

AGAWAM

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'Cooler Communities' highlights environmental awareness

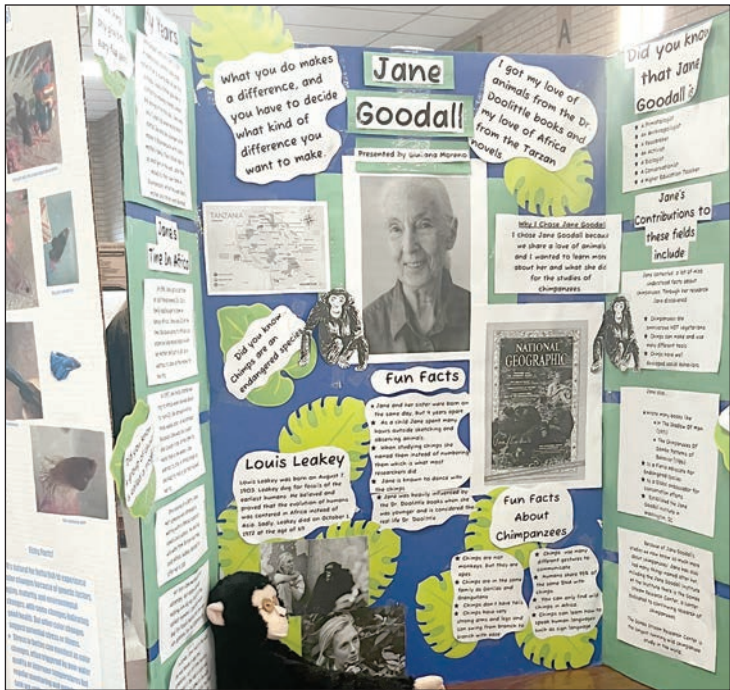
By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Agawam schools hosted a Cooler Communities event where students got to display different science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics projects they had worked on this year.

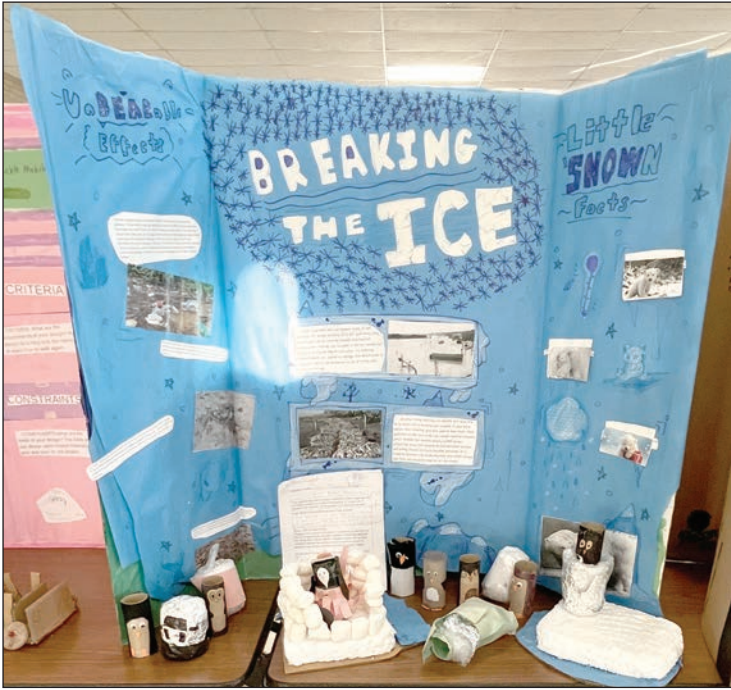
Cooler Communities and Agawam schools worked together to put on this event to encourage children and their families to learn more about how they can help the environment.

"We're trying to bring real life science to everyone in the community, especially my students," Science Teacher Tammy Rumplick said. "I think it's really important to have projects be real-life based."

Throughout the event parents were encouraged to make Cooler



Some students created animal prosthetic prototypes as part of the Cooler Communities event.



People were invited to write their wishes for the environment on the tree drawing.
TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA

Parade Committee pleased with parade participation despite band's absence

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Several social media posts showed some residents were upset at the absence of Agawam High School's band in the St. Patrick's Day Parade on Mar. 17.

The school district and Mayor Christopher Johnson have made no comments on this matter at this time, but the St. Patrick's Committee chair had positive things to say about the community's participation in the event.

Agawam Parade Committee President Abbie Malouin was pleased with the overall participation from the town in the parade, though she said the parade committee is always looking to increase participation levels.

"We are always looking for everybody to come out and join us and we had members from town council, we had school committee members, the mayor was involved too, we did have our contingent with all of our award winners," Malouin said. "So we did have our participation in the parade but we're always looking for more participation from the town...we had a great season."

Malouin also emphasized that the parade day is about the Colleens and the award winners.

"Our girls and our award winners are the center of our contingent for that day," she said. "To see the girls so excited, it makes us so excited. To honor award winners that are so deserving of their award that day it's just a great sense of pride for Agawam and we really want to be able to celebrate that."

Malouin also expressed her pride in everything the parade committee had pulled together for the parade this year.

"Each year we build on what we started and we're always moving, we feel, in the right direction," she said.

Malouin and the rest of the parade committee want to focus on celebrating Irish heritage throughout the parade season.

"Celebrating your heritage and having engagement with your community is really important and that's what our Colleen and court try to do so much," Malouin said.

Already the committee is working toward planning parade season for next year.

"We already have so many ideas moving forward for the next green season," Malouin said. "We're ready to go at our next meeting about planning out our

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Town gearing up for multiple elections

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – This year is a big year for elections, especially in Agawam due to the additional election for the high school project.

Already Agawam has had the presidential primary election on Mar. 5. City Clerk Vince Gioscia reported that they had prepared well for the election, though it wound up being a slower day than expected.

"Everybody was ready to go in March but it was kind of slow election-wise," Gioscia said. "It was busy but it wasn't what people expected. I think a lot of people are just waiting for the November election."

There will be the state primary on Sept. 3 and the general election on Nov. 5.

In 2020, Gioscia found that there was a 72% voter turnout for the presidential election. He anticipates the turnout will also be large in November of this year.

Additionally, the town will have the chance to vote on the high school project, which will take the form of a debt exclusion override vote.

The city council voted unanimously at their Mar. 6 meeting to approve the debt exclusion override and the funding of the high school, so long as the residents vote in favor and the MSBA approves their portion of the funding.

With this vote they also approved a June 11 election so the town can vote on whether or not to approve the high school project.

The city clerk's office has been busy preparing for the different elections this year.

"To be honest with you it does slow the office down because we have to devote so much time and manpower to the elections," Gioscia said.

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– City Clerk Vince Gioscia

According to Gioscia they have had to switch to doing marriage licenses by appointment only and they have experienced some delays on distributing documents such as birth certificates due to the busy election season.

"Usually when someone calls for a birth certificate they can come right in and pick it up and now sometimes we're saying they have to come tomorrow morning to get it," he said.

Gioscia and his staff have been working hard to keep on top of everything they can as elections approach.

"We just plow through it," he said. "We just get through it sometimes."

Additionally, multiple elections in a year can be costly for the town.

While every election is slightly different, the March primary election cost the town a little over \$20,000 according to Gioscia.

"We had to hire extra workers to assist with the mail in balloting and we have the week of early voting as well as election day itself," Gioscia said. "That includes outgoing postage to mail out ballots and the programming of the election machine."

The mail-in voting ballots are some of the bigger costs for planning an election day.

"We sent out a little bit more than 28,000 mail-in ballots for March and it's 88 cents a ballot," Gioscia said.

This cost has increased even further in recent years, thanks to the pandemic increasing the need for mail-in voting.

"Prior to mail-in balloting in 2020 we didn't have postage expenses to mail out thousands of ballots," Gioscia said. "Then there's the logistics of processing all the applications for mail-in balloting."

To learn more about election schedules and where to go to vote, go to <https://www.agawam.ma.us/231/Election-Information>.



SPORTS



Jack Cravo heads down the court.



Agawam 7-8 Suburban Boys Basketball won their division title on March 16 by defeating Chicopee in the finals. TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Agawam's 7-8 boys basketball take title

BELCHERTOWN – On Saturday, March 16, Agawam 7-8 Suburban Boys Basketball won its division title in a matchup at Belchertown High School.



Gabe Natale goes for the open layup.



Dylan Jorgensen makes his way down the court to start a play on offense.



Luke Loughlin looks for an opening to pass.



Jacob Quinby gets a shot on the hoop.

Senior All-Star showcase

SPRINGFIELD – Last Thursday evening, the Nasmith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame hosted three basketball games to honor 60 seniors throughout Western Massachusetts. Among the participants was Colin Smith, who represented Agawam High School in the Class A/B game.



Smith plays for the Class A/B squad in the final game of the evening. TURLEY PHOTOS BY SOFIA DIGRANDE



Colin Smith represented Agawam High School in the Senior All-Star Game.