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# AGAWAM

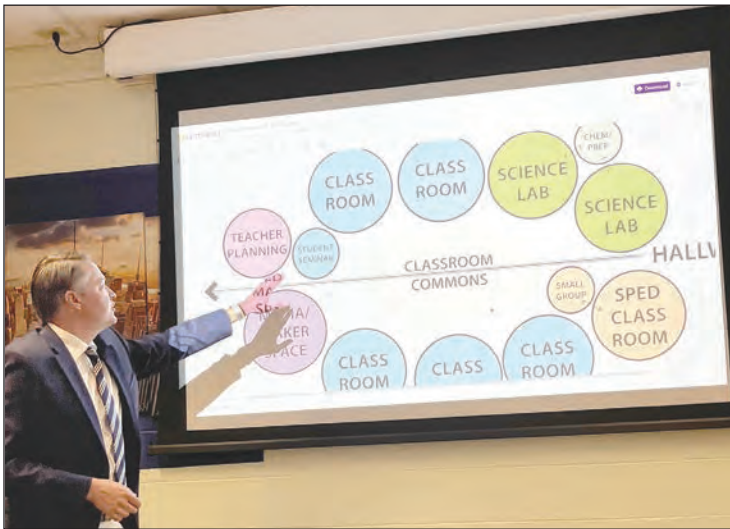
## ADVERTISER NEWS

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# Hefty price tag for school project options



Kent Kovocs, of Flansburgh Architects, goes over options at a recent public forum discussing the Agawam High School project. Agawam is attempting to get partial state funding for a project, whether it be new construction or renovations to update the current building.

TURLEY PHOTO BY QUINN SUOMALA

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Linda Liporto from LeftField and Kent Kovocs from Flansburgh Architects presented the latest Agawam High School project update at the Agawam High School Building Project Community Forum on Monday Aug. 28.

During this presentation they walked through the potential timeline for the project as well as the current options for how to proceed.

Currently, the timeline is set to finalize the project scope, budget and schedule for June of 2024 to then present it to the MSBA in order to secure funding.

The choices for how planning for construction could proceed

are broken down into three series. The first being new construction, and the last two different levels of renovations. Within those series are different options.

New construction was broken down into three options. Options 1A, 1B and 1C.

Option 1A is a “straightforward” option, with the new building being fit around the existing building. The main feedback for this plan is that it feels “shoe-horned in”, according to Kovocs. This option is estimated to cost \$226 million, with the town paying about \$161 million.

The next option, Option 1B, was designed as though there was no existing building on the property. It is estimated to cost \$225 million, with the town paying about \$161 million.

However, with further feedback from students and staff at the high school, a third option was developed.

“We were hearing a lot of ‘we need to create a building that has outdoor learning, that’s not too big,..and so the idea of breaking it into a community wing with the gymnasium, the auditorium, the cafeteria that can be locked off completely, but connected to an academic wing and keeping the heart of the school...so you have a protected area for the building but the kids could still go outside and have outdoor learning within a protected boundary,” Kovocs said.

This option, Option 1C is estimated to cost \$226 million, with

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# ACAA celebrates another successful arts festival

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Agawam Community Arts and Artisans’ Pioneer Valley Art Festival brought color and music to all in attendance.

This festival took place last weekend at the Polish American Club.

The festival began two years ago when President of the Agawam Community Artists and Artisans Ceil Rossi saw the space at the Polish American Club and decided to see if she could make a large festival happen.

From there, the festival only grew. Rossi hand selects each of the vendors who come and sell their art, and she was delighted that over 70 had accepted the invitation to attend this year.

“I go to shows and ask the artists if they would like to come,” Rossi explained. “It’s mostly me vetting them, as I want this show to be a success.”



A variety of animal paintings are displayed by Dave Nevue at this year’s ACAA Arts Festival.

TURLEY PHOTO BY QUINN SUOMALA

Rossi was also proud to announce that this festival was truly dedicated to supporting upcoming artists. The Agawam Community Artists and Artisans donate money to make scholarships for high schoolers going to

college for the visual arts.

“That’s our main goal,” Rossi said. “We need, as a community, to promote the arts and our high school artists.”

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# State funding makes free meals available for all students

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Agawam public schools, as well as all the public schools in the state, will be offering free meals to students.

Students will be able to get one lunch and one breakfast for free throughout the school week.

For breakfast students are able to take four items, a milk, a grain, a fruit and a protein. The students must take at least three of the four items, with one of them being a fruit, in order for their meal to qualify as reimbursable, meaning the school would be reimbursed for the meal by the state.

“So if a student comes through for breakfast and we offer cereal and yogurt, fresh cups of fruit, juice and milk, of those five items they have to take three of them and one of them has to be the fruit,” Director of Food

Services Elizabeth Moulton said.

For lunch, students can take up to five items, a milk, a grain, a fruit, a vegetable and a protein. Similar to breakfast, students must take at least three, with at least one being a fruit or vegetable, for the meal to qualify as reimbursable.

“In order for us to be reimbursed at those rates we have to make sure that the food we are providing to students qualifies as reimbursable,” Moulton said.

Students at the high school are able to go up and get a second meal, should they still be hungry, however that meal would not be free. Nor are the à la carte snacks. Accommodations are made to students who have allergies or dietary restrictions.

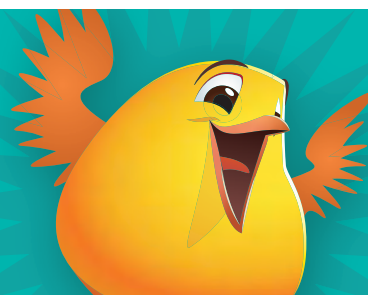
“While operating under the national school lunch program we have to make reasonable ac-

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# September programs for adults at the library

AGAWAM – Celebrate September at the Agawam Library. This month is library card sign-up month. All month long, the library wants to know how you library. Join in virtually and in-person and let us know how you make the most of your library card. Visit the library's website to see our chart of elements.

Choose and print the element that best describes your favorite thing about the library and then post a photo on social media with #HowILibrary. Remember to tag the Agawam Public Library too. We will also have the elements here at the library.

To introduce the many benefits of having a Library card, a Library Tech class will run twice this month. Join Erica as she shows participants What You Can Get with Your Library Card on Thursday, Sept. 21 at 6:30 p.m. and Tuesday, Sept. 26 at 10 a.m.

Join on Monday, Sept. 11 at 6:30 p.m. for What's the History of Your House? Researcher and author, Erin Moulton presents her experiences in researching house histories. Join us as we track the history of a local Masonic Lodge and delve into the history that is underfoot each day. Please register online [www.agawamlibrary.org](http://www.agawamlibrary.org) or by calling 789-1550 X4. This program is sponsored by the Agawam Center Library Association.

Adult Craft Night is back. Monday, Sept. 18 at 7 p.m., create a collage journal. Use it for creative writing or keeping track of the books participants have read. All materials are included, but participants are welcome



to bring any additional collage items of their own to personalize the journal. Space is limited, so please remember to register. This event is sponsored by the Agawam Center Library Association.

In-person Tea & Trivia returns this month. Cher & Charlie host a fun afternoon of challenging wits on Wednesday, Sept. 20 at 2:30 p.m. Join for Jeopardy-style trivia and a game or two of Scattergories. Prizes will be awarded to the winning team.

Author Andrew Lam returns to the Agawam Library on Wednesday, Sept. 20 at 7 p.m. In his latest book, *The Masters of Medicine*, Lam distills the long arc of medical progress down to the crucial mo-

ments that were responsible for the world's greatest medical miracles. He brings to life heroic tales of embattled mavericks who endured ridicule and sometimes risked their own lives to conceive the incredible, life-saving cures we depend on, and often take for granted, today. Dr. Lam is sure to draw a crowd, so please register early. Please register online [www.agawamlibrary.org](http://www.agawamlibrary.org) or by calling 413-789-1550 X4.

The library is pleased to announce that our Mindfulness Outdoor Experience that was rained out this summer has been rescheduled. We welcome Certified Koru Mindfulness instructor Colleen Mollica on Monday, Sept. 25 at 5:30 p.m. for an outdoor experience that will help connect

participants to nature, encourage present-moment awareness and help manage stress. The program will take place in the outdoor classroom behind Agawam High School, rain date is Tuesday, Sept. 26. If you are unfamiliar with the location of the Outdoor Classroom, please call the library or stop in, and a staff member will provide you with that information. Please come dressed for the outdoors; bug spray is suggested. This program is for adults 18+ and is sponsored by the Agawam Center Library Association. Please register online or by phone.

Join expert Russ Cohen here at the library on Thursday, Sept. 28 at 6:30 p.m. for *Nibbling on Native Plants*. Mr. Cohen is an expert forager and author of *Wild Plants I Have Known...and Eaten*. He will present a slide show featuring at least two dozen species of native edible wild plants suitable for adding to your own landscape, or nibbling on as you encounter them in other locales. Russ will bring several samples of foraged goodies made with native species for folks to sip and nibble on. This event is sponsored by the Agawam Center Library Association. Please register online or by calling the library.

Saturday hours begin on Sept. 9. The library will be open Saturdays until mid-June, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Online registration for Adult events opens Sept. 1 at 9 a.m. Please visit [www.agawamlibrary.org](http://www.agawamlibrary.org) to register or call the Information Desk at (413) 789-1550 X4.

## Mattoon Street Arts festival happening in September

SPRINGFIELD – The 50th annual Mattoon Street Arts festival will feature 100 artists and crafters on Sept. 9 and 10 in downtown Springfield. The festivities run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. This free arts and crafts show will include daily performances by strolling entertainers.

This year, the Mattoon Street Arts festival will feature some local performers, including father daughter duo Adelaide Punkin, violinist Stacia Filipiak, double bassist Joel Meginsky, accordionist Paul Grzebieniowski, as well as fifer William Hart.

Held in the city's first historic district, on a street lined with restored brick Victorian row houses, the festival is the oldest arts and crafts show in Western Mas-

sachusetts.

Food items and beverages will be available for purchase from Granny's Baking Table, SouLaod Kitchen, Wicked Whisk, Nosh, Thai Chili Food Truck, Monsoon Roastery, Vegan Pizza Land, Moe's Dogs, P'Froggi by Irida, Island Cow Ice Cream, Allechant Macarons, CremeBru.LA, Sweet Babu's, Vermont Vermouth, Easthampton Cider, Wicked Good Treats by Elaine, Salt Box Seasonings, Patty Cakes Gourmet Cakes, Everything Sauce, and Tribe Power Bites.

Free Festival parking is in the TD Bank lot on Dwight Street and Harrison Avenue. On-street spaces are free on weekends.

For more information, call 413-736-0629 or visit [www.mattoonfestival.org](http://www.mattoonfestival.org).

## NAMI family education program starting Sept. 19

HOLYOKE – National Alliance on Mental Illness Western Massachusetts is offering NAMI Family-to-Family Education Program in person, starting Tuesday, Sept. 19, 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, 9-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.

NAMI is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental health conditions. NAMI Western Massachusetts is an affiliate of NAMI Mass. NAMI Western Massachusetts and its dedicated volunteers, members, and leaders work tirelessly to raise awareness and provide essential education, advocacy, and support programs for people in our community living with mental health conditions and their loved ones.

Pre-registration is required. For more information contact: Susan Sharbaugh at [suesharbaugh@gmail.com](mailto:suesharbaugh@gmail.com) or visit: [nami-wm.org/support](http://nami-wm.org/support).

## FCC hosting flea market

FEEDING HILLS – Feeding Hills Congregational Church is hosting a giant Flea Market/ Tag sale/Craft Sale on Saturday, Sept. 9 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

There will be an assortment of crafts, antiques, and tag sale items. The church is located at 21 North Westfield St. Space is still available inside the church for \$40 or outside for \$25.

Vendors interested in participating can call Christine at 413-210-2421.

## DPW performing pavement milling activities in the O'Brien's Corner

AGAWAM – The Department of Public Works has been performing pavement milling activities within the O'Brien's Corner area of the Town of Agawam.

The installation of SAMI stone and a new asphalt pavement surface is scheduled to begin Sept. 5.

Residents are reminded that on-street parking will not be allowed within the work limits of the project during the construction period. The construction may cause traffic delays or detours, residents are encouraged to plan accordingly.

Please be aware that the construction schedule dates are subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances such as inclement weather or necessary emergency work. Updates to the schedule and a copy of the Agawam Pavement Management Report can be found on the Town of Agawam website at <http://agawam.ma.us/492/Pavement-Management>.

The DPW is making every effort to complete this work as quickly as possible. If you have any questions please call 413-821-0600.

## Remembrance Sept. 11 at AFD

AGAWAM – The Town of Agawam will be hosting a brief Sept. 11 remembrance ceremony on Monday, Sept. 11 at 9:30 a.m. in front of Agawam Fire Department Headquarters, 800 Main St.

The Ceremony will honor those who lost their lives in the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

The speakers at the ceremony will be Agawam Fire Chief Alan Sirois, Father Bill Hamilton, Agawam Fire Department Chaplain and Revered Dr. Harvey Hill, St. David's Episcopal Church.

## Garden Club meeting Sept. 12

AGAWAM – The next meeting of the Agawam Garden Club will be held Tuesday, Sept. 12, 6:30 p.m. at the Agawam Public Library, 750 Cooper St. After a short business meeting Jacqueline Clark will present the program titled "Put Your Garden to Sleep". Jacqueline, a Certified Landscape Designer and Horticulturalist, started her own business in 2005,

"Garden Designs by Jacqueline". A ticket for the bus trip to the New York Botanical Garden on Sept. 17 will be raffled at this meeting. Club meetings are open to the public and not restricted to Agawam residents.

More information about the club can be found on the website [agawamgardenclub.com](http://agawamgardenclub.com) or follow on Facebook.



## Community Crochet Club to meet

AGAWAM – On Tuesdays at the Agawam United Methodist Church, 491 Mill St., from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. there will be a

Community Crochet Club. For more information or to register call Mark Mickey at 413-306-7194 between 1:30 to 10 p.m.

## SHHS Class of '61 planning reunion

SOUTH HADLEY – The South Hadley High School class of 1961 are planning a get-together in South Hadley on Oct. 5.

If you would like to attend, email Judy

Mitrolka Izatt at [jizatt@charter.net](mailto:jizatt@charter.net) and put "get-together" in the subject line.

More specific information will be sent out via email.



# September is campus fire safety month

STOW – Massachusetts Gov. Maura T. Healey has declared September to be campus fire safety month in Massachusetts, and fire officials are reminding students, parents, and others to be sure their living spaces have working smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms, and that they know two ways out in an emergency.

State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine said 2,608 fires occurred in student dormitories, fraternities, and sororities in Massachusetts between 2018 and 2022. These fires caused six civilian injuries, 11 fire service injuries, and more than \$3 million in damages. Fire officials are especially concerned about fire safety in apartments and other types of off-campus student housing, where two college students died in separate, unrelated fires in 2013.

“Fire safety is vitally important whether you live in a dorm, apartment, single-family home, multifamily dwelling, sorority, or fraternity,” said Davine. “Everyone should have working smoke and CO alarms on every level of their residence and know two ways out in an emergency. In the event of

a fire, don’t waste precious time retrieving personal belongings - get out, stay out, and call 9-1-1.”

Davine also noted that fire safety precautions should remain in place all through the year. Windows, doors, and stairways should always be clear of boxes, furniture, bicycles, and anything else that might hinder an escape. Fire doors should never be blocked or choked open. And smoke and carbon monoxide alarms must remain operational all year long, as required by law.

“If your rental doesn’t have smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, insist on them,” said Hyannis Fire Chief Peter J. Burke, Jr, who serves as president of the Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts.

Working alarms, clear exit routes, and a practiced plan for using them are crucial for when a fire breaks out, but students can also take steps to prevent them from starting in the first place:

There is no safe way to smoke, but if you must smoke then do it responsibly. Don’t flick cigarettes on the ground, where they can smolder and ignite debris, or grind

them out on porches or steps. Use a heavy ashtray on a sturdy surface and put it out, all the way, every time.

Always plug appliances such as air conditioners and space heaters into wall sockets that can handle the current, not power strips or extension cords. Don’t overload outlets with multiple devices.

Turn space heaters off when leaving the room or going to sleep. Never leave a space heater unattended.

Don’t leave pots and pans unattended on a lit stove top, and keep flammable items away from burners. In the event of a grease fire, smother the flames with a lid and then turn off the heat. Cook only when you’re alert, not when you’re drowsy or impaired.

Never leave candles burning unattended. Extinguish them before leaving the room. Even better, switch to battery-powered candles.

Use the charging equipment provided by the manufacturer and disconnect it when the device is charged. Charge phones, laptops, e-cigarettes, e-bike batteries, and



other devices on a hard and stable surface - never a bed, couch, or pillow. If you notice an unusual odor, change in color, change in shape, leaking, or odd noises, stop using the device right away. If it can be moved safely, move it away from anything that can burn and call the local fire department. For more fire safety tips for both on and off campus, visit [www.mass.gov/dfs](http://www.mass.gov/dfs).

## Senior Center announces September activities, events

AGAWAM – The Agawam Senior Center will be hosting a number of events in September, including:

### Understanding Dementia

Thursday, Sept. 7 10:30 a.m. to 12 noon

Understanding Alzheimer’s and Dementia: Understand the difference between Alzheimer’s and dementia. Join Community Educator, Mark Nutting as he helps navigate the risk factors of Alzheimer’s, the stages of the disease and the FDA-approved treatments. Meet in the Seminar Hall for 10:30 a.m., call Kristina at 726-2836 to register.

### Looking To Sell Your Home...

#### Have Questions...?

Wednesday, Sept. 13 1:30 p.m.

Have you been considering selling your home? If so, please join us on Wednesday, Sept. 13 from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. The presentation by Sue Drumm, a Realtor with Coldwell Banker Realty and a 25-year Agawam resident, will cover important steps and strategies to help homeowners prepare their property for sale. This will include things like staging, making repairs or improvements, setting the right price, and understanding the selling process.

If you’re interested in attending, make sure to mark your calendar and register by calling Kristina at the Senior Center,

413.726.2836.

### Learn How to Use iPhones and iPads

Friday, Sept. 15 at 1 p.m.

Your speaker, Raymond Rose, will discuss:

- sending text messages and emails
  - using Facebook and Instagram
  - taking and sending photos
  - understanding your Health app
  - keeping your iPad and iPhone safe from hackers
  - learning the Settings app
  - play games online with friends
  - and much more
- Please bring an iPad or iPhone.

### Solinsky Hearing - The Benefits of Hearing Aids

Tuesday, Sept. 19 at 10:30 a.m.

About 20 percent of the U.S. population experience changes in hearing significant enough to impact mental and physical health. All of the negative symptoms of hearing loss can be positively and dramatically impacted by today’s advanced hearing technologies. Join Solinsky Hearing in the Seminar Hall for this informative discussion, call Kristina at 726-2836 to register.

### Six-week Nutrition Class

Sept. 12 to Oct. 17 at 10 a.m.

A six-week nutrition series with Ascen-

tria who is supported by the SNAP program. This class will be mostly nutrition based, some very simple exercises, and BINGO. There will be a snack every week that everyone can try and will hand out prizes/incentive items for the winners of Bingo.

Registration: Walk-Ins are welcome - or register by calling Kristina Lynch at the Senior Center at 413.726.2836.

### Flu Shot Clinic

Thursday, Oct. 19 1:30 to 3 p.m.

The Agawam Senior Center in collaboration with the Agawam Health Department will be holding a flu clinic on Thursday, Oct. 19 from 1:30 to 3:00 p.m. at the Agawam Senior Center. High Dose Flu vaccine will be made available for Agawam seniors on a first come first serve basis.

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## Public Auction

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# Opinion

## Guest Column



### Fall plants extend the season

Over the last few days, I have heard the same sorry statement again and again: "I can't believe summer is over."

I am not sure if this is because school has started, or if honestly, folks feel cheated out of summer because of all the rain and overcast skies we had. Probably it's a little of both!

There have been a few coldish mornings, enough to make me get excited about all that is fall. Pumpkins, crisp apples, beautiful foliage and you guessed it, autumn plants!

Read on for a column from the archives, one that will inspire you to add some late season color to your landscape.

It is always fun to freshen up the garden with new plants. I think of adding a splash of color at this point in the season as a last hurrah before old man winter sets in.

There are all types of mums, and flowering cabbage and kale available for sale right now. Unfortunately, they command higher prices than summer annuals do.

This article will teach you how to get the most out of your investment.

Choose mums carefully.

Daisy and other decorative flower types will generally not last as long in the garden as "cushions" will. These have petals straight through to the center of the flower- no yellow center is visible.

Because the flower head is dense it tends to hold up after a heavy rain and as well as after the first few frosty nights. Although mums are pretty in their pots, they will do better if planted in the ground or at least repotted into a larger container.

The poor things have been growing in the pots you bought them in for quite a while and are usually root-bound. Because of this it is important to slice the roots in a few places just as you would annuals or perennials at planting time.

This way they will have a chance to expand into the new soil you have provided. Mums tend to dry out quickly and require water often.

If you notice that your plant has wilted before you have had a chance to plant it, submerge the pot in a bucket of water- the shrunken soil ball will soak up water like a sponge!

Although mums can stand temperatures a few degrees below freezing, it is still a good idea to cover them if an early hard frost is in the forecast. Try using bushel baskets, old sheets or blankets, etc.

It is a nuisance, but so many times I have been grateful that I went through a bit of work to be able to enjoy my mums for weeks longer than if I hadn't.

If you are hoping that your mums will return for another season, cut them back to "fist height" in November, and provide them with a loose mulch after the ground freezes. The term "hardy mum" doesn't always prove true, but planting them properly, providing ample water and mulching for the winter will increase your odds of a repeat performance.

Remove the winter mulch around the time forsythias bloom.

Prevent gangly growth by pinching them back to a manageable height two or three times prior to mid-July. Expect blooms this time next year.

Flowering kale and cabbage can add nice texture to the fall garden. The same



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## Guest Column

### Who was Mayberry's 'Mystery Man'?

By J. Mark Powell  
jmarkpowell.com



#### J. MARK POWELL'S HOLY COW! HISTORY

I begin this week's column with a confession. I'm a lifelong, dyed in the wool fan of "The Andy Griffith Show". It debuted just a few weeks before I was born, I grew up watching it in prime time, and I've religiously followed it in reruns for decades.

Andy and Barney, Opie and Aunt Bee, Floyd and Otis, and the whole gang feel like extended family. I belong to several Facebook fan groups where members vigorously debate the merits of their favorite characters and argue over who should and shouldn't have been Andy's girlfriend. (Helen Crump? Seriously?)

The show has attained a kind of cult status. Multiple books have been written about it, college courses have been taught on it, and we aging Baby Boomers secretly yearn to spend our golden years in a friendly little town just like Mayberry where people are nice, where right always triumphs over wrong, and where the home cookin' is, in Andy Taylor's words, "extry gooo-ooood!"

Given all that adoring attention, you may be surprised to learn a big mystery from the program remains unsolved more than 50 years later. Who played the mysterious Mr. Schwamp?

Who? It's easy to not remember him.

Although he appeared in over two dozen episodes, both black and white and color, he never spoke a single word. Not even once, although Andy and Barney frequently refer to him by name as "Old Man Schwamp" or Schwump, if you prefer.

We don't know the correct spelling because the character is never listed in the show's credits. In fact, nobody even knows the name of the round-faced actor of a certain age who portrayed him.

He smiles in acknowledgment of his name from time to time, but that's all.

There's a rumor among some fans that the actor was a personal friend of Andy Griffith who had fallen on hard times. He was given a small walk-on role with only a few lines as an act of charity.

Supposedly, according to this uncorroborated version, the actor forgot his lines and froze. So, Andy filmed the scene without him speaking.

That supposedly amused the show's star, who got a kick out of it when he saw the finished product. So, Griffith had the writers insert brief, passing scenes with Old Man Schwamp from then on. (When your name is in the show's title, you can get away with things like that.)

MAYBERRY | page 4

### I'm 64. When should I claim my Social Security?



Dear Rusty

I am 64 years old and still working full time.

My question is - when should I start my Social Security? I would like to start it in January 2024 and go part time at work, but would I be losing much Social Security by not waiting until full retirement age?

Signed: Trying to Plan Ahead

Dear Trying, to Plan:

You are smart to evaluate the impact of claiming your Social Security benefits early. First, be aware that your full Retirement Age for Social Security purposes is 66 years and 8 months and that is when you get 100% of the SS benefit you've earned from a lifetime of working.

It appears you already know that if you start benefits before your FRA, you'll be subject to Social Security's "earnings test," which limits how much you can earn from working before they take away some of your benefits. But if you go part time at work you can mitigate the earnings test and claim your benefits early - just understand that your payment will be permanently reduced by doing so.

If you claim your benefits to start in January 2024, you'll be taking your Social Security about 18

months early, which means that instead of 100% of your FRA entitlement you'll get about 90% (a reduction of 10%).

The earnings test will still apply and we don't yet know what the 2024 earnings limit will be, but it will be something more than the 2023 limit of \$21,240. If your 2024 earnings exceed the annual limit, SS will take away \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. They "take away" benefits by withholding future payments until they recover what you owe for exceeding the limit.

If you work part time and don't exceed the 2024 annual earnings limit, there will be no penalty and you will get every month's SS payment. If you find you will exceed the annual 2024 earnings limit, you can call Social Security and inform them of that and by how much, and they will suspend your benefits for the number of months necessary to avoid overpaying you.

If you don't inform them and you exceed the annual 2024 limit, they will catch up in 2025 when they get your 2024 earnings information from the IRS and issue an Overpayment Notice requiring you to pay back the amount owed, half of what you exceeded the 2024 annual limit by. As you likely know, the earnings test no longer applies after you reach your full retirement age.

So, the decision on when to claim your Social Security benefit is yours to make, and you are smart to consider your work plans - but should also consider your life expectancy and marital



#### PHONE

413.283.8393  
Fax: 413.283.7107  
Subscriptions: 413.283.8393

#### EMAIL

Advertising Sales  
Theresa Wegiel  
twegiel@turley.com

#### Editor

Gregory Scibelli  
aan@turley.com

#### Subscriptions

cgriswold@turley.com

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## AGAWAM ADVERTISER NEWS TEAM



EDITOR/SPORTS  
Greg Scibelli  
aan@turley.com  
sports@turley.com



ADVERTISING SALES  
Theresa Wegiel  
twegiel@turley.com

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# Opinion



The Massachusetts Audubon Society reported the sighting of a black-crowned night heron in Pittsfield.

The black-crowned night heron is about 25 inches long and is gray and white. It is a stocky heron with pale yellow legs, which turn reddish in the breeding season.

The immature is brown with white streaks below and large, buff white spots on its back and wings. It keeps its immature plumage for two years. The immature black-crowned night heron is distinguished from the yellow crowned night heron by its greenish-yellow lower bill. The yellow-crowned has a dark bill.

Although the night heron will feed by day, as its name implies this species feeds mostly at night or at dusk. They roost in trees.

It feeds on fish, amphibians, insects and small mammals. It also will eat the young of other bird species such as terns, herons and ibises. They inhabit freshwater streams, lakes, rice field, dry grassland and salt marshes.



Black-crowned night heron

These herons nest either in colonies or singly. The female lays three to five pale blue green eggs in a nest of twigs, reeds and finer material placed against a tussock or in the reeds, shrub or trees up to 160 feet.

When greeting other black-crowned night herons, they stretch their necks horizontally with breeding plumes on the head raised and they touch bills. They make a low, hoarse "quok" sound often heard at dusk. During nesting, they make a "rok rok."

### Red-winged blackbirds

I received an email this week from someone who lives in the West Springfield Agawam area. She said, "Red-winged blackbirds are one of my favorite birds, but I always wondered why they leave the area so early?" She also said, "I go to areas where I know they nest, but never see them after mid-July or so."

Red-winged blackbirds are one of the



Red-winged blackbirds

first to arrive in early spring with the males coming first, then the females. They migrate anytime from late August to early October and gather in flocks for the trip south.

### Audubon Society sightings

Other Audubon Society sightings reported for August in Berkshire include an alder flycatcher in Washington and a yellow-bellied flycatcher at the Jug End State Reservation in Egremont. In Hampshire County, four sandhill cranes were at East Meadows in Northampton and four more sandhill cranes at the Arcadia Sanctuary.

Migrants tallied at Quabbin Park in Ware included four common night-hawks, two yellow-bellied flycatchers and four Cape May warblers. In Worcester County 14 Common Mergansers were seen near fishing area #3 at Quabbin Reservoir in Petersham and four Bonaparte's Gulls were tallied along the Dana



Black vultures

shoreline in Petersham.

Two black vultures were seen soaring over Mt. Wachusett in Princeton and in Paxton there was a Cerulean warbler. Mount Wachusett is a popular spot for birders to view hawk migrations during September and October. Two Cape May warblers were seen at the Moose Hill Wildlife Area.

### Wild turkeys

It seems wild turkeys are everywhere. I have seen groups of three or four Tom turkeys and much larger groups of hens and their poults. Several times I stopped while a large flock of hens and youngsters crossed the road.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

### MAYBERRY ■ from page 4

Mr. Schwamp appears at a Mayberry stag dance, watches Ernest T. Bass throw a rock through a window, and of course passes time on a sidewalk bench outside the courthouse. He also pops up in a few episodes of the spinoffs Gomer Pyle, USMC and Mayberry RFD.

Always without speaking, and never mentioned in the closing credits. He remains the one complete mystery from a TV program millions of Americans know inside and out.

A few years ago, someone posted on YouTube a home movie taken by Ron Howard's father of a behind the scenes glimpse of "The Andy Griffith Show" set. In the background, standing among the crew, a gentleman is seen reading a newspaper who bears a strong resemblance to the mystery man.

Could he have been part of the production team, and the whole thing was just

an elaborate inside joke? Probably. I agree with that theory.

But we'll never know the true story.

Don Knotts, who played the beloved bumbling Barney Fife, passed away in 2006. Andy Griffith followed six years later. Mr. Schwamp's identity likely went to the grave with them.

Why does it matter, you ask.

In the great scheme of things, it doesn't. But we humans love pondering the unanswerable.

Americans have spent 82 years wondering what became of Amelia Earhart, after all.

And so Old Man Schwamp stares back at us from a half century old spool of celluloid.

The chubby face grins and his eyes twinkle. He clearly enjoys knowing what we don't know, and probably never will.

*Holy Cow! History is written by novelist, former TV journalist and diehard history buff J. Mark Powell.*

### SECURITY ■ from page 4

status. If you are married and eventually die before your lower earning spouse, your spouse's benefit as your survivor will be based on your benefit amount at the time of your death.

Thus, your age when you claim your benefit may also affect your spouse's benefit as your survivor; the longer you wait up to age 70 the more your spouse's survivor benefit would be. And if you enjoy at least average longevity, which is about 84 for a man your current age, then by waiting until your FRA or later to claim you'll not only get a higher monthly payment but also get more in cumulative lifetime benefits.

If, however, your financial circumstances are such that you need the SS money sooner, then claiming earlier may be the

right decision, provided you don't substantially exceed the annual earnings limit prior to reaching your full retirement age. I hope the above provides what you need to make an informed decision.

*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.*

### GARDEN ■ from page 4

planting instructions apply here, but I have found that they can be finicky about water.

Consistent overwatering and they rot; giving them too little and they wilt. The best advice: test them before you get out the hose by inserting your finger into the top couple inches of soil.

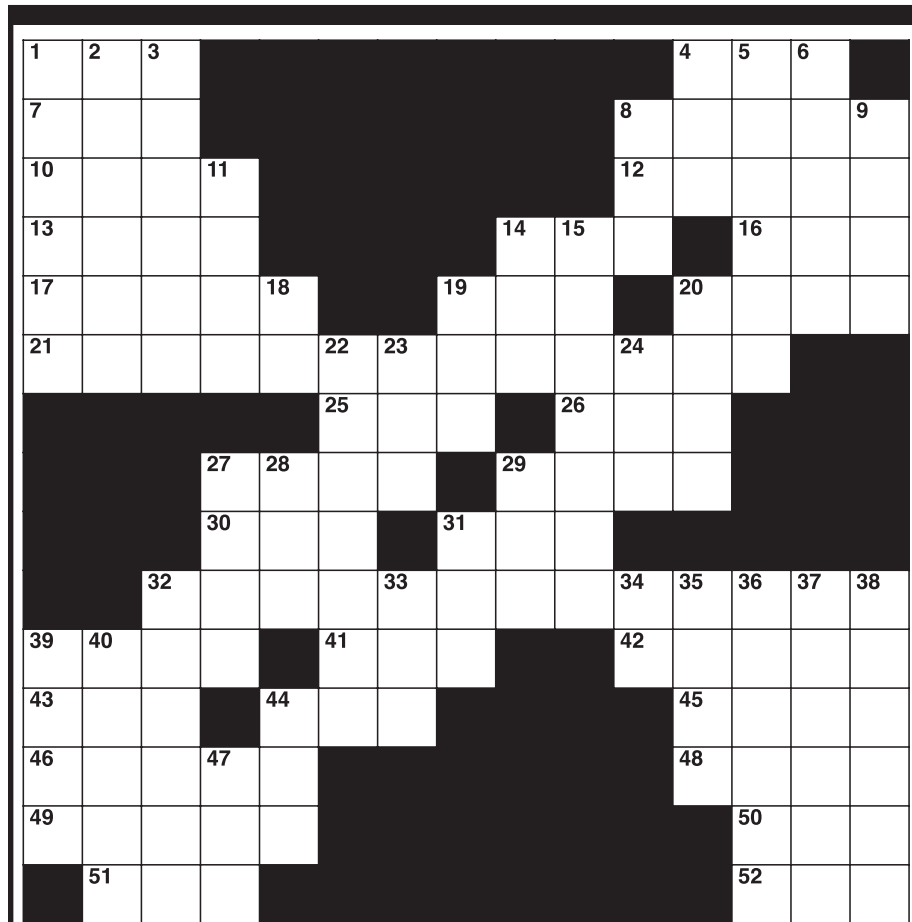
Kale and cabbage need little in the way of grooming other than an occasional bottom leaf removed. Slugs do tend to enjoy the foliage, however, so set up some traps or barriers nearby.

The color on cabbage and kale will intensify as the weather gets colder, and the plants will continue to look good well into

December, provided we don't get an early long standing snow- it will eventually make the leaves mushy. While it's tempting to leave them in your containers and add greenery and such for the holidays, it's not recommended unless the planters are in a protected spot.

Plant now for your garden's last hurrah of the season- you'll be glad you did!

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



### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Second sight
- 4. Standard electrode potential
- 7. Type of gibbon
- 8. John Joseph \_\_\_: American industrialist
- 10. Manning and Whitney are two
- 12. Abrupt
- 13. Baroque musical instrument
- 14. Post-burning residue
- 16. When you hope to arrive
- 17. Sign up (Brit. Eng.)
- 19. Sun up in New York
- 20. Employee stock ownership plan
- 21. Where people live
- 25. Method to record
- 26. Angry
- 27. No longer living
- 29. Simple
- 30. Swiss river
- 31. Portion of a play
- 32. It's under the tree
- 39. Wood sorrels
- 41. No (Scottish)
- 42. Dialect of English
- 43. Former Steelers' QB
- 44. Popular beer
- 45. It can make you sick
- 46. Tropical tree and fruit
- 48. Company officer
- 49. Contact lens term
- 50. Your consciousness of your own identity
- 51. "Ghetto Superstar" singer
- 52. Piece of turf

### CLUES DOWN

- 1. Number of players on each side in a football game
- 2. Containing salt
- 3. Reasoning or knowledge: a \_\_\_
- 4. Car mechanics group
- 5. Leave a place
- 6. Southern Colombian capital
- 8. Old English letter
- 9. Tide
- 11. Walk heavily
- 14. Chemical compound (abbr.)
- 15. Artificial openings
- 18. Luteinizing hormone
- 19. Unit of energy
- 20. Circular movement of
- 22. A way of holding words (abbr.)
- 23. Popular book of words (abbr.)
- 24. States' group
- 27. Dashes
- 28. Body part
- 29. Electronic countermeasures
- 31. Consumed
- 32. Small bird
- 33. Unhappy
- 34. Football's big game (abbr.)
- 35. Valued object offered in good faith
- 36. Wild goats
- 37. Precede in place
- 38. Small edible fish
- 39. Notice of death
- 40. Body cavity of a metazoan
- 44. Partner to cheese
- 47. Not around



# Western Mass. celebrates free community college

GREENFIELD – At a celebration for a program that offers free education at community colleges for residents 25 and older, Springfield Technical Community College student Sarai Andrades stood behind a podium and shared that she will no longer have to worry about accumulating debt to get her degree.

“As a low-income Latin woman with only one income in the household and other bills to pay, I’m thrilled to qualify for the MassReconnect program,” Andrades told attendees at Greenfield Community College. “MassReconnect opens the door for me to pursue a career in the nursing field without worrying about the costs of tuition and other educational expenses. The program significantly reduces the financial burden of pursuing higher education.”

Standing on a stage behind Andrades were Western Massachusetts community college leaders, including STCC President John B. Cook. College presidents joined students and regional lawmakers on Thursday, Aug. 31, to celebrate what GCC President Michelle Schutt described as a “monumental program for the commonwealth.”

Schutt and other speakers touted the



Sarai Andrades speaks at a celebration of MassReconnect.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

benefits of Gov. Maura T. Healey’s new MassReconnect program, which establishes free community college for qualifying residents as well as free community college for nursing students of any age.

Other STCC students benefiting from MassReconnect who attended the GCC event were Destiny Santos, who hopes to study nursing, and Bradley De Jesus, who is interested in pursuing a degree in a science, technology, engineering and math

(STEM) field.

The GCC event follows the official statewide launch in August of the Healey Administration’s MassReconnect program.

To qualify for MassReconnect, students must be 25 or older on the first day of their classes and be a permanent Massachusetts resident for at least one year at the start of the enrolled term. The program is limited to residents who have not previously earned a college degree (associate or bach-

elor’s) who enroll in at least six credits per semester in an approved program of study leading to an associate degree or certificate at a community college.

For the first year, the state has allocated \$20 million for MassReconnect. The funding covers the full cost of tuition and fees and includes an allowance for books and supplies for qualifying students. The state budget also includes money to fund free community college for nursing students of any age.

“MassReconnect is very much in our wheelhouse at STCC. It is a remarkable initiative that gives access to a college degree to anyone 25 or older who wanted a college education, but could never afford it,” Cook said. “The Gov’s program reconnects adults across the Commonwealth to higher education. This is an invitation for them to come back and consider the pathway that higher education offers them. Thank you to the Healey Administration and our legislators for making this possible.”

To learn more about MassReconnect, visit [stcc.edu/pay-for-college/massreconnect](http://stcc.edu/pay-for-college/massreconnect). For questions, call STCC Admissions at (413) 755-3333.

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## ACC seeks funding proposals

AGAWAM – Proposals for community-oriented arts, humanities, and science programs due by Oct. 17.

The Agawam Cultural Council has set an Oct. 17 deadline for organizations, schools, and individuals to apply for grants that support cultural activities in the community.

According to Council Spokesperson Les Tingley, these grants can support a variety of artistic projects and activities in Agawam -- including exhibits, festivals, field trips, short-term artist residencies, or performances in schools, workshops, and lectures.

The Agawam Cultural Council is part of a network of 329 Local Cultural Councils (LCCs) serving all 351 cities and towns in the Commonwealth. The LCC Program is the largest grassroots cultural funding net-

work in the nation, supporting thousands of community-based projects in the arts, sciences, and humanities every year. The state legislature provides an annual appropriation to Mass Cultural Council, a state agency, which then allocates funds to each community.

This year, the Agawam Cultural Council will distribute approximately \$25,000 (exact amount not yet determined) in grants. Last year the Agawam Cultural Council distributed \$23,000 in grant funds for 37 projects.

For information about the Local Cultural Council Program, and Grant Application process, visit the Massachusetts Cultural Council website: <https://massculturalcouncil.org/communities/local-cultural-council-program/application-process/>.

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# SPORTS



Cooper Gobiel-Achorn sends the corner kick away. TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

## Brownies, Orioles lock up in preseason

AGAWAM – The two teams faced each other wearing similar t-shirts over the summer, and now Agawam and Belchertown boys soccer prepared for the fall season with a scrimmage last Wednesday against one another at Agawam High School.

The teams no longer face each other in the regular season. Agawam opened the season against Monument Mountain and next faces Mt. Greylock at home Monday, Sept. 11.

The Orioles opened up this week against West Springfield and host East Longmeadow on Monday evening.



Patrick Keating plays the ball in the middle of the field.



Vinny Rodier tries to settle the ball.



Lucas Ritson moves toward the sideline with the ball.



Andrew Regnier slides tackles to try and take possession.



Dom Pisano attempts a pass.

## Scrimmage action for Agawam

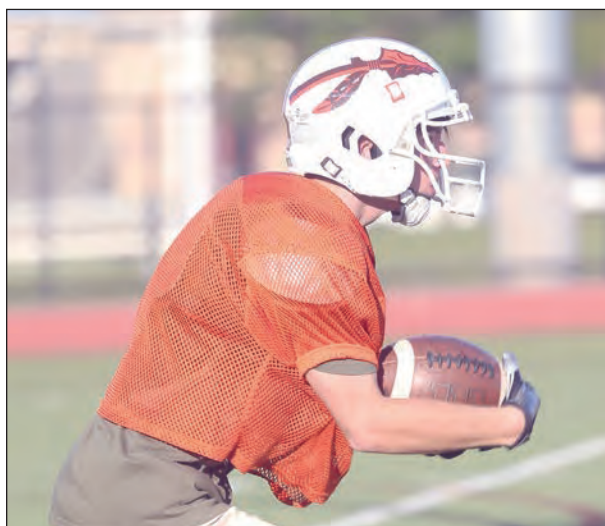
AGAWAM – In what is likely their final tune-up before the regular season begins,

Agawam football host Ludlow last Friday evening. Agawam traveled to Ludlow for a scrimmage before last season. The two teams were gearing up for their season openers.

Ludlow will face Quabog at 6:30 p.m. while Agawam is set to face Chicopee Comprehensive at 7 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 8.



Jayden Perez heads into traffic on a run. TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Rhein Ingham attempts to return.



Ryan Litz heads to the right side on a rush.



Vinny Rodier tries to settle the ball.



# Sports



Kyle Tomas winds up for a long kick.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

## Pioneers cap season with Festa match

LUDLOW – After another season with a playoff appearance in the USL-2 League, the Western Mass.

Pioneers got together one last time for the annual Friendly Festa game on Sunday afternoon.

The exhibition has been happening for the past several years during the town's Festa celebration.



Noah Rivera stops the ball.



Max Robbins looks to catch up with the ball.



Goalie Al Albano sends the ball up the field.



Monson's Connor Hicks receives a pass and makes his way up the field.

## Worcester Railers Hockey Club name Aitken new VP

WORCESTER – The Worcester Railers Hockey Club (@RailersHC), proud ECHL (@ECHL) affiliate of the New York Islanders (@NYIslanders) is pleased to welcome David Aitken to the front office staff as the Vice President of Tickets & Corporate Partnerships.

“David has a proven track record of driving revenue in minor league sports,” said Railers HC President, Stephanie Ramey. “He has been a direct contributor of significant AHL ticket sales growth in both Rochester and Cleveland and will bring new ideas to enhance the Railers experience for fans and sponsors.”

Aitken will oversee all revenue channels for the Railers and will help further develop the ticket sales and corporate sponsorships departments. Most recently, Aitken spent nearly five years as the Director of Ticket Sales with the Rochester Americans (AHL) and Rochester Knighthawks (NHL), as part of Pegula Sports and Entertainment, the parent company of the Buffalo Sabres and Buffalo Bills. His responsibilities included strategy, budgeting, and personnel.

Under Aitken's leadership, the Amerks achieved their highest season ticket numbers and ticket sales revenue in the franchise's 67-year history. The Amerks concluded the 2023 Calder Cup Playoffs with the highest attendance for the AHL clubs playing more than one home playoff game, which featured three of six home games with a sell-out crowd of 10,662 at their venue.

Prior to his time in Rochester, Ait-

ken spent eight seasons with the Cleveland Monsters (AHL) as part of the Cleveland Cavaliers (NBA) organization. His position with the team was Sr. Manager of Business Development where he led all new business ticket sales efforts, as well as managed a senior level team of ticket representatives. During this time, Aitken was also responsible for youth hockey game-day programming and community outreach efforts for six seasons and was instrumental in the founding of the Monsters' "Grow the Game" and Learn to Play initiatives in Northeast Ohio.

Aitken's tenure in Cleveland was highlighted by placing among the AHL's top 10 in group sales for five seasons and generated the most group sales in franchise history at that time in the 2015-16 season. He was also part of the 2016 Calder Cup champion Lake Erie Monsters staff which won the AHL's President's Award for Business Team of the Year.

Aitken is originally from Chestertown, NY in the Lake George region, and is relocating to Worcester with his wife Colleen, and their three daughters, Leah, Emma, and Olivia. His start date with the Railers is Monday, July 24.

The Worcester Railers HC 2023-24 Opening Weekend at the DCU Center is Saturday, Oct. 21 and Sunday, Oct. 22 vs. the Adirondack Thunder & Trois-Rivieres Lions. Season memberships, mini-plans, and group packages for the 2023-24 season are on sale now by calling the Railers front office at 508-365-1750 or by visiting RailersHC.com.

## Foursomes needed for tournament

AGAWAM – Registration and signups are currently open and underway for the Sixth Annual “Shoot Fore The Stars To Cure Cancer” Golf Tournament to benefit the Dana Farber Cancer Institute. In the first five years, the event has raised over \$15,000 for cancer research. The four-person scramble event will take place on Monday, Sept. 18

at Wintonbury Hills Golf Course in Bloomfield, CT. The event will be an 11 a.m. shotgun start. There will be prizes up for grabs (Closest to Pin/Long Drive) along with a putting contest. Entry fee covers golf, lunch and dinner. Please contact ShootFOREtheStarstoCureCancer@gmail.com more information. We hope you can join us.

## Paul, Hall team up to host tip-off event

SPRINGFIELD – The Chris Paul Family Foundation and Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame announced the third annual circuit of two Historically Black College and University (HBCU) events, the HBCU Tip-Off and Challenge, presented by the AEA Foundation.

The HBCU Tip-Off will take place Nov. 18-19 at the Mohegan Sun Arena in Uncasville, Connecticut, and the HBCU Challenge will be held Dec. 16-17 at Michelob ULTRA Arena at Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas.

“As an HBCU graduate himself, Chris Paul has long been a prominent voice for the empowerment of HBCU athletes,” said John L. Doleva, President and CEO of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. “The Hall of Fame is honored to work alongside Chris to create opportunities for these student-athletes, and we look forward to watching them play in two competitive weekends of basketball.”

Paul, an active philanthropist and entrepreneur, has actively supported HBCUs for years. He currently serves on President Joe Biden's advisory board on Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Paul executive produced Why Not Us: North Caroli-

na Central Basketball, Why Not Us: FAMU Football, and Why Not Us: Southern Dance on ESPN+. In addition, Paul partnered with Harvard Business School to bring its Entertainment, Media and Sports program to select HBCUs to develop a pipeline for students pursuing careers in those industries. He launched HBCU voting initiatives to encourage students to vote during the past election and partnered with Sour Patch Kids and the Thurgood Marshall College Fund to create The Mischief for Change Scholarship, a college scholarship fund with a \$1 million commitment over the next five years for students attending HBCUs. In 2022, Paul graduated with a degree from Winston-Salem State University.

“We are looking forward to the third year of our HBCU events,” said Paul. “These events present a unique opportunity for student athletes to play on a national stage. I'm excited to collaborate with the Basketball Hall of Fame, Mohegan Sun, and MGM Resorts and am grateful to all of our partners for their commitment to HBCU schools and athletes in partnership with this event.”

Tickets for the 2023 Chris Paul HBCU Tip-Off and HBCU Challenge will both go on sale on Friday, Sept. 8.



# Dinner Show to be part of next Page One production

AGAWAM – Page One Productions of West Springfield announced the signing of an additional, exciting, Dinner Show Tribute being brought in September to The Brass Rail Meeting House in Southwick.

“I’m very excited that a Whitney Houston/Celine Dion Tribute Dinner Show will be presented on Friday, Sept. 22 starring Michelle Brooks-Thompson who was on TV’s ‘The Voice,’” revealed POP president Roberta Page.

The show was developed by Page, Brooks-Thompson, and her agent, Page disclosed.

Songs to be included in the performance will be such heartwarming like Greatest Love Of All, I Will Always Love You, Because You Loved Me, The Power of Love, My Heart Will Go On, and many more, with Brooks-Thompson’s spot-on renditions. There will also be several surprises, said Page.

Doors open at 5:30 p.m., a delicious, served buffet with many offerings at 6 p.m., and the show at 7:15 p.m. Cost is \$65

complete and will include a remembrance of the evening.

Assistance for the buffet will be available, if needed. There is ample, free parking and the building is handicapped accessible.

For more information, contact PageOneProductions@att.net or call/text 413-530-8000, or send check or money order payable to Page One Productions, P.O. Box 423 West Springfield, MA 01090. Deadline is Tuesday, Sept. 19 with no refunds.



Page One Productions will bring a new Dinner Show to the Brass Rail in Southwick next month. SUBMITTED PHOTO

# Obituary

## Phylis (Brodeur) Bigda

Phylis (Brodeur) Bigda, of Falmouth, passed away on August 28, 2023. She was 96 years old.

Born in Ware, MA to Joseph and Ruth Brodeur.

Phylis met and married the love of her life, Charles Bigda, and they moved to Springfield. They were married for 71 years before his passing in 2016.

She worked at the Farmer’s Exchange in West Springfield before raising her family. In 1957 Phylis relocated to Agawam where she and Charlie settled and



raised their two children. Phylis loved to paint, and she showcased many watercolor paintings at the Agawam Community Arts Center. Phylis continued to take art classes and painted well into her 90s.

She is survived by her children Joanne Koch of Falmouth, and Mark Bigda of Attleboro. She leaves her beloved grandchildren Dr. Robert Koch and

Kristopher Koch and two great-grandchildren.

Services will be held at a later date.

*Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief Death Notice listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place. The other is a Paid Obituary, costing \$225, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. Death Notices & Paid Obituaries should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com. Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.*

### DEATH NOTICE

**BIGDA, PHYLIS (BRODEUR)**  
Died: August 28, 2023

# Public Notices

### AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION LEGAL AD

The Agawam Conservation Commission will meet on **Thursday, September 14, 2023 at 6:15PM** at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St, Agawam, Ma. The purpose of this meeting will be to hear the Request for Determination of Applicability of Houlihan on property at 27 Greenacre Lane.

By Order of  
Henry A. Kozloski,  
Chairman  
AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
09/07/2023

### AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION LEGAL AD

The Agawam Conservation Commission will meet on **Thursday, September 14, 2023 at 6:20PM** at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St, Agawam, Ma. The purpose of this meeting will be to hear the Request for Determination of

Applicability of Muskus for a residential gas line connection at 608 Cooper Street.

By Order of  
Henry A. Kozloski,  
Chairman  
AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
09/07/2023

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 Docket No. HD23P0899PM**

**In the matter of: Pamela E Buoniconti Of: Feeding Hills, 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 Mercy Medical Center of Springfield, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that **Pamela E Buoniconti** is in need of a Conservator or other protective order and requesting that **Kimberly Benjamin-Prokop** of West Warren, MA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Conservator to serve **With Surety** on the bond.

The he 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 AM. on the return date of **09/27/2023**. 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.  
**Barbara M. Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.  
Date: August 30, 2023  
**Rosemary A. Saccomani**  
Register of Probate  
09/07/2023

AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION

### LEGAL AD

The Agawam Conservation Commission will meet on **Thursday, September 14, 2023 at 6:00PM** at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St, Agawam, Ma. The purpose of this meeting will be to hear the Request for Determination of Applicability of Eversource Energy for property located within the Connecticut River.

By Order of  
Henry A. Kozloski,  
Chairman  
AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
09/07/2023

### Legal Ad AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Agawam Conservation Commission will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, September 14, 2023 at 6:05 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 Santaniello for work to be performed

on Parcels G4 1/7 & G4 1/8 Shoemaker Lane, subject to the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act.

By Order of  
Henry A. Kozloski,  
Chairman  
AGAWAM CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
09/07/2023

### Notice of Private Sale

Notice is hereby given by USA Towing, 71 Garden St., Feeding Hills, MA 01030, sale of a motor vehicle pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. C. 255, Section 39A, that on September 11, 2023 at 8:00 a.m., at USA Towing, said motor vehicle will be sold at a private sale to satisfy the garage keeper’s lien for towing, storage and costs of sale.

2008 Acura TL  
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Last known reg. owner:  
Irina Krokhamlyuk  
351 E. Columbus Ave.  
Springfield, MA 01105  
08/24, 08/31, 09/07/2023

## Agawam Advertiser News OBITUARY POLICY

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The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$225, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

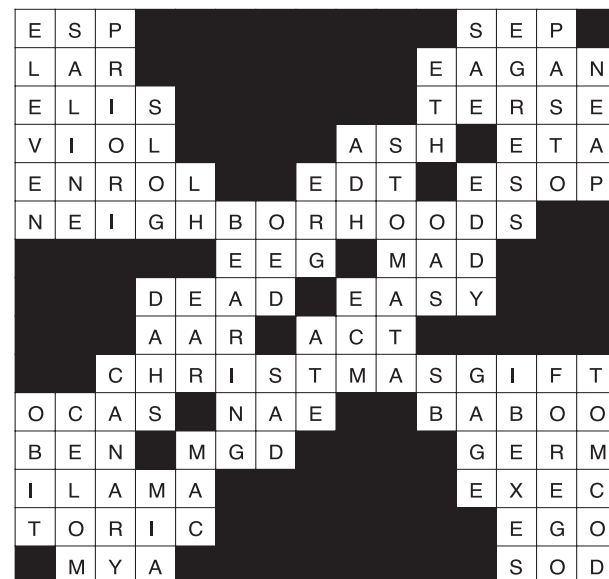
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*Public notice deadlines are Mondays at noon, Fridays noon for Monday holidays.*

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# Wreaths Across America invites all Americans to wave the Flag on Sept. 12

COLUMBIA FALLS, ME – Tuesday, Sept. 12, between 9 and 10 a.m. E.T., national nonprofit Wreaths Across America is calling for the nation to join them in flag-waving to remind all Americans of the feeling we had, the pride in country, the unity and patriotism, which was expressed on the days following Sept. 11, 2001. The event will be hosted LIVE on WAA's official Facebook page and broadcast over Wreaths Across America Radio. The broadcasts will include interviews and stories from volunteers, supporters, Gold Star families, veterans, first responders and members of the next generation.

WAA gathers every Tuesday morning from 9 to 10 a.m. E.T. to raise the American flag and say the Pledge of Allegiance from the Freeport Flag Ladies Monument located on Route 1 in Jonesboro, Maine. Near the 'tip lands' where balsam is harvested to make veterans' wreaths for placement on National Wreaths Across America Day each December. The monument was built by WAA in partnership with its founder,



Morrill Worcester, in September 2019, after the Freeport Flag Ladies retired following 18 years of waving the American Flag in Freeport, Maine, each Tuesday since September 11, 2001.

"Now, more than ever, it is so critical for communities to come together to remem-

ber all those who served and honor their service and their family's service, especially those who volunteered during the War on Terror following the events of September 11, 2001," said WAA Executive Director, Karen Worcester. "But more than anything, we must teach our children about these

men and women and the courage and commitment it takes to be a part of the small number of Americans who protect all our freedoms. Please join us on Sept. 12, as we wave the American flag proudly like we do each Tuesday morning, and never forget that freedom isn't free and must be protected."

WAA encourages the American public to join this weekly tradition starting on Sept. 12 by sharing their pictures and videos on social media using the hashtag #FlagsAcrossTheCountry. You can also submit videos and photos easily on the following link: <http://WreathsAcrossAmerica.memfox.io/flagwaving>. Follow WAA on Facebook, share where you are participating, and share on your own social channels.

This year, National Wreaths Across America Day will be held on Saturday, Dec. 16. To sponsor a \$17 wreath for an American hero or learn more about volunteering, please visit [www.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org).

## SCAS empowers pet owners

EAST BROOKFIELD – Adopting a pet involves a deep commitment and a lifetime of care. Second Chance Animal Services is committed to turning the tide by instilling a sense of responsibility during the adoption process and providing ongoing support for new pet owners.

Making the decision to adopt a pet requires thoughtful consideration, as highlighted by Wendy Hall, director of Second Chance's Animal Relocation programs. "Pet ownership is like raising a child—it takes time, care, and resources and Second Chance is here to help," emphasizes Hall. "Pets have emotions and needs and rely on their owners for food, medical attention, love, and companionship. By investing effort from the start, many common problems can be avoided, leading to a happy and lasting pet-owner relationship."

To prevent unnecessary surrenders, Second Chance provides a range of resources and assistance for pet owners facing difficulties. The organization believes that open communication and guidance can often resolve issues without giving up a pet. Knowledgeable shelter staff

are available by phone or email to listen to owners' concerns and offer advice on various pet-related matters. Whether it's dealing with behavior problems, training challenges, or introducing a new pet to the family, they offer personalized solutions.

In addition, Second Chance operates four full-service veterinary hospitals to ensure pets receive necessary care. Located in North Brookfield, Southbridge, Springfield and Worcester, the hospitals are open to everyone and offer reduced rates for those who qualify, along with weekly low-cost vaccine clinics. The nonprofit also has a pet food pantry program that supplies pet food to local human food pantries, helping pet owners facing financial difficulties.

New Second Chance adopters also get access to a week of free one-on-one online training through an app designed to help dog owners address behavioral issues and foster positive interactions with their pets in their homes. Owners can continue to use the app for a minimal charge as needed. Well-trained pets are more likely to stay in their homes with their families.

## MEALS ■ from page 1

The focal point of the festival was the New England Mosaic. This mosaic is made up of canvases contributed from people all around the area, whether they are artists or people who just enjoy a chance to be creative.

This mosaic also helps to raise money for the scholarships. Each canvas sells for \$25 and that money is donated directly to the scholarship fund.

"There aren't a lot of art scholarships for students, there are broader ones, but these are specifically for students," Karen Conkey, a co-chair of the project, explained. "We gave out two \$1,500 scholarships this year and we hope that we can double it each year."

The mosaic project started two years ago and the plan is to continue the project far into the future.

Conkey explained that they will bring canvases to areas all throughout MA so that a variety of people have a chance to contribute their own art to the project.

"People that are artists do it, people that just love art but aren't artists do it, we get all kinds of different art and per-

spectives," Conkey said. "What is very fun is that we show this at several events during the summer and people come and they find their picture here and they show their family something they've painted."

Throughout the festival there were a variety of activities for attendees to enjoy. Not only could they walk around and look at the art while listening to the live music, but there were also opportunities to create art of their own.

Artists from the Agawam Community Arts and Artisans donated their time to giving free demonstrations for the "paint with purpose" or "art with a heart" section. This allowed the festival attendees to try their hand at painting.

While the demonstrations themselves were free, they did request donations from the attendees. These donations went to the local food bank at the end of the festival.

"People just sign up, come in, enjoy creating, make a donation to a food bank and just feel good. They're happy for doing art and also for giving to the community," Co-Chair of the Mosaic Project Judy Duffy said.

## SCHOOL ■ from page 1

the town paying about \$162 million.

Following the presentation of the new construction series, there was a walk-through of the two series on renovations to the existing school building. All of the renovation options would require modular classrooms, which the MSBA does not reimburse.

Renovation series one was broken down into options 2A and 2B.

Option 2A would cause the gym to be closed for 12-14 months throughout construction. Given the fact that there would be no easy alternative for the gym, many in attendance of the meeting did not approve of this option. If this option was chosen, it is estimated to cost \$231 million, with the town paying about \$157 million.

"At one of the meetings we heard that you have a great auditorium at the junior high, but that you really can't lose the gymnasium, so we did another option," Kovocs said.

Option 2B would allow the gym to remain open throughout the entirety of construction, though the auditorium would have to close. Thankfully, Agawam Junior High School has an auditorium that students could use during this time.

Renovation series two was broken down into options 3A and 3B. In both of these options, the gym and auditorium would be "offline" during part of the construction.

Option 3A is estimated to cost \$240 million, with the town paying \$165 million.

Option 3B is estimated to be \$238 million, with the town paying \$163 million.

All cost estimates at this moment are just that, estimates, as Liporto and Kovocs made clear during their presentation. They found these estimated prices by comparing other projects in the area. However, the costs are subject to change. It is possible for them to go up or down, depending on how plans shift as they come to fruition.

These cost projects were given so that attendees were able to see that there is minimal difference between the cost of building an entirely new building versus doing renovations of the existing building.

"It doesn't cost that much more, or they're basically the same to do a new building than trying to fit the square peg in the round hole with the addition and renovation," Liporto said.

Liporto also pointed out that the modular classrooms, which would be required for the renovation options, cannot be reimbursed by the MSBA. Therefore, while the new construction projects could have more control over the level of reimbursement from the MSBA, renovation would have a guaranteed town payment of the cost of the modular classrooms.

There has been no definite decision on which option will be selected to proceed with. At the moment Option 1C is favored by the building committee. When they did a survey evaluating each of the options, with scores based on education aspects, the cost and schedule, the community benefits and the size of each option, Option 1C received the highest rating by far.

"Based on the preliminary data that's presented, the clear option is Option 1C," Council President Christopher Johnson said. "One: The out-of-pocket cost to the town is less than the renovation option, two: you don't have the modular classrooms and three; you have a shorter construction time on it."

City Councilor Cecilia Calabrese agreed that, for the moment, Option 1C is preferred.

"My favorite option was the new construction Option 1C, I think that's the one that is really going to fit the needs of the community, especially our future generations coming through," she said.

All options also include a renovation or construction for the pre-K, which could also receive reimbursement from the MSBA.

All of the building plans were created with an estimated student population of 955. This number was set by the state.

There were some concerns raised about the number being too small. Especially, as Calabrese pointed out, given the new housing project on Mill Street which could bring an influx of new residents.

"I was concerned about the 955 number, has the state considered the new housing project on Mill Street, how many two and three bedroom apartments are going in there, how many kids are going in there?" Calabrese said.

According to Calabrese, who brought up this potential issue, Liporto and Kovocs said they will discuss it with the state at their next meeting.

Town residents in attendance of the meeting did raise concerns over the costs of this project. However, many attendees agreed that, while the cost is high, it would be worth it to support the future education of the children in town.

"If we don't start putting our money, our time and our efforts into supporting these children then these children and these parents are going to move out of our community and then what's going to be left?" Teacher Jacelyn Foti said.

Additionally, as pointed out by Superintendent Sheila Hoffman, if the school does not receive renovations, there are concerns that it will not be able to remain accredited, given the state of many science laboratories.

Currently, the labs are not up to standards, making it difficult for the school to meet standards for STEM education.

"Our science rooms can't meet the curriculum needs of our students," Hoffman said. "We have eye wash stations and shower things with no drains, they are not meeting safety standards at all...we are very limited in what kind of experiments we can do or hands on things for students."

The school building committee will be holding at least two more community forums at the Agawam High School Library. They are scheduled for Thursday Sept. 28 and Tuesday Oct. 17 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The community is invited to attend in order to learn more about the project and ensure that their voices are heard.



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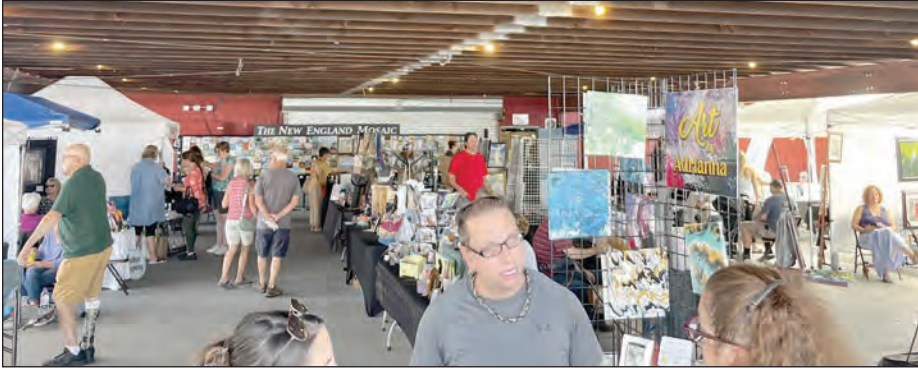
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**OUR CLASSIFIEDS REACH 50 COMMUNITIES EVERY WEEK!**





Residents gather to enjoy the lovely art brought by the Agawam Community Artists and Artisans Pioneer Valley Arts Festival.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA



With more than 240 different canvases, the New England Mosaic was a focal point of the art festival.



Jen Baginski offers attendees a chance to paint their own rocks.



The Agawam Community Artists and Artisans offer demonstrations on how to paint simple but creative paintings.



Diane Boglisch's delicate and lovely wire art easily captures the attention of festival attendees.



Kimberly Caruso-Poley sells her fused glass art.



Nan Hulburt and Charlann Griswold sell jewelry for their business Tangled Vine.



Giuseppa Santaniello Mancuso displays her lovely watercolor, acrylic and glass enamel paintings.



David Hebert displays a variety of hand-crafted pottery.



Agawam High School Artists Huda Sarhan, Zahide Cure and Julianna Hunt get to sell their own art.



Meg Morril had tie-dye shirts, pet portraits and other paintings on display for attendees to choose from.



Christina Nasuti sells her 2D and 3D sequin applique.



David Olzewski performs on one of the lovely flutes he crafted.



Angelo Ferraro paints while surrounded by the display of his oil paintings.



Elayna Sturm sells her photography and embroidery.



With beautifully carved wood art pieces, Eric Murry's tent captured the eye of many in attendance.



Judy Handler and Mark Levesque perform music for festival attendees to enjoy.

**ARTS | from page 1**

commodations for students who have true allergies," Moulton said.

The kitchens are peanut and treenut free anyway, but students with further allergies have to contact their school cafeteria managers. Additionally, the student with the allergy has to get in touch with their school nurse and have paperwork from their allergist.

Once they have contacted the needed people, food services will have a conversation with the student and their family about what meals they like to eat so that they can ensure they have food for them.

"When a student has an allergy, we want to talk to the family, we want to talk

to the student, we want to do anything we can to accommodate them during the breakfast and lunch time," Moulton said.

Any accommodations will have a similar caloric value to the non-allergen offering, as required by the state. For example, if a student is allergic to dairy and therefore unable to have milk, the school will offer lactaid or lactose, rather than water, to meet the calorie requirements.

All students do receive free meals, however meals are reimbursable at different rates, according to Moulton.

"We get reimbursed for the food that we sell that meets a reimbursable standard and then it's reimbursed based on a student's meal status," Moulton explained. "We claim the meals to the state based on

the students' eligibility."

Therefore, the school is reimbursed at a different rate depending on whether the student in question qualifies for free meals, reduced meals or full price meals.

Moulton would like to stress that nobody in the school buildings knows which students qualify for the different meal rates depending on their families' financial status.

"No one knows that but me," Moulton said. "So a student does not come to the line and we say 'oh, it's a free student'. No, it's a student. Everyone gets the same meal."

While meals are reimbursed to the state at different rates, Moulton also made it clear that the meals come at no cost to

the town or the taxpayers.

"It does not cost families or taxpayers or Agawam any more money to feed the students for free," Moulton said.

Part of the reimbursement that is not covered by the state comes from the USDA. Agawam is operating under community eligibility provision, which is part of the national lunch program and shifts part of the burden of reimbursement to the USDA rather than the state.

If a family has any questions about the meal program, they can email Moulton at any time.

"Know that we have an open door policy here in food services and we're happy to discuss this kind of stuff any time," she said.