

AGAWAM

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Qigong pop-up teaches moving meditation

By Christina Gioscia
Correspondent

AGAWAM – Last month, Agawam Public Library hosted a Qigong Popup led by Pamela Cincotta. Attendees could bring their own yoga mat, but it was not required, and water. Cincotta led the group through each movement with a calm voice, creating a relaxed atmosphere. She was sure to reassure attendees that for each move they could go as slow or fast as they wish. She also stated that if a move was painful or didn't feel right, it could be skipped.

Qigong is a form of moving meditations coordinating slow-flowing movement.

Cincotta shared how her Qigong journey began, “My introduction to Qigong occurred after completing yoga teacher training in 2010 via a Gaiam DVD. It was Qigong for Beginners with Masters Francesco Garripoli and Daisy Lee. It was not until

COVID, however, that I began to practice more consistently. I had been experiencing severe neck pain since the birth of my third child and since we were under lockdown and I could not visit my massage therapist or chiropractor, I began searching for YouTube videos for neck pain. That is when I came across Lee Holden. I began practicing with his YouTube videos weekly and then subscribed to his video subscription class. It took me a while to work up to the hour-long classes; they seem simple but can be very challenging.”

Cincotta added, “In spring 2025 I began the student teaching portion of my Qigong training. That is when I started at Agawam Public Library. After completing my certification that summer, I continued instructing weekly with seasonal series in the autumn and spring, when my children are in school.

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APL opens ‘Library of Things’

By Christina Gioscia
Correspondent

AGAWAM – Agawam Public Library recently opened a new section in the library called, “The Library of Things”. The goal of these new additions to the library is to provide the community with resources.

Chad Pelley, Circulation and Technical Services Librarian, provided a list of items in the library, two acoustic guitars, a karaoke blue tooth speaker, a page magnifier, a digital circuit breaker finder, a ten by ten pop up canopy, two external CD and DVD drives, a blood pressure monitor, a bicycle repair kit, a gardening kit, a DVD player, a metal detector, HD binoculars, a scientific calculator, a ukulele, a soil moisture digital PH meter. Pelly also provided a list of upcoming items, fifteen dell pro 14 laptops, crochet hooks, a light therapy lamp, home drill set, hiking poles, a knitting needle set, video to DVD converter, a laser level, a stud finder, a pickle ball set and adult telescope.

Assistant Director Cher Collins shared the process of creating the new section.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA

Items in the new section, The Library of Things, at Agawam Public Library.

“The Library of Things has been on our radar for several years,” said Collins. “We’ve circulated non-traditional items like artwork, wi-fi hotspots and board games for many years, but it was never organized or labeled as the Library of Things. To get this off the ground, we were fortunate to get a grant in conjunction with our DPW that

provided the seed money to get this going in earnest. We also had funding from the Agawam Friends of the Library, and they’ve pledged to continue supporting the project financially. Ordering, packaging, and processing was a long and tedious process, but we wanted to get it right across the board.”

Collins says the library

needs to keep up with trends and incorporate them into the library.

“It’s important for the library to stay responsive to the changes in the community and the larger world,” said Collins. “Providing things’ is a natural addition to a library’s role so that patrons can experi-

LIBRARY | page 10

Neal wins by small margin over newcomer Whalen

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

CHICOPEE – U.S. Rep. Richard Neal has secured the Democratic nomination in Massachusetts’ 1st Congressional District, defeating first-time candidate and local teacher Jeromie Whalen in Tuesday’s primary.

Whalen will now return to the classroom, while Neal turns his attention to November, when he will seek reelection for what would be his 20th term in Congress.

As of Wednesday morning, various reports stated Neal had garnered 46,125 votes, or 53.7%, compared with Whalen’s 39,714 votes,

or 46.3% — a difference of 6,411 votes.

Following the victory, Neal is now expected to face independent candidates Nadia Milleron and Anthony Celata in the general election on Nov. 3. If reelected, he could become chair of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee should Democrats regain control of the House in November, a position that would give him significant influence over tax policy, tariffs, and the future of Social Security.

He acknowledged the possibility while addressing supporters late Tuesday night, after achieving victory. “Let’s take it to Novem-

ber and reclaim the House of Representatives,” Neal said. “I want to first thank the voters of the 1st Congressional District for the faith they have demonstrated in me all of these years, because I’ve spent my lifetime working on these issues. And I want to say this firmly: there is not a family in Western or Central Massachusetts that has not benefited from my work or has not been impacted by my work in Congress,” he added. “Billions of dollars have come back to Western and Central Massachusetts; they have benefited local government, small businesses, non-profits, and we have been your champion, and will continue

to do so.”

The victory came just one week after Neal and Whalen faced off in their only debate of the campaign, a 30-minute exchange in which the longtime incumbent defended his record while Whalen pressed for a new direction for the district.

Whalen, a Belchertown native and progressive who now lives in South Hadley, said watching Trump win two presidential elections while he was teaching at Northampton High School helped motivate his decision to run for Congress.

He was Neal’s first official primary challenger since 2020, when he faced former

Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse and won.

Once the Sept. 1 results came in and Whalen conceded the race, he reflected on the primary and his campaign in a statement posted to social media.

“Congratulations to Congressman Neal, who I spoke with to concede the race,” Whalen wrote. “I was told that I needed to write three speeches for tonight: one in the event that I won, one in the event that I lost, and one in the event that the outcome was not decided by the time I gave this speech. I only

NEAL | page 10

Reminder of proper ways to drain pool

By Quinn Suomala
Correspondent

AGAWAM – Many residents of Agawam recently got a letter reminding them of proper ways to drain their pools.

This letter was sent by the Department of Public Works as part of their effort to keep storm water clean.

The DPW does annual outreach related to storm-water and decided to include a reminder about pool discharge this year.

“We have found in the past some areas of pool discharge improperly being done, so we included this townwide in order to just remind everyone,” Assistant Town Engineer Michael Albro said.

The letter included reminders to ensure pool discharge does not cause flooding in poorly draining areas, erosion in areas with sparse vegetation and damage to neighboring areas due to chemicals.

Pool water should be slowly discharged into the owner’s property in a way

POOL | page 10



US Congressman Richard Neal stands with his supporters.

TURLEY PHOTO BY BRENDAN ROONEY



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SPORTS



The Brownies try to work the ball out of the defensive end of the field.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

The Brownies send the ball deep during scrimmage action.

SOCCKER

Brownies in preseason action

AGAWAM – Last Monday afternoon, Agawam High School boys soccer had its first scrimmage of the season against Belchertown. The two teams have been matching up for the past few

years during the preseason since they do not meet in the regular season and cannot meet in the postseason due to being in different divisions. Agawam is scheduled to open up the regular

season on Tuesday, Sept. 8 against West Springfield, followed by a matchup at Amherst on Sept. 10. Their home opener is on Monday, Sept. 14 at 6 p.m. against Northampton.



Agawam is pressured by the defense.



Agawam moves the ball up the field.

RACING

Racing heats up at Stafford Speedway

STAFFORD SPRINGS, CT – With Stafford Motor Speedway approaching its final races of the 2026 season, drivers are quickly running out of time to either establish themselves as a championship contender, or make a move up in the standings before the season ends. Here is a division by division breakdown of how each of Stafford's five weekly divisions has played out thus far in 2026:

SK Modified Division
Stafford's premier weekly division sees Keith Rocco on track to claim a fifth career track championship. A fifth SK track title would tie Rocco with Bob Potter for the second most in Stafford history, trailing only the late great Ted Christopher with 9 SK titles.

Todd Owen kicked off the 2026 season with what was his first SK Modified feature win since Sept. 2024. Owen, defending SK track champion Jon Puleo, and Tyler Chapman all took turns holding the SK point lead in the early stages of the season, but Rocco's consistency sees him currently holding a 66-point advantage over Puleo with Marcello Ruffano and Owen tied for third, 86 points behind. Rocco took the point lead for the first time following the July 10 feature event and he has not relinquished the lead since. Rocco heads into the Sept. 4 Paradiso Insurance LM 50 program riding a streak of 10 consecutive

top-8 finishes, but all it would take is one bad night for Rocco for his comfortable 66 point margin to disappear.

Late Model Division
Stafford's Late Model division is the tightest championship fight going at Stafford with the top-8 drivers spread less than 50 points, or one race win, apart. Five different drivers have each held the Late Model point lead at some point during the 2026 season. Chris Buffone opened the season with a victory in the NAPA Spring Sizzler and after losing the point lead to Kevin Gambacorta and then Chris Meyer, Buffone was back on top before Adam Gray took over the lead following the June 12 feature event. Gambacorta would swap the lead with both Gray and Meyer once more before Gray went back into the lead following the July 10 feature event and he has held the lead ever since. Much like Keith Rocco in Stafford's SK Modified division, Gray is racing for what would be a fifth career Late Model track title at Stafford. Meyer goes into the final 4 races trailing Gray by 10 points, Gambacorta is third 24 points behind, Wayne Coury, Jr. is fourth, 34 points behind, Michael Bennett is fifth, 40 points behind, Darrell Keane and Buffone are tied for sixth 42 points behind and defending track champion Paul Varricchio, Jr. is eighth, 46 points behind.

SK Light Division

Stafford's SK Light division has seen its 2026 season evolve into a story of two dominant seasons. Chris Matthews opened the season with a victory in the NAPA Spring Sizzler and looked like he would have things on cruise control as he posted podium finishes in the first 7 races with 1 win, 5 second place, and 1 third place finish among those 7 races. Although Matthews has added 3 more wins to his season total since that streak, he has also finished outside the top-15 five times since then and he has fallen to 4th in the standings, 66 points behind Nick Anglace.

Anglace has been the other hot SK Light driver during the 2026 season, racking up 7 wins over the first 17 races. Anglace's win total trails only Ryan Waterman, who has 10 wins in the Street Sizzler division, for the most feature wins at Stafford this season. Former SK Light champion Tyler Barry has quietly kept himself in contention for a second track title, holding the point lead himself for several weeks before Anglace took over the top spot in the standings. Barry has yet to win a race in 2026, but he is the co-division leader with 11 top-5 and 14 top-10 finishes this season. Barry goes into the Sept. 4 race 20 points behind Anglace with Dalton McCarthy, who scored his first

FOOTBALL

AHS football hosts Ludlow

AGAWAM – Last Tuesday in wet conditions, the Agawam High School football team hosted Ludlow in a preseason scrimmage. Both teams are scheduled to open up the regular season this Friday night.

Agawam will be at home for their opener, welcoming East Longmeadow on Friday, Sept. 11 at 7 p.m.



Above, Agawam nearly comes up with an interception.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Left, the offensive line gets their blocking work in.



The Agawam High School football team braved the elements to face Ludlow last Tuesday afternoon.



A pair of Brownies combine on a tackle.



Agawam is preparing for the regular season opener this Friday.



The Brownies' defensive line goes for the tackle on a Ludlow ball carrier.