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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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This massive puddle in the Geissler's parking lot was one of the remaining hazards late on Monday morning as flash floods wreaked havoc in town. If any residents would like to submit more photos of storm damage, please send them to aan@turley.com.

TURLEY PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

AGAWAM – Early Monday morning, many residents in town and throughout the region were woken up by sounds of heavy rains, wind, and thunder as storms caused issues in the early morning hours, with flash flooding issues continuing into the morning hours, affecting commuters and requiring motorists to have to seek alternate routes while water levels took time to drain from streets. Suffield St., near the intersection of Silver St., was among the areas that had street flooding. There were also reports of houses affected by the flooding waters as well as downed trees throughout the community. On one of the reports stated a horse stable suffered heavy damage on Equine Blvd., destroying the basement of resident Holly Thompson.

Increase for ordinance violators proposed

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – It's been a long process to get an e-bike ordinance going in the community, and the Agawam Police Department, earlier this year, looked to inform the public about the new ordinance before the months got really warm and bike use significantly increased.

Now, Mayor Christopher Johnson and City Councilor Dino Mercadante want to take things a step further.

The pair have sponsored an ordinance update that would increase fines for those who violate the ordinance multiple times.

According to the proposal, which hit the city council on Monday, Aug. 3 and will be heard in a public hearing next month, a \$50 fine for the first offense, \$100 for the second offense, and \$300 for third and subsequent offenses.

E-BIKES | page 6

Energy saving tips for the summer

By Quinn Suomala
Correspondent

Many people see their energy bills increase in the summer due to the amount of appliances needed to keep their homes cool.

National Grid offered some advice to help keep energy costs low.

They suggested that you only run full loads in the dishwasher and dryer, setting your refrigerator temperature to 38 degrees Fahrenheit and utilizing a toaster oven to reheat or cook small meals, as

ENERGY | page 6

Rain does not spoil Bennie and the Jets performance

By Christina Gioscia
Correspondent

AGAWAM – Last Wednesday evening, July 29 Bennie and The Jets performed at the Polish American Club as part of this year's Agawam Summer-Fest Concert series. The performance was originally scheduled for School Street Park but was moved due to poor weather. The band is comprised of Greg Ransom

as Elton John on vocals, Dan Moraski on guitar and vocals, Mike Gibbs on bass and vocals, and Steve Lawton on drums and vocals. This band truly brought the songs they covered to life Wednesday evening. Attendance was high despite the weather and location change, with community members showing up to support Bennie and the Jets as well as the Summer-Fest concert series.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA

Attendees Dorris and Jim Donovan at the July 29 Summerfest Concert at the Polish American Club. Please see more photos on page 10.



Greg Ransom and Steve Lawton perform for the crowd



The second group to complete this year's APL Escape Room.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Library hosts Escape Room program

By Christina Gioscia
Correspondent

AGAWAM – On July 29, the Agawam Public Library began their series of Escape Room events. Escape Rooms are the perfect group activity for friends and family, especially on rainy days. These are held every summer and are open to small groups. There are sessions for adults as well as teenagers. Registration is required and can be completed on the library's website. Adult Services Library Associate Charlie Pope facilitates this program each summer.

"This is the third summer that I've created an escape room at Agawam Public Library, and it has become one of my favorite programs to plan and implement," Pope said. "I've always enjoyed writing mysteries, and making an escape room is just like writing one big mystery story filled with clues and red herrings and suspects. Getting to watch how folks go about solving that mystery was such fun, because each team had a completely unique approach and yet they all achieved the same result in the end."

Pope explained the process of creating the story for the escape room was.



A bulletin inside the Escape Room, showing a piece of the puzzle that attendees had to solve.

Pope says, "Once I knew what the premise of the escape room would be, it was a matter of finding the 'flow' of the room: figuring out what clues would lead to other clues, making sure those clues matched the plant/botany theme of the room and didn't feel out of place, and testing each puzzle several times to ensure they worked properly. My coworkers very kindly volunteered to be my test subjects and were invaluable when

it came to ensuring that the room was ready to go for our library patrons."

Pope shares how the escape room program connects to Agawam Public Library's overall summer theme this year

"The theme was inspired by the library's summer reading challenge theme," she said. "Which was 'Plant a Seed, Read.' It made me consider famous books or sto-

ESCAPE | page 6



FastenMaster makes donation to tech schools

AGAWAM – FastenMaster, a division of OMG Building Products, and a leading manufacturer of fastening solutions for professional contractors, has donated \$475,000 worth of its MVP Multipurpose Wood Screws to several local high school vocational programs, as well as to the Habitat for Humanity, and through the Home Depot Foundation to support ToolBank Disaster Services, a national non-profit organization that provides tools, equipment and expertise for disaster relief and assistance in communities throughout the country.

Donations were made to Roger L. Putnam Vocation-

al Technical Academy in Springfield, Westfield Technical Academy in Westfield, and Franklin County Technical School in Turners Falls. In total about 1.5 million fasteners were donated to the three schools, as part of the company’s commitment to teaching the next generation of PRO contractors.

“FastenMaster is proud to support these local schools and organizations,” said David Ellis, vice president of sales and marketing for FastenMaster. “It’s particularly gratifying to see vocational school enrollment on the rise since it’s critical that vocational students have an opportunity to practice actual building techniques with

the real-world products that top PROs use. In addition, we provided nearly 2.5 million fasteners to the ToolBank through the Home Depot Foundation, and to Habitat for Humanity, which will go a long way towards helping those in need.”

MVP fasteners are general purpose construction fasteners designed for maximum connection strength, durability and corrosion resistance. They can be used in interior or exterior applications and are ideal for a wide range of projects, including framing, decking, fencing, and cabinetry, among others.

FastenMaster, a division of OMG Building Products LLC, is a leading manufac-

turer of fastening solutions for professional contractors. Designed and manufactured in Agawam, Mass. and Addison, Ill., FastenMaster products span structural fastening, hidden deck and trim systems, and framing solutions — engineered to help PROs build faster, stronger, and to code. The company’s product lines include the LOK family of structural wood screws, Cortex hidden fastening systems, ZipClip hidden deck fasteners, and the FrameFAST framing connector system, all backed by the ProjectLife™ Guarantee.

For additional information please contact FastenMaster at 800.518.3569 or visit www.FastenMaster.com.

Coalition hosting candidate forum

EASTHAMPTON – A coalition of Hampshire County Democratic Town Committees (DTCs) will host a candidate forum featuring individuals running in multiple local races, providing voters with a comprehensive opportunity to hear directly from those seeking to represent their community ahead of the September 1st Primary. It will be held at Easthampton High School on Aug. 10 from 6 to 8 p.m.

Designed to promote broad voter education, the forum will bring together candidates for U.S. Repre-

sentative, Governor’s Council, State Representative, and State Senate. The event will allow voters to compare perspectives across races in a single, accessible setting.

Candidates for U.S. Representative and Governor’s Council, the two September 1st contested primaries, will have an opportunity to present their campaigns and answer questions.

Other candidates in the district running for election will introduce themselves. The moderated portion will be followed by a candidate meet and greet.

Cooper’s accepting supply donations for Homework House

AGAWAM – For a limited time, Cooper’s Gifts, Apparel, Home of Agawam, Mass., is accepting classroom supply donations for Homework House, which is located at 54 North Summer Street Holyoke, MA 01040.

Homework House strengthens our community by promoting educational success and providing free tutoring and mentoring for children living in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. Homework House provides a safe and nurturing place for children to grow and learn. Donations will be collected at Cooper’s now through August 31st . “We invite everyone to help out Homework House and be entered to win a \$100 Cooper’s Gift Card,” said Kate Gourde, owner of Cooper’s Gifts, Apparel, Home.

Items to keep their class-

rooms clean and well stocked; disinfectant wipes, facial tissues, paper towels, copy paper, dry erase markers and erasers, card games such as Uno, Go Fish and flash cards, are their current needs. “We hope that while people are out purchasing items to send their children back to school with, that they will consider picking up a few extras for the Homework House. And, you’ll be entered into our raffle!” said Gourde.

“We will swap a raffle entry for every item donated to the Homework House. One lucky winner of a \$100 Cooper’s gift card will be notified on Sept. 1. Especially for people in the Greater Springfield area, it’s easier to bring donations here, and we are open 7 days a week,” Gourde said. Items may be brought to the shop anytime up until August 31. Cooper’s is located at 161

Main St., Agawam, Mass., and is open daily 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sundays 12 to 4 p.m.

“This drive coincides with Homework House as our August Round-Up charity; so, it’s the perfect time to spread the word about their mission and really help them out,” Gourde said. Each month Gourde chooses a local charity to receive the profits of the store’s Round-Up Program through which customers are invited to round up their purchase total to the nearest dollar amount. Gourde will then match 50% of the total collected. The program has donated more than \$68,000 to local organizations since its inception in 2014. More information on the Round Up program and how to nominate a charity may be found on Cooper’s website www.coopers-gifts.com/round-up/.

Feline Friends Summer Fun Raffle

AGAWAM – The following was submitted by Feline Friends:

Thanks to everyone who took the time to enjoy wonderful food from E.B.’s on July 15 as part of their generous Give Back Wednesday Program. We appreciate being included in the program.

We will be selling raffle tickets for our Summer Fun Raffle through Aug. 14. Tickets are \$10 each. Prize value is \$25. Winners will be chosen by our raffle wheel daily from Aug. 16 to 31. Winners will be announced on Facebook daily as well as being contacted personally.

We are incredibly grateful for the response to our ap-

peal 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 June and the first 3 weeks of July: Patricia Chraplak, Joan Eckert, Deborah Hasty, Amelia McMeans, Daniel Guidera, Judith Clini, Kar-

en Davis, Joanne Daurizio, Judith Roberts, Sandra Thomas, Katie Heald, Ken Kurowski and Irene Fisher, Joanne Lamson, Big Y Community Bag Program (East Main St., Westfield store), P.J. and Bernie Scantlen, Eva R, Sandra Robb, Heidi Malinowski, Glen Birk, Sara Teitelbaum in memory of Rocco, Dawn Struck, Wyn-ter Manyak, Crystal Mengele, Carol Roy 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.



NAMI offering education program

HOLYOKE – NAMI Western Massachusetts is pleased to offer their NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program in person, starting Tuesday, Sept. 15, from 6 to 8:30 p.m. in Greenfield.

What is the NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program?

NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, 8-session educational program for family, significant others, and friends of people with mental health conditions. It is a designated evidenced-based program. This means that research shows that the program significantly improves the

coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to a person with a mental health condition.

NAMI Family-to-Family is taught by NAMI-trained family members who have been there and includes presentations, discussions, and interactive exercises.

Great Reads event set for Sept. 29

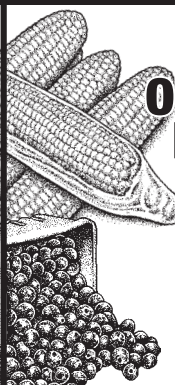
AGAWAM – The Agawam Public Library is pleased to announce its selection as a partnering library with the Massachusetts Center for the Book for the “Great Reads from Great Places” initiative. Each year the Massachusetts Center for the Book

selects a title to represent the Commonwealth at the annual Library of Congress National Book Festival and provides free copies of the book to area libraries for use in discussion groups and community programming. This year’s title is Nothing More of This Land: Community, Power and the Search for Indigenous Identity by Joseph Lee. The Agawam Public Library will host a book discussion and virtual Q & A watch party with the author on Tuesday, Sept. 29 at 6 p.m. in the Clini Community Room. Anyone interested in registering for this book discussion and event is encouraged to stop by the library information desk to pick up a free copy of the book and discussion guide (while supplies last).

Before Martha’s Vineyard became one of the

most iconic vacation destinations in the country, it was home to the Wampanoag people. Today, as tourists flock to the idyllic beaches, the island has become increasingly unaffordable for tribal members, with nearly three-quarters now living off-island. Growing up Aquinnah Wampanoag, journalist Joseph Lee grappled with what this situation meant for his tribe, how the community can continue to grow, and more broadly, what it means to be Indigenous.

Registered participants will be invited to participate in an exclusive Q&A with Joseph Lee on September 29th at 6pm. This discussion series is part of the 2026 Great Reads MA program, sponsored by the Massachusetts Center for the Book.



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Garden Club meeting

AGAWAM – The next meeting of the Agawam Garden Club will be held Tuesday, Aug. 11 at 6:30 p.m. at the Agawam Public Library 750 Cooper Street. After a short business meeting Dan Ziomek, Manager of Sugarloaf Gardens in Sunderland, will present a program on planting for birds and pollinators. An excellent speaker, Dan has over 30 years in the retail gardening industry and loves to share his vast knowledge. All meetings are open to the public and not restricted to Agawam residents.

ACAA's Pioneer Valley Art Festival to feature local history

AGAWAM – History will have a place of honor at the Pioneer Valley Art Festival.

Historical societies of the Pioneer Valley History Network will be featured participants in the Agawam Community Artists and Artisans' 6th annual Festival.

This year's Art Festival will take place on Friday, August 21 from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. and on Saturday, August 22 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Polish American Club, 139 Southwick Street, Feeding Hills, MA.

Festival visitors will have an opportunity to meet local historians, learn about our region's rich heritage, and enjoy fascinating stories from our past in the Pioneer Valley.

Among the participants will be Agawam Historical Association President David Cecchi, a local author who has written several books about Agawam and its beginnings.

David Cecchi

Cecchi's books include "The Big E: Eastern States Exposition"; "Around Agawam and Feeding Hills"; "Agawam and Feeding Hills Revisited"; and "Riverside Park". Copies will be for sale, with proceeds donated to the Agawam Historical Association. An addition, Cecchi will bring information about the Agawam Firehouse Museum, housed at 35 Elm Street in Agawam. He will also include information on the Thomas

Smith House, a home built in 1757 and situated at 251 North West Street in Feeding Hills, and which now operates as a living history museum by the Agawam Historical Association.

Rob Keenan and 25th Continental Regiment

Rob Keenan and members of the 25th Continental Regiment will be in full uniform at their 'encampment,' where visitors will experience Revolutionary War history through authentic living history with interpretations and demonstrations. Members will be firing muskets during both days of the festival.

Carol Martin

Carol Martin, founder of the Westfield Museum's

'Westfield Historic Industries Preservation Project', will offer information on how Westfield became known as the Whip City. She will bring examples of old whips and artifacts.

Helena Alves and Patty Solomon

Helena Alves and Patty Solomon, from Deerfield Teachers' Center in Old Deerfield, will be on hand for the Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association and Indian House Memorial. They will discuss the history of the woman's suffrage movement and how it swept the nation. One of the first national women's rights conventions was held was held in 1850 in Worcester, MA, welcoming more than

1,000 participants from 11 states.

Polly Wozny

New to the Festival will be the Swift River Valley Historical Society. Polly Wozny will explain how the Quabbin Reservoir was created in the 1930s to supply drinking water to the Greater Boston area. The project displaced over 2,000 residents of the towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich and Prescott.

Artists

There will be 70 artists and artisans in attendance at the Art Festival. Admission and parking will be free of charge.

Further information can be obtained by contacting Ceil Rossi at tocarefree2@hotmail.com.

Summer fun for adults continues in August at library

AGAWAM – Feeling the heat? Stop by the library for a cool place to relax and check out our programs and activities while you're here!

Are you curious about the art of Bonsai? Have you purchased a big box store Bonsai tree only to become frustrated when it died? We've got you covered! Join us on Thursday, Aug. 6 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room for The Beauty of Bonsai with the Pioneer Valley Bonsai Society. Come view a number of Bonsai trees showing the various styles, and learn how to care for Bonsai trees (styling, soil, pots, etc.). This presentation will be led by the Pioneer Valley Bonsai Society's President, Doug Taylor, and Vice-President, Joe Polaski. Registration is required.

We're continuing our celebration of America's 250th anniversary with a very special and exclusive **Screening & Discussion of Ken Burns' The American Revolution**. This presentation offers a sweeping overview of the series, illuminating its central themes and inspiring reflection on the ideas, struggles, and ideals that continue to define the American story. There will be a 46-minute film selection screening followed by a discussion reflecting on the Revolutionary War and its lasting significance, co-facilitated by Robert Keenan,

captain and president of the 25th Continental Regiment reenactment group. This event will take place on Monday, Aug. 10 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room and registration is required. For full production and funding credits of this landmark documentary series, please visit agawamlibrary.org.

We are thrilled to partner once again with Ashland Public Library, this time for the virtual event **Act Worthy of Yourself: An Author Talk with Salina B. Baker**. Baker will discuss her book *Act Worthy of Yourself: A Novel of Dr. Joseph Warren and an American Rebellion*. This historical biographical novel brings Bostonian Dr. Joseph Warren to life in vivid, intimate detail—a healer who became a warrior, a scholar who became a revolutionary, and a man whose courage helped give birth to a nation. This event will take place on Monday, Aug. 10 at 7 p.m. on Zoom and registration is required. We hope you can join us for this fascinating conversation!

We have two pop-up qigong sessions this month that will help participants build strength and flexibility while balancing mind, body and spirit. **Evening Qigong** will take place on Wednesday, Aug. 12 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room. This mindful standing prac-

tice will guide you from the busyness of day to the quiet stillness of night. Through deep breathing and rhythmic movements, we will unwind stress and tension for a calm, restful sleep. Please register to attend. **Morning Qigong** will take place on Tuesday, Aug. 18 at 11 a.m. in the Clini Community Room. Using simple but dynamic exercises, deep breathing, and flowing movements we will both awaken and calm the body and mind for the day ahead. This is a drop-in session and no registration is required. Participants should bring a yoga mat (if desired) and water for these classes.

Come take a coast-to-coast adventure without leaving the public library. **America is Wild! with Author Brad Timm** is an engaging, visually rich presentation inspired by his newly released book, *America is Wild!* In this interactive and entertaining program, wildlife ecologist Brad shares some of his favorite animals and plants from across the country, offering a fresh perspective on the wildlife and landscapes we share our amazing planet with. Perfect for families, lifelong learners, and nature lovers of all ages, this presentation sparks curiosity, encourages learning, and inspires a deeper connection to the natural world around us. This event will

take place on Thursday, Aug. 20 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community. Please register to attend.

Celebrate The 250th Anniversary of America's Beer with Advanced Cicereone Em Sauter and learn about the role of beer and brewing in American history. Starting from the Pilgrims landing on Plymouth Rock (because they were out of beer!) to the modern craft brewery movement and the beers we love today, beer has been woven throughout the fabric of American history. This event is a collaboration between the Agawam Public library and the Agawam Municipal Golf Course and will take place on Monday, Aug. 24 at 6:30 p.m. at the golf course. Beer samples will be available. Registration is required as space is limited.

Are you looking to dedicate some time to your body and mind? Join us on Monday, Aug. 31 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room for **Gentle Yoga with Jay!** This beginner-friendly class is designed to help you stretch, move, breathe, and unwind in a supportive environment. Whether you're stepping onto the mat for the first time or have years of experience, all levels are welcome. Modifications will be offered so everyone can practice comfortably. Please bring a yoga mat, yoga blocks, and water. This

special class is a collaboration between Agawam Public Library, Studio One Agawam, and Nest of Peace Yoga, and registration is required.

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. Tea & Trivia returns on Tuesday, Aug. 18 at 6:30 p.m. and Wednesday, Aug. 19 at 2:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room.

We'll have a couple of rounds of both **Jeopardy and pub-style trivia**; 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? Register to attend our **Writers Group hosted by author Katherine Anderson** on Thursday, August 20th at 6PM in the Peirce Conference Room.

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 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 read-

ing or just want to come in for the reading time, all are welcome. Registration is preferred but not required.

This month's **Virtual Author Talk Series** continues with a riveting conversation on Tuesday, Aug. 25 at 2 p.m. with award-winning biologist Beronda Montgomery as we discuss her book, *When Trees Testify: Science, Wisdom, History, and America's Black Botanical Legacy*. Combining the wisdom of science and history with stories from her own path to botany, Montgomery talks to majestic trees, and in this unique and compelling narrative, they answer. Don't miss out on this insightful discussion about Black history and botanical mastery!

Mystery and thriller readers take note: **bestselling author Lucy Foley** will discuss her take on one of Agatha Christie's beloved detectives in her brand new Miss Marple mystery, *Murder at the Grand Alpine Hotel*. Join us on Thursday, Aug. 27 at 2 p.m. for this thrilling conversation. To register to attend any or all of these virtual talks, please call the library or visit library.org/agawamlibrary.

Thank you to the Agawam Center Library Association and the Friends of the Agawam Library for sponsoring select library programs. We are closed Saturdays in the summer.

Class of 1967 to hold reunion in October

AGAWAM – Agawam High School Class of 1967 will be holding its 60th reunion in October 2027. We are seeking our classmates that have

not been contacted recently. Please contact John DeVecchi with your name, address, and phone number(s) to agawam67@aol.com.



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Opinion

Guest Column



When should my wife file for spouse benefits?

Dear Rusty:

My wife is 66 (born February 1960) and started taking Social Security retirement benefits just over one year ago at age 65.

She was a stay-at-home Mom for most of her adult life. I turned 62 this past March and received my first SS payment recently for a May 2026 start. We are scheduled to meet with SSA in late July to initiate spousal benefits because my wife's current benefits are less than 50% of mine.

We also have an adult disabled son, who receives Supplemental Security Income and Social Security benefits (this split in benefit sources happened after my wife filed - that whole process was confusing and we don't understand it).

My question relates to spousal benefits (I was a career finance person but don't completely understand these rules). We were going to file in July but is there any benefit to waiting until she turns 67? And will her 50% benefit be 50% of my lower benefit due to my filing at 62 or is that based on another amount?

Signed:

Confused Finance Guy

Dear Confused:

First, be aware that your wife's spousal benefit will be based on her age when she claims it, and half of your Full Retirement Age, (although you claimed at 62, her benefit as your spouse will still be based on your FRA entitlement).

Because she claimed her SS retirement at 65, your wife will not get 50% of your FRA entitlement; rather she will get her own reduced SS retirement benefit (which was reduced by about 13% from her FRA entitlement) plus a "spousal boost." The amount of that "boost" will be the difference between her own FRA entitlement and half of your FRA entitlement, but that boost amount will also be reduced because she will be claiming in July before her FRA.

Your wife will reach her FRA in February 2027, so by claiming her spousal boost in July her boost amount will be reduced by about 5% and the "boost" will be added to her already reduced SS retirement about. The result will be your wife's benefit as your spouse will be less than 50% of your FRA entitlement. And, FYI, your wife will be automatically deemed to be filing for her spousal benefit, she will not be able to defer claiming it.

As your son is now collecting SS benefits based on your wife's personal SS record, you should ask Social Security to switch him over to payments based on your

record because you have the higher SS benefit.

FYI, because your son is now receiving Supplemental Security Income, the SS disability benefit he receives will offset by his SSI benefit, and the payment amount will consist of two sources - SSI and SSDI. Nevertheless, he cannot get more than 50% of your SS retirement amount and will likely be affected by the Family Maximum, which may further reduce his SSDI entitlement.

Your wife's benefit as your spouse will also be affected by the "Family Maximum," which limits how much can be paid on any one person's SS record (on your SS record).

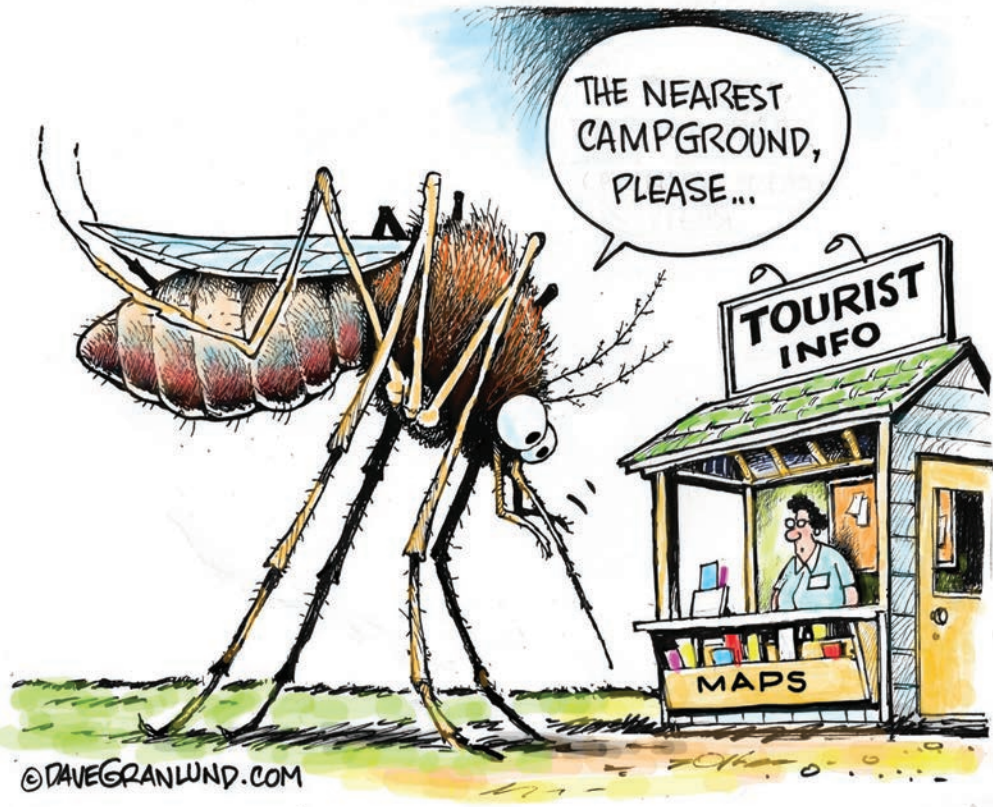
That also means that your wife will not get a full 50% of your FRA entitlement; rather she will get less because the family maximum limits how much all your dependents can receive to somewhere between 50% and 88% of your FRA benefit amount (after subtracting your own SS entitlement).

That also means that your son's SS payment, as well as your wife's SS payment as your spouse, will be reduced to less than 50% of your FRA entitlement. SSA will be able to guide you through the Family Maximum calculations for both your son and your wife when you meet.

To recap all of this: a) your wife will be automatically deemed to be filing for her spousal benefit; she cannot delay until her FRA. b) her amount as your spouse will be less than 50% of your SS FRA entitlement. And c) both your wife's and your son's SS benefit will likely be also affected by the Family Maximum and, thus, be less than half of your FRA entitlement.

Nevertheless, it was likely the right decision to claim as you have, considering that your son and wife have been receiving SS benefits for some time now, and both will continue to receive more as your dependents.

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 ssadviser@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.



Guest Column

Privet pruning leads to instruction

Every year when we head off to the Cape, the "yard" talk becomes privets, and bunnies, but that is a whole other column.

When we visited in June, the privets where we stay had been cut way back in an effort to reduce height and width. This trip, I noticed those cuts had grown back nicely, achieving the desired results.

Read on while we revisit a column from the archives on pruning hedges.

A living hedge offers multi-seasonal interest. A number of shrubs suited for hedges flower or have appealing fall leaf color.

Others are evergreen and fulfill the "need for green" even in the offseason.

Some make great homes for wildlife, and others are the perfect backdrop for our holiday decorations.

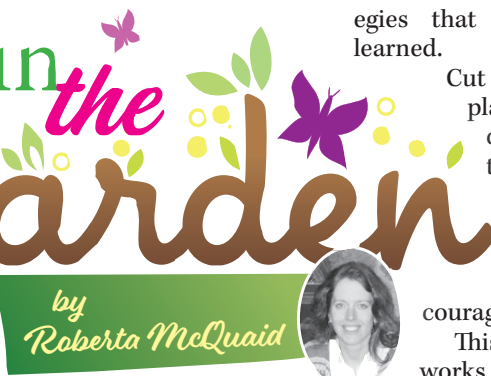
Whatever the case, a hedge doesn't have to be old and overgrown to require your attention. Perhaps it is a little misshapen, or too tall and gangly. Maybe it has lots of dead wood.

Anyway, there is no time like the present to get out the loppers and hand clippers and do some pruning.

Old and overgrown

Hedges that fall into this category should be rejuvenated over the course of three years. The general rule of thumb is to remove no more than one-third of a shrub's mass at one time.

Working from the interior of each plant, cut out the oldest stems first to ground level. Fresh new growth will fill in the gaps.



Repeat in years two and three, until all the old wood has been pruned away. If you prune more drastically than recommended, there will be less leaf power for photosynthesis, and vigor may be reduced; curb your impatience and stick to the three year rule.

Misshapen

Hedges can sometimes be disproportionate and appear top or bottom-heavy. Proper pruning can alleviate this problem.

Before horticulture college, it never occurred to me that I could determine the direction in which my shrub will grow based on the pruning cuts I make. I used to think I was merely shortening stems!

Grab a branch and examine the buds closely. Some point inward while others point out. Voilà!

For a top-heavy shrub make cuts at inward facing buds on the upper section - this will curb outward facing growth. On the lower portion make your cuts at buds facing out to encourage outer branching.

Best cuts are made on a 45 degree angle just after the bud of choice. Try this pruning method on privet.

Too tall and gangly

Hedges that are tall and thin need more than just "a little off the top." Here you will employ pruning strategies that you've already learned.

Cut deep into the plant to bring down its height, then prune the sides of the shrub to outward facing buds to encourage a wider hedge. This technique works especially well with hedges comprised of Rose of Sharon.

Lots of dead wood

The quickest way to prune a hedge has always been to employ shears or electric trimmers and simply remove new growth each season. Unfortunately this method makes for lots of green leaves at the plant's tips but for very little on the interior of the shrub.

If you should decide you want to reduce the overall size of the hedge you will be in for trouble - all that will be visible is dead wood. Start making "windows" now by cutting out large stems back to main branches.

Light will penetrate inside the plant spawning lots of fresh green growth. Eventually you will be able to cut the hedge back to that point. The three year, one-third rule that I spoke of earlier should apply here as well.

Boxwood and yews benefit from this type of rejuvenation.

Kudos to the privet pruner; you did well!

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.

AGAWAM ADVERTISER NEWS

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Agawam Advertiser News

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Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief **Death Notice**

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Agawam Advertiser News welcomes letters to the editor

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

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

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper

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

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

August events for children and teens at the library

AGAWAM – Summer is still in full swing for Children and Teens at the Agawam Library! There is still time to complete your Plant-A-Seed, Read Summer Reading Challenge. Log your reading, write book reviews, contribute to our Community Reading Goal of 6,000 hours, and earn raffle tickets that can be entered to win awesome prizes until Aug. 7.

We will also have lots of fun, free activities for kids and teens happening at the Agawam Library during the month of August.

Below is a listing of everything that's going on for kids and teens this month. Some events require registration. To register, call 413-789-1550 ext 3 or go to our website agawamlibrary.org.

Art & Stories - For ages 3 – 5
Tuesday, Aug. 4 and 18 at 9:30 a.m. - Drop-in

Join us for a short story time followed by an art project. We will explore simple art concepts and experiment with materials. Please wear clothing that can get messy!

Baby Story Time - For birth – 18 mo.
Thursday, Aug. 6 and 20 at 9:30 a.m. - Drop-in

Join us as we learn a little American Sign Language, read stories, sing, & play together.

Dungeons & Dragons – Grades 5-6
Friday, Aug. 7 at 2 p.m. – Registration Required

This is the last session of a

three-session program. Join Dungeon Master Anna for imaginative adventuring.

End-of-Summer Ice Cream Party - For all ages
Friday, Aug. 28 at 3 p.m. - Registration Required

Join us in celebrating the end of summer vacation the Friday before school goes back into session! We will have ice cream and popicles, and coloring materials and board games will be available.

Family Movie: Monsters University (2013) (G) - For all ages
Friday, Aug. 14 at 2 p.m. - Registration Required

Join us for a showing of Monsters University (2013) (Rated G). Feel free to bring

a blanket to sit on, but chairs will be provided. Snacks will be available.

Family Take & Make Crafts - For all ages
First Day of the Week & Thursdays - While supplies last - Drop-in & pick up.

A new Take & Make craft will be available on the first day of each week and again on Thursdays.

Aug. 3 and 6: Fruit Dinosaur Tubes Aug. 10 and 13: Farmer Clothespin Puppet

Aug. 17 and 20: Apple Tree Sign Aug. 24 and 27: Bunny in a Carrot Craft

Aug. 31: School Themed Magnets

Joke Days – For all ages
Wednesdays and Fridays

Tell a joke to the librarian

in the Children's Room and get a small prize.

Teen Craft – Grades 7-12
Wednesday, Aug. 19 at 6 p.m. – Registration Required

Diamond Art Coasters: Diamond Art is a simple and satisfying craft that involves attaching rhinestones to a color-coded background to make a picture. Each participant will choose a coaster to create.

Teen Escape Room: Escape From the Terrible Thicket - Grades 7-12
Monday, Aug. 3 – Registration Required

4 to 5 or 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. Join us for an exciting Escape Room presented by Wicked Fun Games. You've become lost in the forest! Mix potions with the correct

herbs, read the signs of the forest, and translate fairy messages to find your way out. Registration is required.

Teen Take & Make Craft - Grades 7-12
Available starting Monday August 3 until supplies run out

Toddler Time - For 19 mo. - 36 mo.

Mon. Aug. 3, 17, and 31 at 9:30 a.m. - Drop-in.

Join us as we read stories, sing, and play together

Weekly Scavenger Hunts – For all ages

Aug. 3-7 Raccoon-themed Hunt & Riddle

Aug. 10-14 Piggeon-themed Hunt & Riddle

Aug. 31 to Sept.4 School-themed Hunt & Riddle

Historic Thomas Smith House to hold open house on Sept. 12

AGAWAM – On Saturday, Sept. 12 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., there will be an open house held at the historic Thomas Smith House.

The c. 1757 Thomas Smith House and 1920 Delmore Hawthorne Garage will be open for tours.

Master stone carver & gravestone conservator Randall Nelson will be on-site to talk about his work

carving replicas of badly deteriorated gravestones of Revolutionary War veterans as replacements for the original stones.

The National Register-listed Thomas Smith House is one of a few remaining resources from Feeding Hills' eighteenth-century agricultural past, and is significant architecturally as an un-

usually intact example of eighteenth-century building practices and a rare surviving example of mid-to late-eighteenth century Connecticut River Valley design and materials.

The Hawthorne Garage illustrates the property's evolution from agricultural to suburban setting that took place in the early twentieth century.

Agawam Senior Center announces upcoming activities

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

Bingo with guest caller
Monday, Aug. 10

Bingo with special prizes. Guest caller will be State Sen. John Velis.

Movie
Wednesday, August 12 at 1 p.m. in Veterans Hall

Michelle A. McCarthy, RMT – Reiki ~ Healing Connection -
Monday, Aug. 17 by appointment

Monday, Aug. 17 for a Reiki appointment in the library. Must sign up in advance. Reiki is a Japanese stress reduction and relaxation technique. It is based on the idea that a “Life Force Ener-

gy” flows through each of us. Reiki is a “hands on” method of reducing stress, promoting relaxation and creating balance in ourselves and our actions. Appointments start at 11:30 a.m. Call Kristina at 726-2836 to book your appointment. Cost is \$20 per 20-minute session in the library.

Medicare Simplified Presentation
Tuesday, Aug. 18 10 a.m. in Seminar Hall

Host a fun and informative “Medicare Simplified” educational presentation with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts! This presentation is designed to help your seniors navigate the Medicare maze by clarifying core concepts like “What is Medicare?,” “When Can I Enroll?,” and the differences between Medicare Supplement and Medicare Advan-

tage plans. To make learning more engaging, a lively Medicare Trivia Challenge is included with small prizes. Our knowledgeable Medicare Outreach Representative will run this presentation and will be available afterward to answer all questions.

Karaoke and Cousins Lobster
Tuesday, Aug. 18 at 5:30 p.m.

Karaoke with Raven is back. We had such a great time last summer, Raven has decided to come back for another fun filled evening of Karaoke. Cousins Maine Lobster will be here for you to purchase all your favorite seafood delights.

Coffee with the Mayor
Wednesday, Aug. 19 at 10 a.m.

Please join us for Coffee with Mayor Johnson on the following dates in 2026 at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 19.

Registration, volunteer signups open for Run Stanley 5K

WESTFIELD – Stanley Park is excited to announce that registration is now open for the 14th Annual Run Stanley 5K, taking place on Sunday, October 4, 2026. Participants and volunteers can sign up online at <https://runsignup.com/Race/MA/Westfield/Run-Stanley>.

Run Stanley is a beloved community tradition that brings together runners, walkers, families, students, and their four-legged companions for a morning of fitness, fun, and support for Stanley Park. The event welcomes participants of all ages and abilities through a variety of race divisions, including the 5K

Trail Run/Walk, K9 Division, 1-Mile Stroll & Roll, and the ¾-Mile Munchkin Run for elementary school students.

Elementary schools are also encouraged to participate in the School Spirit Challenge. The elementary school with the most registered participants will take home the coveted Run Stanley School Spirit Trophy.

In addition to participants, Stanley Park is seeking volunteers to help make the event a success. Volunteers are needed for a variety of roles, including registration, course marshaling, water stations, finish line support, and event setup

and cleanup. Community members, service groups, students, and local organizations are encouraged to get involved.

As a private nonprofit organization, Stanley Park relies on the support of events like Run Stanley to help maintain its nearly 300 acres of gardens, trails, wildlife sanctuary, and recreational spaces, which are enjoyed by more than 400,000 visitors annually. The park remains free and open to the public year-round.

To register for the race or sign up to volunteer, visit: <https://runsignup.com/Race/MA/Westfield/Run-Stanley>

Don't Miss Out!



The August 23 & 30 issues of the *Agawam Advertiser* will be **DIRECT MAILED** to all residents! This is a great opportunity to reach many potential customers.

CALL WENDY AT 413-283-8393

NOTE EARLY DEADLINES:
August 20 issue deadline is **Friday, August 14.**
August 27 issue deadline is **Friday, August 21.**

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6. Snakelike fish
9. Database management system
13. Social evolution
14. American rocker Grohl
15. Greek personification of compassion
16. Negatives
17. Rescued
18. Self-immolation by fire ritual
19. Assigns tasks
21. Popular type of cigar
22. Discounts
23. The whole quantity
24. New York Giants legend
25. Indicates before
28. Lentils
29. Extremely angry
31. Body part
33. “North Star State”
36. David __, US playwright

38. Lower and raise one's head
39. Private rendezvous
41. In a way, improved
44. A place to play
45. Astronomical period of
46. Automobile
48. Something you can take
49. A radio band
51. Jaws of a voracious animal
52. Short-billed rails
54. Chinese province
56. Shameless
60. Horizontal passage from the surface into a mine
61. Indian respectful titles
62. Fail to entertain
63. Dried-up
64. Central Utah city
65. Southern U.S.
66. German river
67. Necessary for breathing
68. Put into play

CLUES DOWN
1. Curved segment
2. Wings
3. Yellowish volatile liquid
4. Makes less severe
5. Debit note
6. Overhang
7. The nights before
8. Type of light
9. Lacking enthusiasm
10. Tattle
11. Some is “heavy”
12. One who is canonized
14. Indicates date and place of writing
17. “Peace” in Arabic
20. “Olaf” actor Josh
21. Fragmented rock
23. They __
25. Advanced degree
26. Backside
27. Influential architect and design couple
29. An act of undue intimacy

30. Words from which later words are derived
32. 10 meters
34. Neither
35. Fungal sacs
37. The law of God revealed to Moses
40. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
42. A promise
43. Challenges
47. British Air Aces
49. Large bank
50. Served as an omen
52. Cavalry sword
53. Vaccine developer
55. Belgian WW2 resistance leader Jules
56. Italian Seaport
57. Hip joint
58. __ Clapton, musician
59. Insect repellent
61. Constrictor snake
65 “The First State” (abbr.)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE xx

Library to host American 250th webinar for new book

AGAWAM – On Monday, Aug. 10 at 7 p.m., Agawam Public Library will host “America 250th: ‘Act Worth of Yourselves.’”

This is part of the virtual author program with the Ashland Public Library. Registrants participating will receive a link after registering for the event. Go to the

APL website to register.

The Library is so pleased to be starting this 9 week series to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. We’re thrilled to welcome author Salina B. Baker who will be discussing her book, “Act Worthy of Yourselves: A Novel of Dr. Joseph

Warren and an American Rebellion”. This historical biographical novel brings Bostonian Dr. Joseph Warren to life in vivid, intimate detail—a healer who became a warrior, a scholar who became a revolutionary, and a man whose courage helped give birth to a nation. We hope you can join us for this

fascinating conversation.

This program will be recorded. All registrants will receive the recording via email within 48 hours of the program.

You can buy signed books by Salina from Aesop’s Fable, just make a note that you want the books signed when you check out.

About the book: In the summer of 1755, fourteen-year-old Joseph Warren left his family’s farm in Roxbury, Massachusetts, and walked into destiny when he entered Harvard College. Brilliant, compassionate, and driven by an unshakable belief in liberty, he would become one of the most

influential—and tragically overlooked—figures of the American Revolution.

A respected Boston physician, Warren healed the sick by day and challenged the British Empire by night. As a leader of the Sons of Liberty and the radical resistance to English rule, he stood at the center of a growing storm.

E-BIKES ■ from page 1

es for violators of the ordinance.

It also would allow the Agawam Police Department, under certain circumstances, to seize and impound e-bikes that violate the ordinance.

According to the proposal, anyone under the age of 18 can be fined, with the parent or legal guardian of the violator being held responsible in that situation.

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.

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 that this ordinance will help with e-bike education.

“The ordinance is just about safety,” Lieutenant 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.

Greater Holyoke Chamber invites businesses to Annual Chamber Cup

HOLYOKE – The Greater Holyoke Chamber is inviting businesses, professionals, local leaders, and community partners from across Western Massachusetts to participate in the 58th Annual Chamber Cup on Friday, Sept. 25, at Westover Golf Course. Registration is now open for the annual event, which brings together the regional business community for a day of golf, networking, visibility, and relationship-building.

The Chamber Cup offers companies and organizations a valuable way to connect outside the traditional meeting setting. Participants can build business relationships, strengthen team connections, and engage with professionals from across

the region in a relaxed and welcoming environment. The event is open to Chamber members and non-members alike, making it a regional opportunity for businesses looking to expand their reach and community presence.

Businesses can participate in several ways, including registering a foursome, becoming an event sponsor, sponsoring a hole or meal, donating raffle prizes, or volunteering during the event. Each option offers a different path to visibility and engagement, whether a company wants to host clients, recognize employees, promote its brand, or support a signature community event.

The day will include golf at Westover Golf Course,

breakfast, lunch, raffles, and opportunities to connect with business owners, executives, public officials, nonprofit leaders, and professionals from throughout Western Massachusetts. For sponsors and raffle donors, the event provides added exposure before and during the tournament, helping businesses stay visible among a broad and engaged audience.

The Greater Holyoke Chamber encourages businesses to register early, secure sponsorship opportunities, and plan now for participation in the 2026 Chamber Cup. Companies interested in playing, sponsoring, donating raffle prizes, or volunteering can visit holyokechamber.com or contact the Chamber for more information.

Applications open for Holly Wreath Christmas Bazaar

AGAWAM – Agawam Congregational Church is now accepting applications for the Holly Wreath Christmas Bazaar to be held on Saturday, Nov. 21 at 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

If you are interested in participating contact the

church office at 786-7111 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon for an application.

You may pick one up at the church office or request one be sent to you by email.

The church email is office@agawamcong.com.

HCC opens registration for fall 2026 noncredit classes

HOLYOKE – Registration is now open for noncredit professional development and personal enrichment classes at Holyoke Community College for the fall 2026 semester.

The fall calendar begins Tuesday, Sept. 8, with individual classes running on different schedules through

out the semester. Many are available as single sessions that cost as little as \$20.

Class topics include cooking, wine tasting, sewing, painting, piano, dance, conversational Spanish, music technology, voiceover coaching, investing, graphic design, financial literacy, retirement planning, Social

Security strategies, writing, starting a home business, applying to college, mediation, understanding AI (artificial intelligence), K-12 education (professional development), and computer technology (with specific classes geared toward seniors).

Most classes meet in the Kittredge Center for Business

and Workforce Development on the main HCC campus, 303 Homestead Ave, or on Zoom. Cooking and wine tasting classes meet at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, 164 Race St.

To see complete fall course listings and schedules, or to register, please visit hcc.edu/bcs.

ENERGY ■ from page 1

it utilizes less energy than a traditional oven.

It can also be beneficial to cook outside when possible and even use a clothesline to dry clothes, rather than a dryer.

These strategies reduce electrical costs and can help to keep house temperatures lower.

Additionally, switching fan directions in the windows during the day can also help keep temperatures down. Switch the fans to push out hot air during the day and

pull in cool air at night.

Eversource also recommended closing curtains on direct sunlight and turning off the air conditioning when no one is home.

Furthermore, regularly cleaning the AC filters improves air flow and extends the life of the AC unit.

It is also important to check that an AC unit is correctly draining any and all moisture. AC units remove moisture from the air as they work, and incorrect drainage can lead to leaks, mold and a broken AC.

A simple way to prevent

this is when installing a window AC unit, ensure that the unit is tilted backward slightly. This ensures that the water drips down and out, rather than into the room the AC was installed in.

Furthermore, when installing the AC unit people should make sure that there is at least five feet of clearance from walls, trees, hedges or yard ornaments.

If there is not enough clearance it can block airflow and reduce the efficacy of the unit.

Another tip for keeping costs low, as suggested by Lisa

Sullivan from Holyoke Gas and Electric, is sealing any air leaks in windows and doors to help keep all cool air in.

“Additionally, we encourage customers to consider installing a smart or programmable thermostat,” Sullivan said.

Having a programmable thermostat allows people to turn up the temperatures in their home while they aren’t there, effectively cutting down energy costs.

Moreover, when installing a thermostat in a home, ensure that it is out of direct sunlight. Having the thermostat in direct sunlight can

lead to incorrect temperature readings, which then cause an increased energy output.

The thermostat should also be kept away from windows and doors, as drafts from those can also alter temperature readings.

Additionally, many people find themselves adding appliances in the summer to keep on top of the heat.

Having multiple appliances plugged in can cause safety concerns, including power surges or electrical fires.

To avoid these problems, Sullivan recommended that people should avoid plugging multiple high-energy devices

into the same outlet, inspect cords for damage before use, and follow manufacturer’s instructions for installing and operating devices.

“If breakers are frequently tripping, outlets feel warm, or lights flicker when equipment is running, we recommend contacting a qualified electrician to evaluate the home’s electrical system,” Sullivan said.

HG&E also offers a surge protection program that will safeguard appliances. People can learn more about this at <https://www.hged.com/services/electric-service/surge-protection.aspx/>.

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ESCAPE ■ from page 1

ries that feature plants, and immediately the short story Rappaccini’s Daughter by Nathaniel Hawthorne came to mind. The story is about a poison garden that that makes the people exposed to the plants become poisonous themselves. I took that idea of “dangerous plants” and explored how it could be used to create various themed codes and ciphers, what sort of scenarios it might create that people need to “escape” from, and so on.

Pope enjoys the fun of holding the program each

year

“I hope participants had fun and enjoyed working with their teammates to collectively find solutions,” Pope said. “It was really great seeing folks who didn’t know each other at the start become a solid, well-balanced team where everybody contributed something different.”

The escape room series is completely free for people to participate in. Pope explained how this is important for both the community to experience and the library to provide.

“Escape rooms are such unique experiences that, understandably, tend to be on

the pricier side,” Pope says. “However, that can be very limiting for many people who may not have that money to spend. Removing that financial barrier opens up this type of experience to everybody, and allows folks to try something new and discover new interests without pressure,” Pope adds.

Free events like these allow people to come have some fun at the library, in doing this they get to enjoy a day of solving mysteries while supporting the library. For more information about upcoming events at Agawam Public Library



The third group to complete this year’s APL Escape Room.

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SPORTS

Bridget Loughlin pushes a pass.



FIELD HOCKEY



Amelia Dibella guides the ball out of the defensive end.



Gianna Battiste sends a pass away.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY

Summer campaign continues

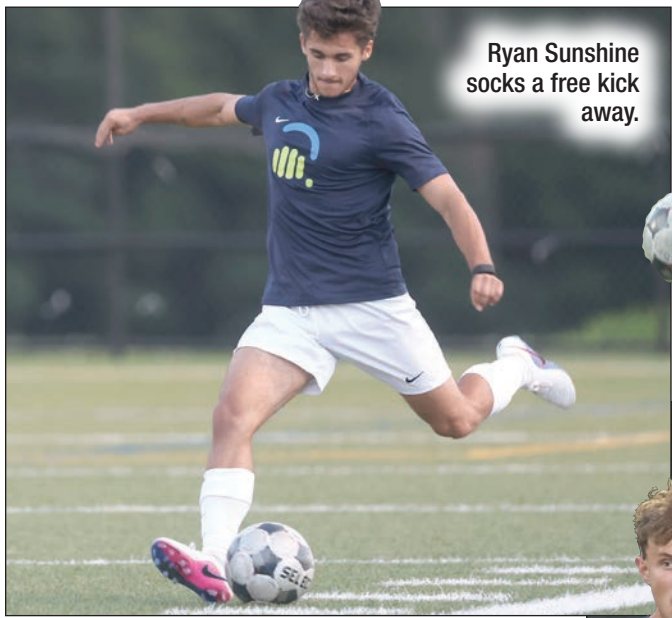
SOUTH HADLEY – The summer field hockey program for high school students, hosted by South Hadley High School, continued last Wednesday with multiple teams in action for short games. Agawam has been a regular participant in the summer league for the past few years.

SOCCER

CF Arbor reaches PVSSL semifinals

SOUTH HADLEY – In last week's PVSSL summer playoffs, the CF Arbor Men's soccer team, which was the No. 4 seed in the playoffs, was able to advance into the semifinals and took on Mt.

Carmel, which defeated CF Arbor by a score of 2-0, ending CF Arbor's chances of reaching the championship game this year. Mt. Carmel would capture this year's men's championship.



Ryan Sunshine socks a free kick away.



Tyler Lewis advances up the field.



Landry Kwawu goes to meet up with a loose ball.



Owen Dieterle heads up the field.



Troy Remillard outplays an opponent for the ball.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPOTOS.COM

BASEBALL



Nate Woodland makes a catch for the A's during regular season action in the Valley Wheel league.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
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Pitcher Mike Bielen fires to the plate.



Sam Ribeiro takes a swing.



Ken Schubert heads to second.



Adam Strain fields a grounder.



Mike Burgos pitches in a game for the Orioles on July 26.

Valley Wheel regular season ends

WILBRAHAM – The regular season has concluded for the Valley Wheel Over-28 Baseball League, one of several adult baseball leagues that plays in the region. This year, with play concluding this past Sunday, the Angels were able to finish the regular season with the top re-

cord, going 11-4. The Angels matched the Twins with the same record, but won two out of three head-to-head for the tiebreaker advantage in the playoffs. The Orioles finished third and the Cubs overcame the A's by tiebreaker for the final of four playoff spots. The semifinals for the

league are set for this Sunday at Spec Pond in Wilbraham. In the first matchup, the No. 2 Twins host the No. 3 Orioles at 2:30 p.m. Then, the top-seeded Angels face No. 4 Cubs at 6 p.m. The championship game will be held on Sunday, Aug. 16 at Spec Pond at 3 p.m.

Valley Blue Sox fall in Game 1 of first playoff series

SANFORD – The Valley Blue Sox (0-1 postseason) dropped Game 1 of their first-round NECBL playoff series against the Sanford Mainers (1-0 postseason), 5-2. This marks the first time that the Blue Sox have lost to the Mainers this season, as Valley won the two previous outings.

The first inning remained scoreless for both teams, but the Mainers got themselves

on the board in the second. Nater Watcher (UConn) hit a 2-run home run out to left field with Steven Kraus (Binghamton) on base to give Sanford an early 2-0 lead.

Valley, however, was able to tie the game back up shortly in the fourth after Mainers’ pitcher Andrew Middleton (Maryland) had a lackluster inning, allowing 2 runs and 3 hits.

Nick Spaventa (UPenn)

got the first run to score when he singled to the short-stop, who made an error, which allowed Esteban Garcia (Boston College) to score and Spaventa to advance to second.

Anthony Tirado (Penn State) then hit a sacrifice fly to right-center, letting Spaventa make his way around the bases to tie the game 2-2.

While it seemed like it was panning out to be a close

game, Sanford broke things open in the sixth. Kraus was up to bat with the bases loaded when he singled to third base, sending Albert De La Rosa (Maine) and Brian Connolly (Rhode Island) home to score, breaking the tie 4-2.

The Blue Sox loaded up the bases once again for Sanford, but it was Valley who sent the run home for the Mainers when Michael Goodman (UMass) hit Bren-

nan Staublely (Elon) with a pitch, forcing in the fifth tally for the Mainers.

While the Blue Sox still had plenty of time to mount an offense, the Mainers’ pitching staff locked it down, retiring batters in order over the final three innings.

“You got to tip your cap when [Sanford’s pitching] does their job,” said head coach John Raiola postgame. “We had some tough at-bats;

it’s tough to string a bunch of hits together against guys like that.”

Though it was not the result the Blue Sox were looking for, Raiola still has full confidence in his team’s ability to win Game 2.

“The fun thing about getting to this time of the year [is] it truly can be any random person who puts one good swing on a ball that changes the game.”

Patrick Emerling picks up win at Monadnock Speedway

WINCHESTER, NH – If there’s any end in sight to Patrick Emerling’s current dominance of the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour, it wasn’t visible Saturday, July 25 at Monadnock Speedway.

The Orchard Park, NY speedster won the fifth annual JDV Productions Duel At The Dog energized by USNE Power Modified main event at the storied high-banked oval, using his third consecutive Tour victory to stay atop the points parade and, as an added bonus, picked up an additional \$5,000 check for topping the three-race JDV Whelen Midsummer Championship.

And he did it with relative ease. Beating Tyler Rypkema to the checkers by 2.321 seconds, Emerling now has 13 Whelen Modified Tour victories to his credit, two of them scored at Monadnock.

With a huge crowd on hand

for the JDV Duel event, other winners Saturday at the fast quarter-mile included Granite State Pro Stock Series rocketman DJ Shaw, and third-year Pro Truck Challenge hot shoe Jason Paquette, who scored his first career Pro Truck victory in front of the thundering Duel at The Dog crowd.

Matt Hirschman set fast time in Whelen Modified Tour qualifying, touring the high banks in 11.836 seconds. The Keystone State hot shoe was one of ten drivers in the 21-car field to turn sub-12 second laps. It was the third week in a row that Hirschman had set fast time but a top-ten redraw Saturday would place him ninth on the starting grid for the night’s 200-lap main event.

Jon McKennedy, a winner of many events at Monadnock over the years, started on the pole, with defending Tour Champion Austin Beers

at his side. At their bumpers, were six-time Champion Doug Coby and Emerling. McKennedy quickly took charge.

With Coby, Beers, and Ronnie Williams riding in his shadow, McKennedy would lead the first 35 laps. Emerling, content to survey the task before him, moved up to third on lap 18.

The first lead change occurred on lap 37, with Beers low-lining to the front. Two circuits later, his mirror was filled by Emerling. He would take charge on a lap 86 restart and never look back. Beers would stay right with him on restarts, racing wheel-to-wheel with the eventual race winner, but each time Emerling would again best him and pull away.

Tyler Rypkema, aboard the fabled Boehler Old Blue, blasted into second on lap 137, actually inching ahead of Emerling to lead lap 148 by inches,

but two go-rounds later, the Empire State star was back in front to stay. Rypkema’s strong second-place performance was his third Whelen Modified Tour runner-up finish of the summer.

Beers held strong to earn the third-place hardware, followed by 15-year-old rookie sensation Paulie Hartwig III and Tommy Catalano.

Positions six through ten went to Teddy Hodgdon, Eric Goodale, McKennedy, Coby, and Stephen Kopcik. Hirschman, after his promising start, finished 12th on the night.

Second generation superstar DJ Shaw did what’s become expected of him in big northeast Pro Stock events Saturday. The Center Conway, NH ace patiently worked his way to the front in the 100-lap Granite State Pro Stock Series main event, pounced at the

first opportunity, and then sped off to victory.

Teen star Cole Robie – the series’ defending champion and defending Duel at the Dog Champion – set fast time in Pro Stock qualifying Saturday with a lap of 12.136 seconds, but a redraw put Tom Carey III and Cory Casagrande up front as the race went green.

Carey, with Casagrande glued to his bumper, had the best seat in the house for the first 72 circuits, but Shaw – from row three – was methodically working his way to the front. Taking third from points leader Jeremy Sorel on lap 11, he was content to sit there until low-lining into turn three 40 laps later to swipe second from Casagrande.

With the same move on lap 73, Shaw was at the front and off to the races, Casagrande kept it close, but there was no stopping Shaw once he was in

front. Saturday’s big Duel At The Dog score was his second GSPSS victory of the summer.

With Casagrande holding strong for a close second, Carey’s strong performance brought him home third. Hudson, NH’s Joey Pole was fourth under the checkers, and Robie completed the top five.

Pro Truck Challenge driver Jason Paquette couldn’t have picked a better day to earn his first win. Racing in front of the huge Duel crowd, the Scotland, CT hot shoe took the lead from pole starter Nate Smith on lap 26 and then held ageless wonder Duane Noll at his bumper the rest of the way.

With Noll finishing glued to the winner’s bumper, Tyler Chapman was third on the day. Four-time winner and series points leader Randy Burr got as high as third before settling for fourth, and Adrien Paradis was fifth in the 16-truck field.

Public Notices

AGAWAM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS LEGAL NOTICE

The Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals will conduct a public hearing on **Monday, August 24, 2026 at 7PM** for all parties interested in the request of James Lewis who is seeking a Special Permit from the Town of Agawam’s Zoning Ordinance, Ch.180-7, B2 (b) for an addition to a nonconforming structure at the premises identified as 4 Lennox St.

Doreen A. Prouty, Chairperson
Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals
07/30, 08/06/2026

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. HD26P1601EA Estate of: Barbara Ann Bradley Date of Death: 04/26/2026 CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons: A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Kristen L Bradley of Boston, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that **Kristen L Bradley of Boston, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain

a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 08/20/2026**. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court.

Date: July 23, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate
08/06/2026

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. HD26P1611EA Estate of: Kathleen E Earnest-Lombardi Also known as: Kathleen Earnest Date of Death: 06/05/2026 CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons: A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Sean Earnest of Denver, NC and Cheri Rogers of Agawam, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that **Sean Earnest of Denver, NC and Cheri Rogers of Agawam, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 08/28/2026**. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: July 30, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate
08/06/2026

Agawam Conservation Commission Notice of Public Hearing

The Agawam Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, August 13, 2026 at 6:00 PM** at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. The purpose of this hearing will be to hear the **Notice of Intent** Application of the Town of Agawam DPW for work to be performed on Adams St over Threemile Brook, subject to the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act.

By Order of
Henry A. Kozloski, Chairman
Agawam Conservation Commission
08/06/2026

Sale of Motor Vehicles PUBLIC NOTICE

Under G.L. C. 255 Sec. 39A Notice is hereby given by USA Towing, 71 Garden St., Feeding Hills, MA, 01030, sale of a motor vehicle(s) pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. C. 255, Section 39A, that on August 31,

2026 at 8:00 a.m., at USA Towing, said motor vehicle(s) will be sold at a private sale to satisfy the garage keeper’s lien for towing, storage and costs of sale .

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Last Known Reg. Owner: Anthony Flores 35 Lonhill St. Springfield, MA 01108
07/23, 07/30, 08/06/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 Docket No. HD26P1634PM In the matter of: Pearl Belton Of: Agawam, MA RESPONDENT (Person to be Protected/ Minor) CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF CONSERVATOR OR OTHER PROTECTIVE ORDER PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, §5-304 & §5-405

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by **Agawam East Rehabilitation Ctr.** of Agawam, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that **Pearl Belton** is in need of a Conservator or other protective order and requesting that **Lisa Judkins** of Shrewsbury, MA

(or some other suitable person) be appointed as Conservator to serve **With Surety** on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is disabled, that a protective order or appointment of a Conservator is necessary, and that the proposed conservator is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 a.m. on the return date of **08/26/2026**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person’s right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.

Witness, Hon. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: July 29, 2026
Rosemary A. Saccomani, Register of Probate
08/06/2026

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HUNTINGTON BOARD OF HEALTH is seeking a part-time Transfer Station attendant. 16.33 per hour based on qualifications. Application and Job description are available online at www.huntington.ma.gov. us deadline is 8/18/2026.
Town of Huntington is an Equal Opportunity Employer

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ALL REAL ESTATE advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination." We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.
This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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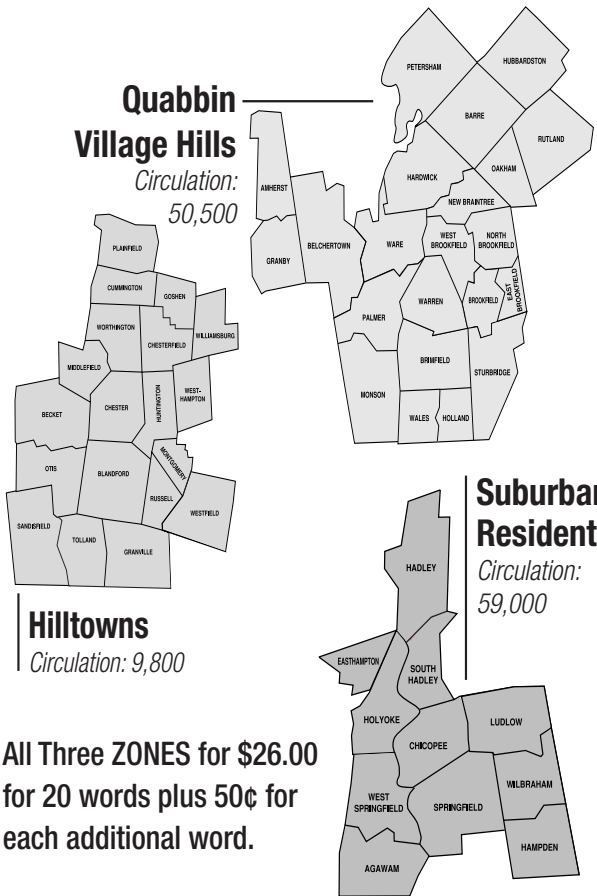
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5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Base Price \$26.00
21 Base Price \$26.50	22 Base Price \$27.00	23 Base Price \$27.50	24 Base Price \$28.00
25 Base Price \$28.50	26 Base Price \$29.00	27 Base Price \$29.50	28 Base Price \$30.00
29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
33 Base Price \$32.50	34 Base Price \$33.00	35 Base Price \$33.50	36 Base Price \$34.00
37 Base Price \$34.50	38 Base Price \$35.00	39 Base Price \$35.50	40 Base Price \$36.00

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Heritage in Bloom: Stanley Park’s Fundraiser tickets available

WESTFIELD – Stanley Park invites the community to join us for Heritage in Bloom: Stanley Park’s Annual Fundraiser, taking place on Saturday, Sept 12 at 5 p.m. in the scenic Beveridge Pavilion.

This signature evening celebrates the history, natural beauty, and enduring

legacy of Stanley Park while supporting the ongoing care and preservation of one of the region’s most treasured public spaces.

Guests will enjoy a memorable evening surrounded by the park’s gardens, beginning with light hors d’oeuvres during cocktail hour and a guided garden tour high-

lighting the beauty, history, and stewardship of the landscape. The evening continues with dinner stations and dessert catered by The Bubble Mug at the Pottery Cellar, along with a cash bar available throughout the event.

Festivities will also include expanded online and in-person raffles, a dynamic

online auction, and the interactive Stanley Park Heritage Challenge, a team-based competition celebrating the park’s history, landmarks, wildlife, and memorable moments from more than 75 years of community impact.

Stanley Park is also honored to welcome Ward Caswell, great-grandson of

founder Frank Stanley Beveridge, as guest speaker. He will share reflections on the park’s founding vision and the shared responsibility of preserving this special community resource for future generations.

“Heritage in Bloom” celebrates the generations of donors, volunteers, staff,

and visitors who have helped Stanley Park flourish. The event underscores a simple message: heritage is what we inherit, and legacy is what we leave behind.

Tickets are now available for purchase online at: <https://spwi.betterworld.org/events/annual-fundraiser-heritage-bloom>

Public invited to Hibernians picnic

HOLYOKE – The Hibernians of Hampden/Hampshire Counties invite the public to attend the Annual Traditional Summer Picnic 2026 on Sunday Aug. 30 at Hamels Pavilion in Holyoke from 1 to 5 p.m., rain or shine. This year for young people ages 1-10 we are offering mac and cheese, chicken fingers and lemonade, face painting, and sculpture balloons.

The giant barbeque will include: hamburgers, hot dogs, potato salad, corn on the cob, tossed salad, dessert, coffee, iced tea, cash bar, music, dancing, raffle.

Featuring The Healy’s “The Institute for Better Living.”

The cost is \$30 for adults and kids 16 and over; kids 10-15 are \$15. For reservations/tickets call Ryan Allen at 413-531-3040 or Fran Hennessey at 413-785-5687 by Aug. 25.

Local author set to celebrate release of new book

HOLYOKE – Local author and public school teacher Lisette Martinez is celebrating the release of her newest book, The Extraordinary Adventures of Emma and the Dragon, just one year after publishing her debut fantasy novel, Born of Fire: The Phoenix Knight.

To mark the occasion, Martinez will host her first-ever book signing on Saturday, Aug. 15, from 2 to 5 p.m. at New Chapters Bookstore in West Springfield.

The Extraordinary Adventures of Emma and the Dragon is a heartwarming children’s adventure that encourages readers to look beyond appearances and discover the value of kindness, courage, and compassion. Written for young readers and families, the story follows Emma as she embarks on an unforgettable journey that challenges expectations and



Lisette Martinez

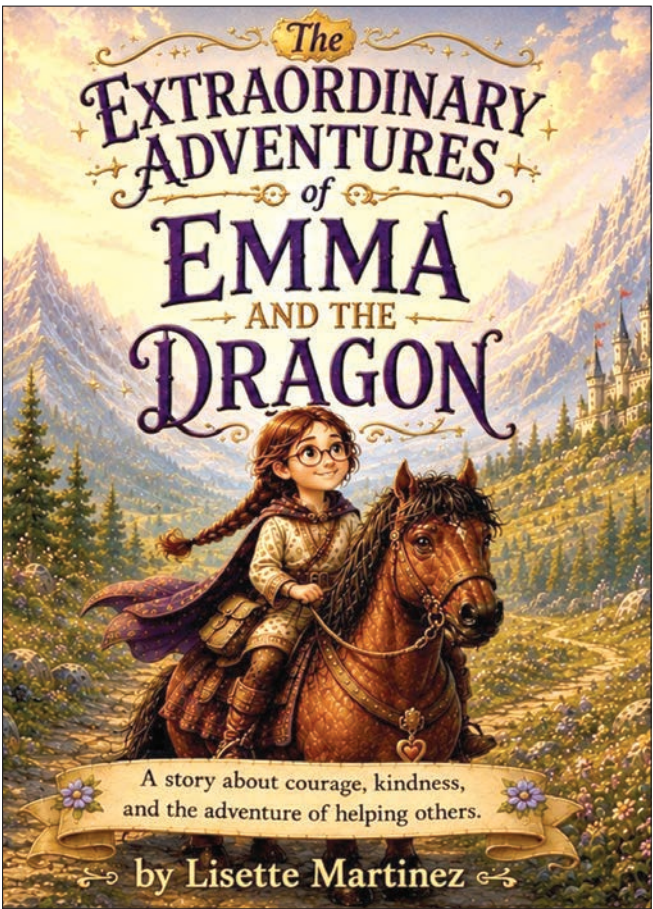
celebrates friendship.

Martinez, who teaches in the local public school system, has long been passionate about inspiring children through literature. Her experience as an educator has shaped her storytelling, with a focus on imagination, character development, and meaningful life lessons.

“My hope is that my books encourage readers of all ages to dream big, show kindness, and never stop believing that ordinary people can make an extraordinary difference,” Martinez said.

Her debut novel, Born of Fire: The Phoenix Knight, introduced readers to an epic fantasy world of courage, sacrifice, and hope. With the release of her first children’s book, Martinez is expanding her reach to inspire younger audiences while continuing to pursue her passion for writing.

The Aug. 15 event offers readers an opportunity to



meet the author, have books personally signed, and celebrate the launch of her latest work. Families, educators, students, and book lovers of all ages are invited to attend.

HCC gallery presents alumni art show

HOLYOKE – The Taber Art Gallery at Holyoke Community College will present “Constellations,” an exhibition of alumni artwork from the HCC Permanent Collection, Aug. 3-21, with a reception Aug. 6, from 5-7 p.m.

The show features paintings by HCC alumni artists from class years 1974 through 2021.

The artwork was produced by alumni after they had graduated from HCC, with the pieces subsequently purchased by the college and added to its permanent collection, which numbers about 400 works.

The Taber Art Gallery, located off the lobby of the HCC Library on the second floor of the HCC Donahue Building, is free and open to the public Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during regular school sessions.



Ruth and Jim Tucker under the cover of the pavilion at Polish American Club.



Donna Fanos and Jim Aiello enjoy the concert.



Laurel Folley and Robert Beachesne at the July 29 Summerfest Concert at the Polish American Club.



Bennie and the Jets including Greg Ransom as Elton John on vocals, Dan Moraski on guitar and vocals, Mike Gibbs on bass and vocals, and Steve Lawton on drums and vocals.

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Location _____

Description _____

Cost _____

Contact name & phone number for more information _____

Please specify if you would like your name and number printed in the paper.