

***Agawam Catalyst***  
***May – second issue -2012***  
***Agawam's On-Line Hometown***  
***News***

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<http://www.tinyurl.com/agawamcatayst>



Mayor Richard Cohen cuts ribbon at active lifestyle Fitness 168 Elm Street Agawam. Owner and ACSM certified personal trainer Ashley Brodeur is left center. while friends, family and supporters look on- *courtesy photo*

**Active Lifestyle Fitness Offers Fitness Training Options**

Ashley Brodeur, Certified Personal Trainer and owner of Active Lifestyle Fitness, 168 Elm Street, Agawam, has been working as a certified fitness coach since October 2002. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree from Springfield College and is presently pursuing a Master of Science in Exercise Physiology there. She is insured and certified through the American College of Sports Medicine. Her website says, "Ashley specializes in fitness lifestyle development and management as well as injury prevention, strengthening post-physical therapy, and fitness for diabetics. You are not just a number in a queue of clients when you work with Ashley. You are a friend and colleague as you work together to develop and execute a plan personalized to your needs and goals. Ashley's leadership and guidance during (and between) sessions will help you feel secure in knowing you're not alone on your journey." Ashley is the only personal trainer. She does both group and personal training. The other instructors do group training only. "I am here every day but it is by appointment as I don't have set hours and I am usually working with someone when I am here," she said. Ashley conducts a Boot Camp program in addition to group and individual training. Boot Camp suits all fitness levels but some cardio endurance beforehand is advised. Boot camp sessions last about 50 to 50 minutes. Group training are \$10 each session or \$80 for ten session punch card. Visit the website at <http://activelifestylefitness.com> or call 413-519-9641.



**Westfield River Wild & Scenic Free Training & Workdays in May**

*All river enthusiasts welcome. Spring Cleaning at Glendale Falls Saturday MAY 26<sup>th</sup> 10am. - 2pm. Help Preserve and enhance one of the highest falls in Western Mass. Meet at the Glendale Falls parking area. Bring your shovels, gloves and sense of humor!! Call to sign up for a crew!! Identify and help reduce the spread of Invasive plants. Sunday May 27<sup>th</sup> 10 am -2pm. meet at the Chesterfield Gorge TTOR parking lot. Call Meredyth Babcock 413 623-2070 [www.westfieldriverwildscenic.org](http://www.westfieldriverwildscenic.org)*

**Support Needed for Robinson Park School 5k Techno Trot and 2-mile Family Fun Walk May 20th**

There's still time to sign up to run the 5k or to walk the 2 mile family fun walk. At Robinson Park School, we are organizing our first annual fundraiser technology in our classrooms. Our goal is to put an Epson BrightLink in every classroom within the school. We are hopeful that by utilizing this engaging learning system and its interactive technology, our children will become more motivated to learn and will feel empowered to play an active role in their learning. **Participants can be seasoned runners, beginners, students and walkers.** At the conclusion of the race, fantastic items will be raffled off including 2 Red Sox vs. Yankees tickets; a Madeira Beach, FL condo escape; a full-size, pre-assembled Charbroil gas grill with LP tank and complementary first fill-up; Authentic Paul Pierce Autographed Basketball donated by the Boston Celtics; a Venetian gondola ride for 4 by Gondola di Venezia in Boston; a one-night stay at the Green Turtle Floating B&B, located in the historic Charlestown Navy Yard; and many more! Raffle tickets available at the event. We are incredibly appreciative of the support we have received from the community, town service departments, local organizations and businesses. Contact Marie Ball at [mball@massmutual.com](mailto:mball@massmutual.com). Event will be Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, Robinson Park School, Begley Street, Rain or shine. Check in: 12:00 noon – start Time: 1:00 pm. Runners and walkers can pre-register by returning a completed registration form, completing an online registration form, or by signing up at the school on race day. To learn more visit [www.rpstechnotrot.com](http://www.rpstechnotrot.com). Thank you for your support!

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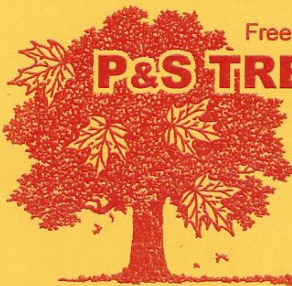
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Mark Tansey of Partners Restaurant & Catering is now serving lunch and dinner at Crestview Country Club. Mark is also available for golf outings and catering at Crestview. We are very excited to offer you more GREAT! food and service. You can be assured of both as our reputation of 26 years attests. Crestview Country Club is open to the public. We are serving in the 19<sup>th</sup> Hole – “The View” from 11am – 7pm. Come in before or after golf or just stop in to enjoy a great meal with a great view! Families are welcome! Beginning on Memorial Day weekend dinner will be served in “The View” and on the outside patio on Friday & Saturday nights from 5 -9pm. Entertainment schedule to follow! Check [www.crestviewcc.org](http://www.crestviewcc.org) for more details. Menus for catering at Crestview Country Club are available for viewing at [www.partnersrestaurant.com](http://www.partnersrestaurant.com). Or, call Partners at (413) 786-0975.



**Robinson State Park Day to be celebrated on Saturday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2012**

**428 North Street, Agawam, MA**

Co-Sponsored by Friends of Robinson State Park and the Dept. of Conservation and Recreation

Please Join us, and spread the word.

- 1) We have a publicity flyer. If you could help by sending the flyer to other contacts, or posting it appropriately, please respond and we will send the flyer electronically.
- 2) If you could be available, even for short periods of time, to guide people from the front entrance to the Pavilion area, or from the Pavilion to the Pond, please respond. We would really appreciate it.

**Major new highlight this year: The Watershed on Wheels (WOW) Express is coming to Robinson. The Express is a traveling exhibit designed to engage children of all ages in the beauty and wonder of the Connecticut River Watershed.**

**The exhibit has two components:** The walk-through exhibit is enclosed in a 28-foot trailer wrapped in a colorful mural depicting the wildlife of the Silvio Conte Refuge. The emersion trailer simulates a walk in a New England Forest and is designed to introduce children to the diversity of wildlife that may be found within the Watershed, (which includes Robinson State Park and their own back yards!) There are seven portable, four-sided kiosks and one interactive watershed table. Each kiosk employs interactive panels, games or computer screens to creatively engage children in the topics of biodiversity, wetlands, bald eagles, migratory birds, endangered species, migratory fish, food webs, and invasive species. The interactive watershed table includes a model of the Connecticut River Watershed and uses push buttons and lights as educational devices. [http://www.fws.gov/r5soc/educational\\_resources/WoW%20Express%20Request%20Packet.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/r5soc/educational_resources/WoW%20Express%20Request%20Packet.pdf)

**Schedule of fun and educational events on Robinson Park:**

**Park Opens at 8 am**

**John Hutchison** of the Allen Bird Club will lead a bird identification walk from the Pavilion. Please bring binoculars. He loves to teach "new birders" of all ages. All other activities begin at 10 am in the Day Use Area and are ongoing until about 2 p.m.

**Gini Traub**, Regional Environmental Education Coordinator for DCR will lead nature explorations at the Pond and around the edges of the forest: "What's in the Water?" and "Life on the Edge"

**Burt Freedman**, lead educator with the ECOS program for the Springfield School System will also lead nature explorations and will have a "kid's table with redback salamanders".

**At the Pavilion:**

**Sharon Vasicek**, Agawam elementary school teacher, will facilitate "nature weavings" for elementary school aged children, on looms made of recycled paper board. Volunteers will help young children color and identify wildflowers, trees and forest animals.

**Matt Largess**, ("Twig") arborist from Rhode Island.

**Rod Parlee**, Bolton Ct. Conservation Commission

**Dave Conley**, hike leader from the Appalachian Mountain Club, Berkshire Chapter

All are willing to lead hikes and/or do rapid stream assessment, depending on which trails are open by that time. Recent conversations with our Park Supervisor, Joe Sarkis, have left us with an optimistic hope that more tree work will be completed soon, and the trails will be deemed safe for "use with caution."

**Westfield River Watershed Association plans annual Canoe Cruise for Robinson State Park Day**

Please check their website for the latest information: <http://www.westfieldriver.org/events.html>

Please bring your own food and water. There is no additional charge beyond the standard admission of \$5 per car entry. Walkers and bikers are free. As always, thank you for your support, and thank you in advance for helping us promote this event. Note: We are working on restoring our website: <http://www.friendsofrobinsonstatepark.org> from *The leaders of the Friends of Robinson State Park*

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Out of Control Care Hits Pedestrian

A woman was struck by an automobile in January of 2011. Because the sidewalk was icy and obstructed by the snow banks, the woman was walking along the shoulder of the road when she was hit from behind. The driver, who had lost control of his car, also struck two other vehicles and was cited for operating to endanger, improper passing and unsafe lane change. The victim sustained multiple fractures to both legs and had a series of orthopedic surgeries and hardware placements. She underwent short-term rehabilitation followed by twelve weeks of physical therapy, both of which were especially difficult due to her permanent right leg weakness, a result of childhood polio. Four months after the accident, she was able to walk with a walker and a cane for short distances. That summer, she returned to work full-time. She continued to make gains with physical therapy, but walking was painful and her gait was slow and unsteady. The medical records of her orthopedic surgeon indicated that she had full range of motion in all joints and no pain or difficulty with the hardware, and that she was ambulating independently with only a slight limp. Because the records failed to demonstrate the true extent of her limitations, a day-in-the-life video was produced during negotiations to demonstrate her difficulties doing most basic daily activities, including climbing the stairs to her apartment and walking short distances. After producing the video, plaintiff's demand was increased by \$115,000.00 to the eventual settlement amount.

Plaintiff's settlement: \$365,000.00

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Friday Night Dinner  
Public Event · By Springfield Turnverein

Friday, May 25, 2012

6:00 pm until 7:30pm

Chicken Casserole w/salad  
Italian green beans , rolls  
or choice of chicken caesar salad  
pudding , coffee, tea  
\$ 10.00 Adults- \$  
5.00 Children under 12  
make reservations at club



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Carl Beane, the "Voice of the Red Sox," was an Agawam native and a 1971 Agawam High School graduate who served as the announcer at Fenway Park in Boston since 2003. In 2004, the Red Sox won the World Series, and Beane brought the trophy around to a multitude of public facilities, allowing as many people as possible to share in the joy. He is shown above left bringing the trophy into Agawam Public Library, where a large group of people were able to admire it. Above left, Beane holds the arm of an enthusiastic Agawam student and her mother. Beane died recently, suffering a heart attack while driving in Sturbridge. Beane, 59, was pronounced dead at Harrington Hospital in Southbridge a short time after the crash. As a radio reporter at WARE Radio, he had already been well known to the Red Sox before he became their public address announcer. Beane's signature introduction at each game was always, "Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, welcome to Fenway Park." He was hired not only for his resonant voice but also for his knowledge of baseball, making lineup changes obvious to him. Beane broadcast Red Sox home games at the 2004 and 2007 World Series, and his voice was heard in the film "Fever Pitch," about the passion of a fictitious Red Sox fan. Beane wrote a weekly column called The Beane Pot for *Agawam Advertiser* for several years. A service for him was held in Sturbridge May 16<sup>th</sup>.



DAKIN PIONEER VALLEY HUMANE SOCIETY

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### The "Little Shelter That Could" Gets a Makeover

On April 1, 1995, Leslie Harris became the first employee of the Dakin Animal Shelter on Montague Road in Leverett. At that time, the organization was called Friends of Amherst's Stray Animals and was gearing up to open its first animal shelter on May 1. Soon a more spacious, comfortable renovated facility will open, fulfilling Dakin's promise to provide continued service to Franklin County. One of the lead gifts for Dakin's Leverett Adoption Center renovation was years in the making. "Coby's Gift" tells the story of how one family built a legacy that will serve the Upper Valley for years to come. Was it a decision or fate that brought a former racetrack dog into the Lucier home? Telitha Lucier credits her adopted greyhound Montana with saving her life, not from fire or flood, but severe depression. **25,000 Spays and Neuters and counting....** People concerned with cat care will remember Feral Spay Sundays, which were conducted by Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society when their only facility was in Leverett. Since Dakin purchased the former Springfield Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals on Union Street, Springfield, there is no longer a need for the exhausting Feral Spay Sundays because there have been 25,000 spays and neuters and counting by Dakin veterinarians at the low-cost spay and neuter clinic in Springfield since opening in late 2009. Spaying or neutering an animal is one of the best actions anyone can take for the welfare of animals. It can help your cat or dog live a healthier, longer life. Spaying eliminates the loud crying and nervous pacing of a female cat in heat or the messiness of a female dog in the heat cycle. Neutering male dogs and cats minimizes undesirable sexual behaviors such as urine marking, male aggression and an urge to roam. If you have multiple pets, they generally get along better if they are neutered. All spay-neuter surgeries require an appointment, and each animal is examined before surgery. To make an appointment, please call 413-781-4019 or contact [spay@dpvhs.org](mailto:spay@dpvhs.org).

### Dakin is chosen charity for the Paradise City Arts Festival May 26 -28 -Northampton Fairgrounds

Visitors to this year's fabled art festival will have opportunities to obtain fine art and craft items while helping animals in our communities. Come bid in the silent auction to benefit Dakin Pioneer Valley Humane Society.

**September 17, 2012 –**

Five Star Dakin Charity Golf Tournament 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. **Play one of New England's finest courses for a great cause. The Orchards, South Hadley.**

**October 19, 2012**

**Wyckoff Country Club, Holyoke – Reception, dinner ceremony, dancing. Second Annual Dakin Humane Awards: Dakin asks your help in its efforts to recognize the most deserving in our community.**



Westfield River Watershed Association  
P.O. Box 1764  
Westfield, Mass. 01086  
WestfieldRiver1764@gmail.com

**Media Contact:** Lynn Bannon, 413-454-5264 [lynnbannon@verizon.net](mailto:lynnbannon@verizon.net)

**TRY PADDLING AT KAYAK DEMO DAY**

*Hampton Ponds State Park, May 19th*

If you've been thinking about buying a kayak or you're just curious to see what it's like to paddle some of these sleek craft, Kayak Demo Day on Saturday, May 19 is a perfect opportunity. Demo Day, sponsored by the Westfield River Watershed Association in partnership with Westfield Water Sports/Wilderness Adventures in Southwick, gives people a chance to try out dozens of different kayaks on the water at Hampton Ponds State Park, 1022 North Road (Route 202) in Westfield from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Rain date is Sunday, May 20.) At Demo Day, instructors will make sure participants are outfitted safely, help them into a boat and show them some basic paddling techniques and tips for getting back in the boat if it happens to flip. Paddlers can try kayak styles from Wilderness Systems, Native, Wave Sport, Elie, Current Designs, Wenonah, Liquidlogic and others. There will be demonstrations and instruction repeated throughout the day. Check out the Whitewater Kayak Demo, Eskimo Roll Demo, Outfitting for Safety, Rescue Clinic, Stand-up Paddling, and Intro to Kayaking Clinic. While you're at Demo Day, check out WRWA's raffle of great prizes including a Pelican Sound 120 kayak and lots of paddling gear. You don't have to be present to win. Admission to Demo Day is \$5.00 per person or \$10.00 per family. Proceeds benefit the Westfield River Watershed Association. For more information, visit [www.westfieldriver.org](http://www.westfieldriver.org) or email [westfieldriver1764@gmail.com](mailto:westfieldriver1764@gmail.com).



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- THE SHOWER IS YOUR BEST FRIEND
- IT TAKES A LITTLE WHILE IN THE MORNING TO GET EVERYTHING MOVING
- YOU NEED TO TURN YOUR WHOLE BODY IN ORDER TO SEE BEHIND YOU
- WHEN YOU TURN YOUR HEAD A SHARP PAIN ZINGS DOWN YOUR BODY
- KNOTS HAVE REPLACED THE MUSCLES IN YOUR BODY
- THE THOUGHT OF GOING FOR A WALK SOUNDS LIKE RUNNING A MARATHON
- YOU WAKE UP VERY "UNREFRESHED"
- YOU CAN'T SLEEP AT NIGHT
- PUTTING ON A PAIR OF SOCKS IS A MAJOR YOGA MOVE
- IT FEELS LIKE A CELLPHONE IS GOING OFF IN YOUR BACK POCKET WHEN THERE'S NO PHONE THERE
- YOU JUST DON'T FEEL RIGHT

*If you experience any of these symptoms, it may be time for a "chiropractic" tune-up. Call our office today for your spring adjustment! Here's to a happy and healthy spring!*



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Courtesy photo from Cece Calabrese

**Lynne Bryant Henry** wrote.

1:17am May 1

“Well 2,883 miles later Dana and I have made it back from St. Louis. What an awesome time. First I would like to say to the students of Rosie, you are AWESOME!!!! I am so proud of our fantastic team. You ALL worked very hard to get there and it showed. We left St. Louis with many teams knowing who Rosie was, you did an excellent job representing Agawam High School from Agawam, MA. To ALL the Mentors and parents that attended with the team, Thank You for taking the time out of your busy schedules to attend. A big kudos to you all for being there. Because of you Dana and I were able to do our volunteer jobs we do. Thank You. GO ROSIE!!!!”

**Feline Friends** announces some upcoming events and opportunities:

**May 20th Feline Friends will be having our annual golf tournament** at the beautiful Ranch Golf Course located in Southwick Mass. Interested in golfing? Not a golfer, but want to attend our dinner with auction/raffle? Go to [www.felinefriendsgolf.org](http://www.felinefriendsgolf.org) for all details and sign up directly through there. **June 16th** is our Kitty Can-Can Drive. What is that you may ask? Well come to Dave’s Soda and Pet City located in Agawam Mass between 10-2. Bring your empty bottles and cans. Feline Friends volunteers will be there to collect your bags and return those empties for you. All moneys collected will go towards the kitties. Don’t have empties? Then come on down and buy a few cans of cat food for our kitties. There will be volunteers there handing out wish lists and gathering donations. Every bit helps!!!! We launched our Sponsor a Cat Program!!! Visit [www.felinefriendsinc.org](http://www.felinefriendsinc.org) Sponsor a Cat. Read the stories about 11 of our cats. See how far these furry creatures have come. Each kitty has levels of support. Once you sponsor a cat you will receive a letter and periodic updates. It’s a wonderful way to help a kitty in need!

We would like to welcome our new Volunteer Coordinator Lisa Carney. She has been with Feline Friends for many years now. She has stepped up and is excited to head our volunteer program. We have MANY volunteer opportunities such as cat care, kitty transport to and from the vet, helping with mailings, writing grants, picking up orders and much, much more. If you are interested then please contact Lisa directly at [tenspeed99@comcast.net](mailto:tenspeed99@comcast.net).

Thank you all for supporting Feline Friends! Alanna Regan, Manager

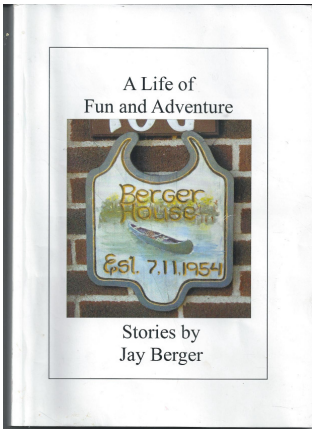
Our mailing address is:

Feline Friends Cat Sanctuary  
PO Box 174  
Feeding Hills, MA 01030



**Eddie is just one of the kitties needing special support in our Sponsor a Cat Program. Who says cats have bad taste in television?**





Agawam Catalyst has been given permission from Jay Berger to share excerpts from his book, A Life of Fun and Adventure. We have already enjoyed several of these "installments," and here is one more!

### Why I Ride A Bicycle

By Jay Berger

Cruising along Route 202 alongside the beautiful, scenic Quabbin Reservoir, I was not prepared for the grinding, clunking sound, not to mention dark smelly smoke, emanating from beneath my car. This was my very first automobile. A Hudson, rusty, dented, with a non-working rumble-seat, scuffed whitewall tired, but it was mine. The car groaned to a halt at the overlook for Quabbin. I exited the Hudson and saw under the car, a dark metallic mass lying on the macadam. "I wonder if that's the transmission" was my thought. Luckily, because this was such a popular overlook, there was a coin telephone. I dialed an operator and she connected me with a local auto repair shop. I reported my woes and after saying he would be right along, he asked, "When did you check or change the oil or have the car greased?" My reply of Huh? was enough for him. When the mechanic arrived, he confirmed my observation of transmission; hooked up the car to him tow truck and away we went to his repair shop. After much grunting, hemming, my goodness, the mechanic announced, "It's going to cost you much more than the car is worth. I suggest you sell it for parts and buy another one. Only, this time, check your oil level and grease it." Gee, when my Uncle Al sold me the car, he said I would be able to drive it forever. He never said anything about the oil! So went the saga of my very first car. My second great car purchase was a Dodge. The salesperson who sold me the Dodge promised, "This car was built right after the war. The best materials, engineering know-how, and skills went into it. You will have this auto for years to come." A few weeks later, I was driving north on the New Jersey Turnpike and had turned in at a rest stop. As I was enjoying the break with a cup of coffee, a man burst into the area shouting, "There's a car on fire outside..I think it's a black Dodge." I got up suddenly spilling the coffee on the floor and strode outside. My "years to come" auto was completely engulfed. Drivers who had come over with fire extinguishers were ineffective. A tow truck had arrived and after cooling down, it was towed away. Allegedly, someone had placed a copper rod in the place of a fuse and when the circuit shorted, it just continued to create heat until it caught fire. My third automobile was sold to me as a "chic magnet". I was still single and this car according to the sales person had bedroom lights. Sure enough, the interior lights were a subdued, house of prostitution, color purple. The car itself was a sickening shade of lime green. It was a top of the line Ford product and I bought it. Fall semesters had just begun and I figured with a top of the line auto, with bedroom lights, I just couldn't miss. When I walked out of the dorm after picking up my first date, her reaction was, "We are not going out in that THING, are we? Let's walk. There are a number of restaurants within walking distance." I pulled over as best I could and looking under the car I spotted a dark metallic mess that I took to be the transmission. I never learn. The second date wasn't much better. Her reaction was to get into the car gingerly, slump down in the seat and mutter, "I hope no one I know sees me in this awful car." Fortunately for me, the company I was working for decided to get me a company car. My mother was looking for new wheels, so I gave the car a fresh, neutral paint job and replaced the interior light bulbs, and presented my mother with the "chic magnet". Shortly after this, I was married. My wife needed a car to get across town where she was teaching. We went out and bought a Pontiac. This car had a nasty habit of stalling at key traffic lights. When that happened, the mechanic said, "Get under the hood and tap the wires on the distributor cap." That in itself was reason to get rid of this car, but then the incident of the car losing its brakes on a steep hill occurred. Fortunately, Kitty had the presence of mind to down-shift, and use the emergency brake, then coast to a safe place and exit the car forever. From that point on, I had a series of company cars. One cannot complain about them. And as a second car, we elected to purchase new cars. They haven't had time to develop a history such as "you'll have this care for many years to come" or "you can drive it forever" or "just tap the distributor cap." One more experience illustrates the wisdom that I have shown in buying automobiles. I bought a Ford station wagon, so that we could pull our camping trailer. But I bought one that was underpowered. We were pulling our trailer, canoe, sailboat, and assorted gear up the mountains in the Berkshires, and on one particularly steep hill, we heard and felt a quite dramatic "CLUNK." When I called triple A on the car phone, the dispatcher wanted some information and I overheard him talking to the mechanic who was going to respond. "Doesn't that dope know that you can't pull that much weight with an undersized engine. Some people!"



Mayor

Richard A. Cohen

36 Main Street  
Agawam, MA 01001

(413) 786-0400 ext. 8520

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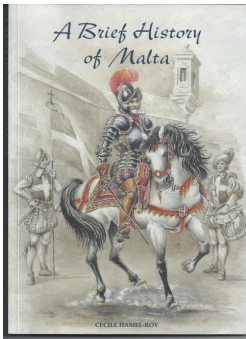
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From *A Brief History of Malta*, by Cecile Hamel-Roy

Author Cecile Hamel-Roy has agreed to share excerpts from her book, *A Brief History of Malta*.

Follows is the third chapter.

### Chapter Three

## *The Medieval Period*


### *The Norman French Invade Malta*

At the end of the tenth century, lower Italy and the Mediterranean were contested by three great powers: the Moslems, the Byzantines and the Normans. The Normans first appeared in Italy in 1014 AD when they came to fight with the rebels against the Byzantine Empire. Although the rebels were defeated, the Normans stayed on in Italy as “hired swordsmen” and were soon followed by fellow Normans. The Normans were not only great fighters, they were also ambitious. By the middle of the eleventh century their leader, Roger Hauteville, was recognized as a Count and a leading power in Italy. After thirty years of fierce fighting the Normans seized Sicily from the Arabs in 1090 AD. In July of that same year the Norman fleet, with Count Roger’s ship in the lead, sailed on to Malta. The Normans attacked the Arab defenders of Malta at Mdina and the Arab leader quickly sued for peace. The Normans’ terms stipulated, among other things, that the Arabs free all Christian slaves, and turn over all horses and weapons. In turn the Arabs were allowed to remain in Malta if they agreed to pay an annual tribute to the Normans. The Maltese also accepted the Normans’ sovereignty and promised to pay an annual tribute. Freedom of belief was continued with Christians and Moslems being treated equally. Count Roger saw to it that the cathedrals of Malta and Gozo were rebuilt, as well as various chapels and churches that had been neglected during Arab rule. According to local lore Count Roger gave Malta its national flag. As Count Roger was bidding farewell to Malta he tore off a section of his own “Hauteville” coat of arms, giving the Maltese flag its colours of white and red. To this day Masses are said in Malta on 4 November for the Count’s soul.

### *The Angevins, Aragonese and Castillians* *“The Count of Malta”*

In 1250 Pope Clement IV, declaring that he had the right to name the successor to the crown of Sicily, invited Charles of Anjou and Provence to take over the kingdom. The rightful heirs to the throne thought otherwise, and the ensuing battles continued for the next 18 years. Charles was victorious, and it seemed, the Angevin dynasty was now free to rule Sicily unopposed. In actual fact the Angevin dynasty was to be short-lived. Charles was a tyrannical ruler, and his tyranny was felt by all of Sicily. The revolt of 1282, aided by the Aragonese fleet which was anchored in the Palermo harbour, rid Sicily of the Angevins. The population greeted Peter III of Aragon with jubilation. Peter III was crowned King of Sicily in 1283. In June of that year the Aragonese naval commander sailed his fleet to Malta to take on the Angevin fleet still harboured there. A fierce battle ensued with the Aragonese victorious. The Maltese recognized their new rulers, presenting the Aragonese Admiral with provisions and money. During the Aragonese period Malta, although considered a part of the kingdom of Sicily, was usually granted as a “fiefdom” to some nobleman, who was then given the title of “Count of Malta.” During the reign of King Lewis of Aragon the Maltese petitioned that Malta and Gozo be governed directly from Sicily, and no longer be granted as a fiefdom. This was agreed to and the King signed the petition in 1350. This agreement was ignored by subsequent monarchs with the next “Count of Malta” being granted as a fiefdom in 1357. Between the years 1393 and 1397 Malta was torn between partisans favouring two different “Counts”. Following these troubled times, known as the “Time of the Tyrants,” again the King issued a decree that, under no conditions, were the Maltese Islands to be given as a fief. However, in 1420, under the rule of Alfonso I, the islands were feudalized yet again for 30,000 florins. The people of Malta entered strong protests, but were obliged to swear fealty to the new leader and to pay any taxes that he chose to levy. By 1425 the populace was reduced to miserable conditions under the heavy taxes of another count, Don Consalvo Monroi, which led to open revolt. Ambassadors were sent to King Alfonso requesting that Malta again be included under the royal banner of the kingdom of Sicily. The situation had become so unbearable to the Maltese that they offered to pay back to Count Monroi the 30,000 florins that he had paid for the Islands. The King, by an edict dated 3 January 1427, granted the Maltese all privileges granted to them by former kings. As a compliment to the Sicilian king, the capital of Mdina was from that date on noted in official documents as “Citta Notabile”, although the people of Malta, to this day, continue to call it Mdina. The repayment of the 30,000 florins created yet another hardship for the Maltese people. Malta had recently been invaded by Barbary Corsairs, as the pirates of North Africa were called, and a plague which raged from 1427 to 1428 had taken many lives. Public collections were made and land owners gave large amounts of money to raise the 30,000 florins. The paid debt was confirmed on 20 June 1428, and the people were now officially under the auspices of the King of Sicily. Alfonso I died in 1458 and his brother, John II, King of Navarre, succeeded to the Crown of Aragon and Sicily. King John II died after a reign of twenty years. Upon his death the crown passed to his son, Ferdinand II of Sicily and V of Spain and his wife, Isabella of Castile. Thus, the Maltese Islands were now under a combination of Sicilian and Spanish rule. During the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella yet more misery was visited upon the Maltese in the form of a massive army from Tunisia a full 18,000 strong. The Maltese, heavily out-manned and still weak from yet another plague, valiantly tried to resist. Sadly more than 3,000 people, out of a total population of 16,000 to 18,000, were carried away to slavery. Following this debacle King Ferdinand authorized the construction of a small fort, actually not much more than a tower, built at the mouth of the Grand Harbour for protection against further attacks. The fort, named San Telmo or Sant Elmo, was greatly enlarged in 1552 by the Knights of St. John, and, as Fort St. Elmo, was to play such a large part in the defense of Malta during the Siege of 1565.

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**FINAL REMINDER.....**



**Coffee House Benefit May 18th at Senior Center to Present Variety of Talent**

On May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012, Coffee House for Cool Cats will be held at Agawam Senior Center. The show begins at 6:30 pm and benefits Agawam Friends of Homeless Cats, a small group who bring water and food to abandoned, lost or feral cats while sometimes working with other rescue groups for spay/neuter/release or adoption. Coffee House for Cool Cats will include performances by Jerry Marchand, a Celtic harp player, songs by the trio What's the Buzz, and a rendition of "The Cat Came Back" by local musician Al Rosati. Verne McArthur will perform and engage the audience in a sing-along, a few standards will be performed by Joan Linnihan and Kate Shepard, and several songs will be donated by Jack Yourous, known as "Jack and His Guitar". A highlight of the program will be a brief history of the bugle by Darcy B. Davis, Jr., who was recently elected to the Buglars Hall of Fame. The program promises to offer a medley of musical delights. Plenty of coffee and decaffeinated will be available, with some refreshments. There will be a place to donate bags of dry cat food the night of the show, or bags of dry cat food can be left on the back steps at 184 Poplar Street, Feeding Hills anytime. Suggested ticket price is \$10. For ticket information call Agawam Friends of Homeless Cats at 413-786-3672 or Joan Linnehan at Agawam Senior Center, 413-821-0604, ext 1. Also contact by email at [kshep873091@verizon.net](mailto:kshep873091@verizon.net). Tickets can be purchased in advance or will be available at the door.