away.
Right: Nicholas Ghareeb plays the ball off his chest.



The Pioneers supporters are hoping to celebrate a victory in the regular season finale on Friday night against the undefeated Vermont Green FC.

Thomas Wadas, who's also a member of the UMass soccer team. Wadas also plays for the Pioneers and was an outstanding soccer player at Ludlow High School.

"Thomas was my college roommate and teammate

last year," Murasawa said. "He told me about the Pioneers, and I wound up playing here. It's been a lot of fun and it's a great atmosphere here."

The score remained 1-0 until stoppage time.

With ten Black Rock players standing inside the box on a corner kick, Juan O'Neill booted the ball from the right corner and goalie Christian Herluf Braae-Anderson put a shot into the net, which spoiled the Pioneers night.

Public Notices

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

Sale of Motor Vehicle

Notice is hereby given by Langonet Towing pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c.255, Section 39A, that on **July 24, 2026** at 63 Ramah Cir S, Agawam the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy the garagekeeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicle.

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4 Colony Drive
Hampden, MA 01036
07/09, 07/16, 07/23/2026

Valley Blue Sox fall to Mystic Schooners

HOLYOKE – The Valley Blue Sox fell 11-2 to the Mystic Schooners on July 3 at Mackenzie Stadium. Mystic got in front early with four runs in each the second and third innings, never looking back en route to a dominant victory.

The loss is the Blue Sox's sixth in seventh games and the seventh time they have allowed 10 or more runs in the 2026 season. The Schooners flipped the script on a Blue Sox team that beat them 11-3, largely driven by nine early runs June 12.

LHP Andrew Speranza (Marist) took the ball in his first Blue Sox start and lasted three innings, allowing eight earned runs in his debut on six hits. Blue Sox's Head coach John Raiola said Speranza was put in a tough

start for his first appearance.

"Not to make excuses, but in reality he drove two hours to get here in 104 degrees and didn't know anybody, and here you go," Raiola said. "... Obviously it didn't go the way that he wanted, and kind of snowballed on us from there."

Speranza was the third new Blue Sox's player to join the team in the past week and make a start in his first appearance. However his start went south quickly and was essentially ended by a three-run home run into the Blue Sox bullpen. It was only the second home run hit at Mackenzie Stadium this season.

The Valley bullpen did well cleaning up the mess, pitching the remaining six

innings without allowing an earned run. LHP Mike Madigan (George Mason), RHP Lukas Jachens (SUNY Oneonta) and RHP Jason Pinonnault (Western New England) combined for a line of zero earned runs, five hits, one walk and three strikeouts.

For Pinonnault, who has been a frequent late innings pitcher for Valley, it was business as usual. Pinonnault has not allowed an earned run since June 14, a span where he has thrown eight innings.

"Just been mixing well," Pinonnault said. "Everything's felt good. I've been able to command everything. Being able to command and mix with all three has been the biggest thing for me."

While the bullpen did not have any earned runs, Mystic did score three times after Speranza exited, largely due to some shaky defense from a Valley team that made five errors, a season high.

The Blue Sox are in their roughest stretch of play this season. They have lost six of their last seven games and dropped to fifth in the South Division.

Despite the tough run of games, Raiola is still optimistic that his team can grind their way out of a rut.

"One thing we just talked about is June is over," Raiola said. "Be the best July hitter, be the best July pitcher that we have. Everyone should be striving for that."

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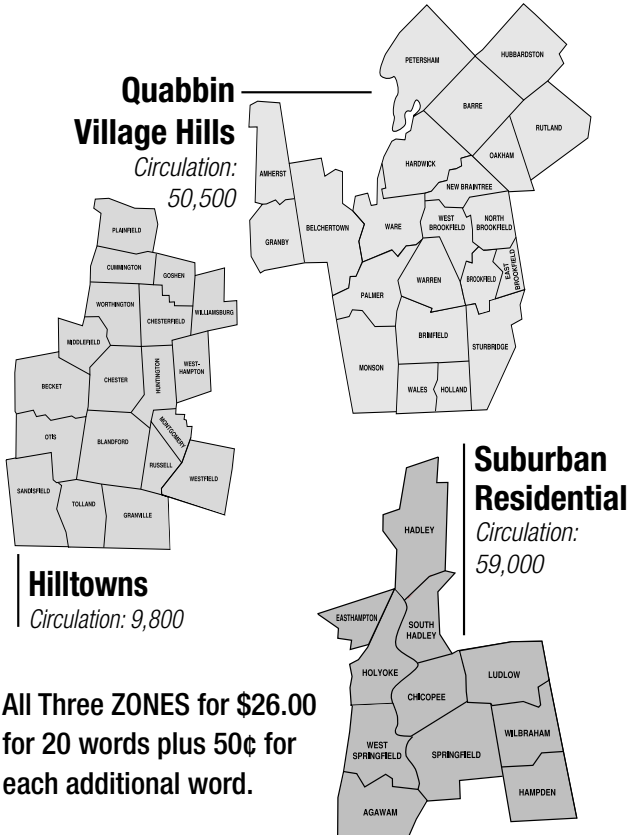
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HELP WANTED

Town Administrator Town of Russell, MA

The Town of Russell seeks a **Town Administrator** with strong communication and collaborative skills to oversee and manage day-to-day operations for our Town. Russell is a small rural community (pop. 1643) in the Southern Hilltown's of the Pioneer Valley region in Hampden County. Led by a three-member Select Board, and Open Town Meeting form of government, the Town relies on the Town Administrator to be responsible for the oversight and management of daily operations of the Town.

Responsibilities include scheduling, developing and implementing town projects, assisting with the preparation of budgets, coordinating with various town boards and committees, supervising and coordinating overall operations of Town government and managing day-to-day affairs under the general direction of the Select Board. The Town Administrator will support the Select Board, ensure compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, interface with government agencies and the public and manage municipal operations for the Town. Attendance at certain evening meetings is required.

Candidates should have knowledge and competence in municipal finance and budgeting, project management, human resource/personnel administration, Massachusetts municipal law, and intergovernmental and community relations. The successful candidate should possess five (5) years of municipal management and leadership experience, or similar responsibilities in a public or government agency. A degree in public administration or a related field is preferred. An equivalent combination of education, training and experience which demonstrates possession of the required knowledge, skills and abilities may also be considered. This is a full-time position with benefits. Starting salary range of \$70,000 – \$85,000 commensurate with qualifications and experience.

Submit resume and cover letter as a pdf attachment to **nboersig@townofrussell.us**. Applications must be received by July 16, 2026. The Town of Russell is an equal opportunity employer.

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The 25th Continental doing a musket drill presentation.



The reading of the Declaration of Independence.

250TH ■ from page1
enjoy,” she said. “I get to share it with my town and the rest of my country. We’ve got people today from all over the place, not just Agawam. And having the reenactors here is, it just helps to submerge people in what it was like in 1776. Which is hard for them to see, for people to feel, especially kids. It’s important to me to be able to share that with them and bring history to life.”
“For us, it’s very important to us to be celebrating it this

way and sharing it and teaching about this,” said Caren Harrington, a reenactor with the Green Valley Homestead Living History Group. Green then points out ways in which women showed their patriotism during the revolution era of our country, “It’s a very common misconception that most women had the skill of spinning, and they didn’t, because they were purchasing fabrics from England. So, to be honest with you, I don’t want to spin. It’s

a lot of work to process fabric to process fibers to make linen. It’s a lot of work to do that. But to show my patriotism, I am going to start producing homespun fabric.” During a time in which women were silenced, this act of boycotting English goods was a way for women to show this support of America and resistance against England. Harrington highlights this as one of the contributions to the early days of America that many women made.



Jenny Green, a member of Green Valley Homestead Living History Group, explains the clothing of the time.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA



Above: President of Agawam Historical Association David Cecchi and member of the 25 Continental Rob Keenan.



Left: The Liberty tree at the Thomas Smith house.



Caren Harrington's historically accurate Independence Day cake.

AUTHOR ■ from page1

able conversations, but they’re important conversations that help you to understand who someone really is,” Grout said. “Understanding their belief system, their soul, their core, sometimes has to do with these uncomfortable conversations. Whether you have a terminal illness, living is a terminal illness. And, you know, it’s like, you want to enjoy it the best you can. Whatever this terminal illness is. You want to enjoy your days and then you want to be able to communicate what you need. And some people don’t need to, but, you know, I think it’s important.”
Grout shared during her presentation that she was inspired to write, “A Bean in

my Breast,” through her own journey of those around her, some loved ones, dealing with breast cancer. “Writing the story allowed me to understand why she didn’t get her treatment and more importantly, it allowed me to understand that sometimes you have to accept someone else’s journey even if you don’t accept that journey. So, it was a big learning thing for me. Like I said, I do write things where I need an answer.”
Grout also hosts a podcast called “yWrite” where she speaks with writers about what drives them to continue writing. She told us a little about this project of hers, “I started it because I wanted to know why people were writing because people

were asking me why I was writing. I didn’t have a real answer for my first book. So, I started calling authors, and saying, ‘Hey, want to meet at Panera for a cup of coffee? How did you put this book together?’ And I started asking them questions and realized, writers want to share their experience. And when they share their experience, it helps other writers.”
Adult Services Library Associate Kristen Frost shared why she believes this was presentation that discussed difficult topics such as grief and death was so important to bring to the community and start that conversation.
“The library is a space that holds something for everyone,” Frost said. “There are times in our lives when

we need to deal with difficult topics, and when those situations arise, the library hopefully will have materials and programs that can be utilized. As uncomfortable as thinking about death and dying may be, it is a necessary conversation. Angela’s presentation touched on these topics, and I believe her book may help folks who find themselves faced with similar circumstances. At the very least, her book opens up the possibility to begin a conversation. In the past, the library has also held death café sessions to give people a comfortable place to talk about any aspects of death and dying, which were greatly appreciated and well attended.”
Frost then shared the pro-



Angela Grout's latest book.

TURLEY PHOTO BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA

cess of putting together this presentation with Grout, “Angela stopped into the library one day to introduce herself and to inquire about having an author talk about her newest book. Although we had her previous titles in our collection, she hadn’t presented here to talk about her work. We were able to

get her a date right at the start of our summer reading program.”
Grout put a lot of thought and effort into her book, “A Bean in My Breast,” trying to start those difficult conversations and grapple with her own acceptance of events around her.

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:

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 ba-

sis. 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 remembering 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 hurls 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