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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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Club celebrates 88th anniversary

AGAWAM – On Wednesday, May 20, the Catholic Women's Club of Agawam celebrated its 88th anniversary with a beautiful banquet

event at Storowton Tavern.

The May Banquet was held at Storowton. And Club President Paula Raiche, Vice President Jackie Toussaint

and Treasurer Eileen Kane presented tea cups and saucers as a remembrance of the September "teas" and the many warm and wonderful

friendships made throughout the years. Honored guests were Deacon Dave Picard and Sr. Melinda Pellerin.

It was a joyous evening.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Top photo, longtime members of the Catholic Women's Club of Agawam. Above, the tea cup table on display. Left, Treasurer Eileen Kane, Deacon Dave Picard, Vice President Jackie Toussaint and President Paula Raiche.

Pajer, town reach compromise to move forward with project

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – After a massive turnout to a late April Agawam City Council meeting and a subsequent community information meeting and city council workshop, town officials were able to reach a compromise with Alfred Pajer, owner of Pajer Superette so an intersection project can go forward.

At its May 18 meeting, the council approved eminent domain takings at the five-way intersection that meets Rowley St., with Cooper St. and Suffield St. (Rte. 75). The town will utilize casino mitigation funds for the project. The goal is to modernize the intersection with new traffic signals and a couple of dedicated left turn lanes in order to help with the traffic flow. Sidewalk and crosswalks with proper ADA-compliant materials were also part of the plan. A rotary, or roundabout was considered, but ultimately ruled out.

One part of the project that was a major issue was the eminent domain takings on a few properties needed to widen the intersection.

Pajer, community supporters, and even some of his employees, addressed the city council in April, saying the land takings

that would have eliminated a few of parking spaces in front of his business would have hurt his operations and asked the council to consider other options.

The council responded by holding a workshop meeting for more community interaction and to ask more questions of project designers and Mayor Christopher Johnson.

The takings were then tabled at the first May meeting before compromise was reached between the Town and Pajer.

One thing of note was that the eminent domain takings would have eliminated approximately three parking spaces in front of the Pajer building, but there are actually no lined spaces in front.

The mayor's office says the exact details of the compromise cannot be shared until a contract has been signed between all the parties, but members of the city council were satisfied a solution had been reached in order to vote in favor of it. It is also not known if any of the current plans on the project have been changed to accommodate the agreement.

According to the presentation made last month, the design process for the intersection will continue and work will

PLAN | page 10

City council shows support for legislation to help with affordable Internet

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – A resolution to support legislation currently in the state house that would major utility pole changes to accommodate high-speed fiber optic Internet was approved last month by the Agawam City Council.

City Councilor Thomas Hendrickson, along with Councilors Rosemary Sandlin and Edward Borgatti, are sponsoring a resolution that supports "One Touch Make Ready" legislation.

It passed through the full council as the town's legislative body agreed that affordable internet is a necessity for the Town of Agawam.

Supporters of the resolution referenced the fact that other communities nearby have been able to achieve fiber optic networks that

help create competition with Xfinity, which currently the main provider of Internet in the community.

"The price of internet access in Agawam is one of the most significant cost-of-living issues facing our community," said Councilor Hendrickson. "For many years, Comcast's stranglehold over Agawam's internet market has allowed them to charge exorbitant prices and has had severe consequences for Agawam residents. This legislation would make it easier for us to entice a competitor to come to Agawam, which would create market competition and fairer prices."

The councilors' resolution is to support HB.5290 and SB.2285, which would establish "One Touch Make Ready" applications in Mas-

INTERNET | page 10

Bands come together



Every spring, the performing arts students from across the Agawam Public Schools come together to perform for the community. This form of collaborative event is unique to Agawam and showcased our K-12 performing arts students in a very meaningful way.



WRWA holding river cruise on June 13

WESTFIELD – On Saturday, June 13, the Westfield River Watershed Association (WRWA) will sponsor a scenic six-mile paddle from the Great River Bridge in Westfield to Robinson State Park in Agawam. For those used to seeing the river only in glimpses from the road, the family-friendly canoe and kayak cruise offers a new, close-up view of the waterway.

“We’re excited to be on the river this year for our annual Cruise. This is a fun section of river to paddle for anyone who enjoys being on the water and it is ideal for beginners looking to develop their skills,” says Mark Damon, WRWA Board president. The Cruise begins just below the

Great Bridges in Westfield and continues down to Robinson Park in Agawam.

“Nature enthusiasts will enjoy the early summer vegetation and birdlife. Perhaps you’ll spot some of the more charismatic animals such as bald eagles, beavers, or snapping turtles,” adds Damon. “We hope you can come out and join us!” In the past, participants paused paddling to watch a pair of nesting eagles as they soared and landed in a tall tree along the river.

“Wow! Those eagles were amazing—and so close up! It was my first time down the Westfield, and I loved it,” recalled a previous Cruise participant. “It was easier and a lot more fun than I expected.

I’m a novice kayaker, so I really appreciated the help we got in the trickier spots, although no one who is experienced would call that water fast!”

“People are amazed that the pollution is now gone and the river is really clean. You don’t see any of the commercial businesses near the river while paddling, just birds, wildflowers, even beaver dams and animals native to our area,” states Phil Sousa, who is a long-time member of the river organization. He encourages paddlers to “Come and meet new people. You’ll have a great time. This cruise is suitable for people with at least a little paddling experience. The water is mostly flat—we guide folks around

any really fast spots.”

Participants need to bring their own canoe, kayak, or paddleboard and their own paddles and personal safety devices, as well as sunscreen and drinking water. Organizers recommend that participants have some experience paddling, given that river conditions may be unpredictable. Children under 18 must be supervised by a parent or guardian. Children under 14 must paddle in the same boat as an adult. Other suggestions for what to bring include snacks for before and after the cruise, a picnic for an early lunch for the second wave of registrants, or possibly a late lunch for the first wave of registrants for once you reach

Robinson State Park, as well as easy snacks for munching along the way. The cruise typically takes 2-3 hours.

A participation fee of \$20 per person (\$15 for WRWA members) will help cover shuttle service, insurance and light refreshments. Registration begins at 9:00 a.m. and continues to about 10 a.m. in the municipal parking lot off Meadow Street near the Great River Bridge in Westfield. Participants will register, unload boats and gear, drive their vehicles to Robinson State Park (parking fees apply) and return by shuttle to the launch area. Staggered Cruise departures will begin around 10:30 a.m. Parking fees at Robinson for the Canoe Cruise are \$

for Massachusetts residents (\$10 for a Lifetime Senior DCR Pass) and \$20 for out-of-state vehicles.

“Signing up in advance helps us plan more effectively. For the past couple years, water conditions/ severe weather have requires us to cancel,” adds Heather Aieta, another Board member working on the Cruise. “If you plan to participate and would like to receive a cancellation notice by email the evening before the Cruise, email info@westfieldriver.org and put the word ‘Notify’ in the Subject line. WRWA will also post the cancellation on its Facebook page and website, www.westfieldriver.org the evening before.”

Agawam Senior Center announces upcoming June activities

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

Social Security Presentation with Erica Anne Beaudry, CSA, RSSA Certified Senior Advisor

Wednesday, June 10 at 1 p.m. in Seminar Hall

This Social Security presen-

tation covers areas of interest such as the Importance of Social Security & Mitigating Risk for Retirees, Social Security Basics: Rules and Benefits. We will also dive into Claiming Considerations & The Complexities Involved in deciding when to claim. Lastly, we look at Optimizing Social Security Benefits and I provide some Case Examples to see how dif-

ferent scenarios play out in the real world. 726-2836 Call Kristina

Learn to clean out and organize with Heide Blackak and Jerry Grendin

Tuesday, June 16 at 1 p.m. in the Garden Room

Come and learn different tips and tips to downsize, reorganize and clean out. Heide and Jerry will share tips and

tricks they have learned along the way. 1 p.m. in the Garden Room Call Kristina to register 726-2836

Trivia with Cindy and Celebrity Guest MC - Patrick Berry

Tuesday, June 23 at 5:30 p.m.

Join Cindy and Celebrity Guest MC Patrick Barry for a fun filled night of trivia and snacks. Come alone or bring a

team. We share a lot of laughs and have a blast! Call 726-2836 to register.

Continuing Sessions with Glenn Olsen

Wednesday, June 24 at 1 p.m. in the Conference Room

Olsen was a long term successful Physical Science Special Educator. In January of 2010, he had a severely disabling stroke. For the past 15

years, he has focused on rehabilitation from his injuries with both traditional and non-traditional methods. The sessions will discuss topics essential to living a healthy life style and more. This time there will focus on muscle testing, energy levels and the significance of orbs and color. He looks forward to welcoming you into our discussion group.

MHC Summer Theatre to return

SOUTH HADLEY – After a hiatus of 25 years, the curtain is rising once again on an ambitious and exhilarating new chapter of summer theatre at Mount Holyoke College. Mount Holyoke College Summer Theatre will open this summer with two exciting productions, “Agatha Christie’s Murder on the Orient Express” adapted by Ken Ludwig and “The 39 Steps” adapted by Patrick Barlow. More than a summer stock company, this initiative is designed as a professional launching pad, bridging the gap between academic theatre training and the realities of the professional industry.

“It’s deeply exciting to bring summer performances back to Mount Holyoke College,” said Noah Tuleja, associate professor of Film Media Theater and chair of the Film Media Theater department at the College, and former participant of the original Summer Theatre at Mount

Holyoke College. “Mount Holyoke students will be collaborating with alums, faculty, staff and local theatre professionals as they hone their craft by working on professional theatrical productions.”

The Summer Theatre at Mount Holyoke College was founded by James T. Cavanaugh, professor emeritus of theatre arts, at Mount Holyoke College in 1970. Cavanaugh founded the theater for students who wanted more practical experience in acting and technical skills during a summer internship in the department. A usual summer season would consist of eight plays for adults and two or three plays for children. Former patrons will remember that the plays were performed in the round in a large orange and white striped tent.

Reviving the spirit of a once-thriving summer theatre tradition, thanks to the support of a generous anonymous

donor, this new company will now be staged in the Kendall Sports & Dance Complex. Even though this reimagined theatre will look and feel different from the company under Cavanaugh, it still focuses on being a training ground for the next generation of theatre artists. Students from various colleges and universities will work alongside professional theatre artists, fostering a collaborative atmosphere rich with mentorship and creative exchange.

This company also aims to become a cultural destination for the city of South Hadley, bringing audiences together with a renewed commitment to live theatrical performances during the summer season. With a legacy reborn and a new generation ready to take the stage, Mount Holyoke College is once again poised to become a summer home for community engagement and entertainment.



Live debate held at AHS

The Speech and Debate Society held their first annual Live Debate! The event consisted of two debates: one on the topic of free will and one on the topic of lying. Winning teams were Free Will Exists and Lying Is Not Okay! The four winning the Excellence in Debate Award were Mia Beaudry, Sam Izzo, Stella Christopher, and Aimen Adeel. Each debate consisted of opening statements, questionnaire round, and closing statements.

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Class of 1967 needs help organizing reunion

AGAWAM – Agawam High School Class of 1967 will be holding its 60th reunion sometime in calendar year 2027. We are seeking our classmates that have not been contacted recently. Please contact John DeVecchi with your name, address and phone number(s) to agawam67@aol.com

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HCC recently celebrated its Class of 2026 in the nursing program.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

HCC celebrates Class of 2026 nursing graduates

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College celebrated the graduation of 43 students from its Associate in Science in Nursing degree program on Thursday, May 21. The students were recognized during a pinning ceremony in HCC’s Leslie Phillips Theater, during which they were formally inducted into the healthcare field as soon-to-be registered nursing professionals. During a traditional pinning ceremony, new nursing graduates light candles, receive their nursing pin, and recite the Nightingale Pledge.

The graduates, many of whom are already working, will sit for their exams before becoming licensed as registered nurses.

Holyoke Community College Associate of Science in Nursing Degree Graduates for 2026: Scott Kelly, Innessa Schneider.

The benefits of native plants in your backyard

BELCHERTOWN – Native plants are essential to maintaining local food webs, with many insects native to North America only being able to consume plants that are also native to North America. Native insect populations have been in sharp decline in recent years, largely due to the removal of native plants, the rise of various invasive species, and the use of pesticides. These insect populations are necessary food sources for songbirds which rely on them to raise their young. By restoring native plants to our yards, we can help to protect the ecosystems and food webs within our own neighborhoods, ensuring that populations of a variety of creatures (including humans) remain healthy for many years to come. For more information on the benefits of native plants and how you can help, check out Homegrown-NationalPark.org and Mass-PollinatorNetwork.org. Also, the next time you go shopping for plants, consider looking for a nursery that specializes in native plants like the Native Plant Trust (Nasami) in Whately.

In addition to planting more native plants in your yard, you can also help maintain local ecosystems by removing invasive species, many of which are able to get out of control because the native predators that keep them under control in their places of origin do not live here. That means that it is up to us to control them ourselves, ideally without using herbicides. For more information on which plants are invasive in Massachusetts and what can be done to control them, see the Mass Audubon’s Invasive Plant Guide at massaudubon.org.

The following free Apps are very useful for identifying plants and birds, making it much easier to tell what is native and what is invasive:

- Seek by iNaturalist: This is a phone app that allows you to take pictures of plants, animals, and fungi and will help you to identify them. You can also upload observations which helps give scientists more data to perform research on the distribution and size of plant and animal populations
- Merlin Bird ID: This is a phone app that allows you to record bird songs and will help identify which birds you are hearing.

Grange hosting strawberry shortcake luncheon

AGAWAM – Community Grange #382 of Feeding Hills will hold a Strawberry Shortcake Luncheon “to-go” on Saturday, June 20. The Grange Hall is located at 47 North West Street in Feeding Hills. Pick-up hours will be 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The menu will consist of a freshly made sandwich of your choice served with macaroni salad and baked beans. Dessert will be a strawberry shortcake and a beverage will also be included.

Donation is \$14.00. Please pre-order your meal(s) by calling (413) 789-2061. The last day for orders is June 18.

Proceeds will benefit 2026 community projects and building fund.

Trinity Church holding attic tag sale

SPRINGFIELD — Treasure hunters, bargain shoppers, collectors, and families are invited to one of Springfield’s most anticipated community tag sales as the annual Pastor’s Attic Tag Sale returns to Trinity United Methodist Church on Saturday, June 6, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

This year’s event promises to be bigger, better, and more exciting than ever, featuring an expanded selection of merchandise at Trinity United Methodist Church, 361 Sumner Avenue, Springfield.

Shoppers will discover an incredible variety of items including:

- Men’s, women’s, and children’s clothing
- Household goods and kitchenware
- Small appliances and electronics
- Furniture and home décor
- Collectibles and antiques
- Artwork and decorative pieces
- Books, toys, games, and seasonal items
- Jewelry, accessories, and unique treasures

In addition to great bargains, visitors can enjoy freshly baked goods while spending time with friends and neighbors in a fun and welcoming atmosphere.

Crafters wanted

LUDLOW—Crafters Wanted for the Rosary Sodality’s St. Nicholas Craft Fair and Raffle on Saturday, Nov. 14, 2026, at Christ the King Church located at 41 Warsaw Avenue in Ludlow from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The cost is a non-refundable \$40. fee for an 8-ft table, which will be provided by the church.

To reserve a table or for more information contact Debbie Martell at 413-547-8739 or Lorraine Bernier at 413-519-7658.

Light refreshments will be available.

Plant Sale at the Holyoke Senior Center

HOLYOKE— The Holyoke Senior Center Garden Club will hold its second annual plant sale on Saturday, June 6, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Senior Center, 291 Pine St., Holyoke. Shoppers will find a selection of sun or shade loving perennials, plus herbs and annuals that do well in our local gardens. Members will be available to answer questions about the plants they enjoy. The sale will be held rain or shine.

Proceeds from the sale are used for projects that beautify and support the Senior Center’s gardens. Come and visit our beautiful life-enhancing gardens.



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Opinion

Guest Column

SOCIAL SECURITY

Matters

By Russell Gloor



I'm being released from incarceration. What are my Social Security options?

Dear Rusty:

In a previous column, you wrote about people who filed for Social Security late in life.

I am currently incarcerated and will be filing for Social Security in the fall of 2029. I will be 74 years old in the first week of January 2029. Unless I read it wrong, could I be eligible to collect the previous six months?

If this is so, how would that work? Would I get that all at once or incrementally? According to the chart we once got in the mail, I should be collecting the maximum amount. I've worked all of my life and never collected Social Security before. Also, my ex-wife remarried and has since passed away. Do I qualify for part of her Social Security?

Signed, "D" in Danbury

Dear "D" in Danbury:

I'm afraid you cannot receive Social Security benefits while you are incarcerated, even if you are eligible for them prior to your release.

Thus, you cannot get retroactive Social Security benefits for any period you were still incarcerated. For clarity, although most who apply at a later age (e.g., in their 70s) do have the option to claim retroactive benefits, you cannot get any SS benefits for any month you were still incarcerated. Further, you will not get credit for delaying your application for SS benefits while you are incarcerated (you won't earn Delayed Retirement Credits during your incarceration).

Assuming (from what you shared) that you expect to be released from incarceration in the fall of 2029, you can apply for your SS benefits to start upon your release. Be aware, however, that it usually takes several months for your application for SS bene-

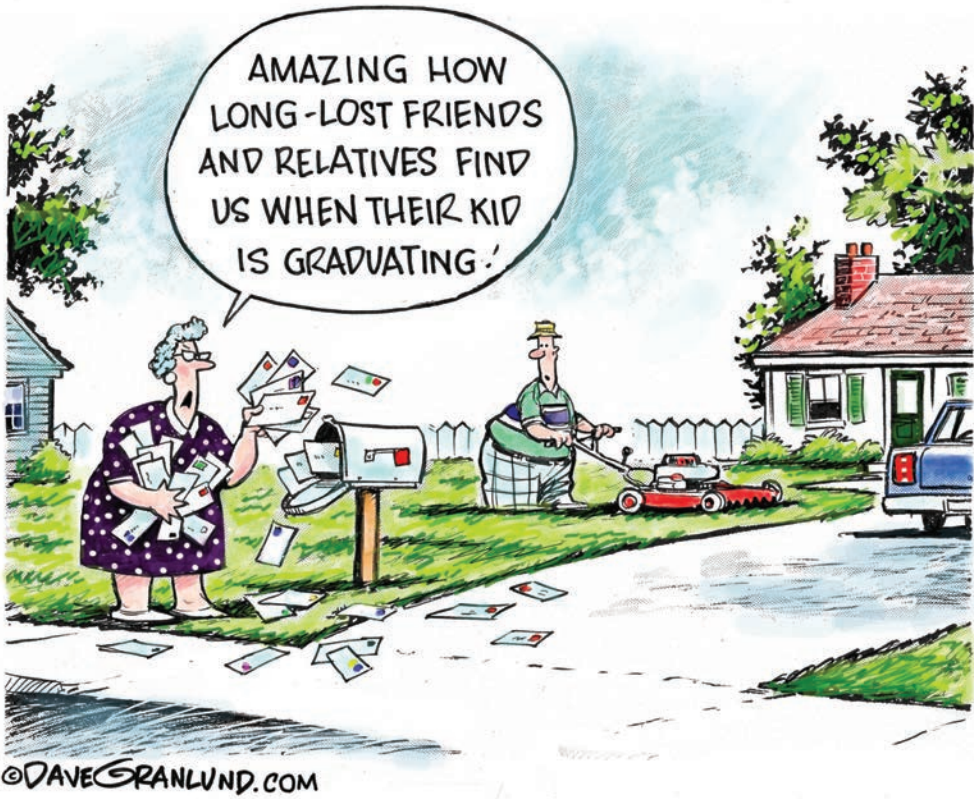
fits to be processed and you can specify the month you wish your benefits start.

Your benefit amount will be based upon your average monthly earnings for the 35 highest earning years over your lifetime. But you cannot get retroactive SS benefits for time prior to your release from incarceration. Since Social Security does not pay benefits for partial months, you can file for your SS benefits to start effective with the month following the month in which your incarceration ends. Be sure you have your official prison release documentation (parole or discharge papers) in hand when you apply for your Social Security benefits.

FYI, some correctional facilities have a "Prerelease Agreement" with Social Security, which may enable you to file for your SS benefits three to four months prior to your release from incarceration. Be sure to check with your facility to see if they have such an agreement with Social Security and, if so, use it to apply for your benefits in advance of your release. This will facilitate your SS benefits starting more quickly upon your release.

You did not ask about healthcare coverage, but since you will be eligible for Social Security, you will also be eligible for Medicare upon your release. When you apply for your Social Security benefits, you can also apply for Medicare Part B (coverage for outpatient medical services), the premium for which will be deducted from your Social Security payment. FYI, Medicare Part A (coverage for inpatient hospitalization services) is free and automatic because you are also eligible for Social Security.

SOCIAL | page 5



A question and an answer?

Carole, who faithfully reads the column in the Wilbraham-Hampden Times each week, wrote in with this question for the Garden Lady:

"I am hoping you can provide me with some advice as to how to rid my garden of an incredibly invasive plant. It is called Houttuynia cordata or chameleon plant. I bought a single variegated plant about 25 years ago and now I literally have hundreds of them in my gardens and lawn. The plant is no longer variegated but reverted to green with red around the edges. For at least three or four years, I have been trying to dig them out one by one which has been extremely difficult due to the long roots – some can be over a foot long – which become intertwined with other plants, choking them. I have not been very successful, despite spending hours at a time. And I painstakingly try to get every piece of root out. I am not sure if they are spreading solely through the roots or also from the flower pod seeds.

I notice they also spread under my brick walkway even though they get no sun there. It's been very frustrating. For that reason, I am considering using a herbicide, but

am concerned that it might poison nearby plants or may not be effective due to the long roots. Yet, at this point, I am open to the idea. I look forward to any suggestions you may have.

Incidentally, I just learned from the internet that it is considered to be a medicinal herb, which I find quite shocking, given how much I have come to dislike them! Thank you very much for your time and assistance."

Happy to help, Carole! It's funny you mention that this plant is a medicinal herb.

Some years back I was taking extract of Japanese Knotweed, another invasive plant, in my quest to cure late stage Lyme Disease. I guess most plants have some merit although some times it's hard to want to admit it, especially in the situation you are in.

While I have never grown Houttuynia cordata, I have dealt with similar invasive plants. Not always have I been successful, but here are a few tactics you can try.

If there is a way to smother, go for it. Try black plastic, a thick tarp or cardboard covered in mulch.

Eventually, if the plant can't photosynthesize, it will die.

You are smart to try and remove every little bit of root when hand digging it out; it's kind of amazing how a tiny piece will start a whole new plant. For that reason, never take the rototiller to a patch of any invasive plant, especially those that spread by rhizomes. The roots will be dispersed throughout the garden.

I also read about cutting the stems of the plants and then "painting" the open cuts with herbicide. To me that sounds like a smart plan to get the chemical right to the roots. Time consuming, but targeted.

I'll be curious to know how you make out trying to rid your landscape of this plant.

Diane, who gardens in West Chesterfield, had a possible solution for my hyacinths getting cut off at the soil line.

"We had a great disappointment this spring when something chopped off most of our cultivated black berries. When I was trying to

GARDEN | page 5

in my

BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer



John Kunhardt of Belcher-town took this photo of a green heron catching a fish at Lake Wallace.

The green heron is solitary at most seasons and often somewhat secretive, living around small bodies of water or densely vegetated areas.

When seen in the open, it often flicks its tail nervously and raises and lowers its crest.

The small heron is about 16 to 22 inches long. The green on this bird's back is an iridescent color and often looks dull bluish or simply dark.

They have orange yellow legs, chestnut neck, black crown feathers. Young birds are duller and brown with a striped neck.

Northern birds migrate as far as Panama and north-

ern South American. Green herons in the most southern states do not migrate.

Green herons inhabit coasts and shorelines, forests and woodlands, freshwater wetlands, lakes, ponds, rivers and saltwater wetlands. Their call is a sharp "kyowk" or "skyow."

They nest in a wide variety of situations, including willow thickets, mangroves, dry woods and open marsh. The female lays three to five pale green or blue green eggs. Both the male and female incubate the eggs which takes 19 to 21 days.

The male chooses nesting territory and calls repeatedly from prominent perch in tree or shrub. Displays of male include stretching neck forward and down and snapping bill shut, pointing bill straight up-



Green heron

PHOTO BY JOHN KUNHARDT

ward while swaying back and forth. Male and female may perform display flights around territory. Nest site is usually in shrub or tree 5-30 feet above ground, but sometimes on the ground.

It is often very close to water, but it can be quite distant away. The nest is a platform of sticks. The male begins con-

struction, then female builds while male brings materials.

Both parents also feed their young by regurgitation. Young begin to climb about near nest by 16-17 days after hatching, usually make first flight at 21-23 days.

They are fed by parents for a

BACKYARD | page 5

Agawam Advertiser News welcomes letters to the editor

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

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

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper

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

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

AGAWAM ADVERTISER NEWS

We Want to Hear From You

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

must include a name, address, and daytime telephone number for author verification purposes. We do not publish anonymous letters.

All letters are subject to editing for content and length. The deadline is Monday at noon. Please send letters to *Agawam Advertiser News*, care of Turley Publications Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, or e-mail aan@turley.com.

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Agawam Advertiser News

OBITUARY POLICY

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 \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) 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.

Agawam Public Library announces adult activities for June

Cultivate your curiosity at the Agawam Public Library with this year's Adult Summer Reading Challenge: "Plant a Seed, Read!" Log your reading, complete activities, and contribute to our Community Reading Goal to earn raffle tickets that can be entered to win one of our five grand prizes! This challenge will run from Monday, June 29 to Friday, Aug. 7. You can participate one of two ways: visit agawamlibrary.beanstack.org to log your reading online, or visit the library Information Desk to log your reading in person using our paper packet! Registration for this challenge opens on June 29.

Come on out for some golfing fun! Agawam Public Library has partnered with the Agawam Municipal Golf Course for Let's Golf! A Chipping and Putting Clinic on Monday, June 1 at 1 p.m. Attendees will learn proper techniques of chipping and putting, arguably the most important part of any golf round. This clinic is open to beginners as well as those looking to hone their golf skills. Please note that this event will be held at the Agawam Municipal Golf Course (128 Southwick St, Feeding Hills, MA) and registration is required.

Learn how to uncover the past of any home—whether it's 20 years old or 200! The Agawam Public Library, Agawam Historical Association, and Agawam Historical Commission have partnered to bring you 10 Steps to Researching

the History of Your House in Agawam with The Northeast House Historian. House historian Marian Pierre-Louis will introduce where to find the deeds to your house, how to chain a deed, and locate other sources of information such as the US Federal Census records, maps and tax records. Come learn 10 steps to get you started on your house history research and uncover the stories that bring the history of your house alive! This talk is appropriate for both beginners and those who have research experience. This event will take place on Monday, June 8 at 6:30 p.m. in the Judith Clini Community Room. Please register to attend.

Interested in participating online for our Summer Reading Challenge, but need a Beanstack refresher? We've got you covered! On Wednesday, June 17th at 6:30PM and Monday, June 22 at 10 a.m. in the Judith Clini Community Room, the library will be hosting Library Tech: Getting Started with Beanstack. Learn the ins and outs of using Beanstack for our reading challenge, as well as how you can use it to record what and how often you are reading. Please register to attend either of these sessions and be sure to bring along whichever mobile device you are most comfortable using.

Join us for an evening of Revolutionary War history as we continue to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the United States. Alex MacKenzie

from the Springfield Armory National Historic Site will present The Most Proper Spot in America: The Continental Arsenal at Springfield on Thursday, June 18 at 6:30 p.m. in the Judith Clini Community Room. Following the creation of the Continental Army in 1775, General George Washington and his lieutenants organized a system of supply and logistics to support the fledgling American military as it fought for independence. Brigadier General Henry Knox, Chief of Artillery, personally sited a military supply depot at Springfield, Massachusetts early in 1777. Hundreds of enlisted tradesmen poured into town to begin building, repairing, maintaining and shipping all sorts of military supplies, and Springfield was quickly bustling with activity throughout the American Revolution. Join Springfield Armory NHS Curator Alex MacKenzie as he reveals the hidden stories of the Continental Arsenal at Springfield and the contributions of the region to American independence! Please register to attend.

Discover the power of music with Dr. Randi Lebar as she presents Music and Memory: The Accidental Creation of a 92-year-old Social Media Sensation. Lebar will recount the wild ride she has taken with her mother, pianist Elaine Lebar (born in 1928), who went viral on TikTok in 2020 while living in a memory care unit in Buzzards Bay. Specifically fo-

cusing on the magic and power of music in dementia, the talk features many videos of Elaine, and also includes lessons Randi learned along the way about finding meaning and joy in their relationship, in spite of her mother's mental decline. The presentation is sure to entertain a wide audience, and it will be especially educational and hopeful for those dealing with a loved one in any stage of cognitive decline. This event will take place on Monday, June 22 at 6:30 p.m. in the Judith Clini Community Room and registration is required.

Join us for a Local Author Talk with Angela Grout as she discusses her latest novel Bean in My Breast. The book is a powerful story of motherhood, legacy, faith and the courage to say goodbye while still holding on. This fictional memoir of one woman's journey of accepting living, loving and making peace with dying as she lives her days with breast cancer prompts conversations for all. The author will read aloud a sample of the book and give insight to the writing and publishing process. Copies of all of Grout's books will be available for purchase and signing. This event will take place on Monday, June 29 at 6:30 p.m. in the Judith Clini Community Room and registration is required.

Our regular programs are a great way for folks to pursue their interests or try out something new! Drop in for the last few sessions of Qigong for Spring on Tuesdays at 11 a.m.

in the Judith Clini Community Room. With similarities to yoga and tai chi, Qigong is an ancient healing art that blends fitness, breathwork, and meditation. Harness the expansive energy of spring to build strength and flexibility while balancing mind, body, and spirit for a fresh new year. The last class will be held on June 23. Join us for weekly Chair Yoga at 9:05 a.m. on Wednesdays in the Clini Community Room. Led by yoga instructor Heidi Taberman, these drop-in classes are perfect for folks of all fitness levels. If you're a fan of board games and card games, then check out our drop-in Game Night on Wednesday, June 3 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room. Are you a writer looking to connect with other writers? Join our Writers Group hosted by author Katherine Anderson on Thursday, June 18 in the Peirce Conference Room. There will be opportunities for peer and host feedback, learning the basics of self-publishing, finding opportunities for submission to magazines, literary journals, and presses, assembling a portfolio, and the basics of a query package for submissions and publications. Please register to attend!

This month's Virtual Author Talk Series kicks off on Wednesday, June 3 at 2 p.m. with a fascinating discussion with Smithsonian Curator Mary Savig on the history and significance of craft at state fairs—from blue-ribbon quilts

to sculpted butter cows, and so much more! Join us for an adventurous conversation with bestselling author Matt Dinniman on Thursday, June 11 at 7 p.m. as he discusses his wildly popular (and just plain wild) Dungeon Crawler Carl series. Storyteller and popular blogger Ted Page will discuss his book Good Grandpa: Stories from the Heart of Grandfatherhood on Thursday, June 18 at 2 p.m. This heartfelt book highlights his journey to bring together the stories and wisdom of grandfathers from all walks of life—all with a mission to nurture the next great generation. Looking for some new recipes to try out? Join authors Sana Javeri Kadri and Asha Loupy as they discuss their cookbook, The Diaspora Spice Co. Cookbook, which celebrates beautiful, simple, and seasonal cooking with 85 recipes adapted from India and Sri Lanka's best family spice farms. This event will take place on Tuesday, June 23 at 2 p.m. To register to attend any or all of these virtual talks, please call the library or visit libraryrc.org/agawamlibrary.

Thank you to the Agawam Center Library Association and the Friends of the Agawam Library for sponsoring select library programs. Our last open Saturday before summer hours begin is June 6 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please note that the library will be closed on Friday, June 19 in observance of Juneteenth.

GARDEN ■ from page 4

prune what was left and save something I found the stalks laying on the ground but the tops were eaten. It looked like someone took a clean angle sweep with a hatchet to cut down the stalks. Then one evening at dusk we saw the culprit. It was about a 60 pound porcupine! He was chomping on our wild white rose bushes. He would bite the stalks off but since the rest of the bush wouldn't let the branch fall, he couldn't eat the top. What a mess. When I read your article I was thinking this might be the answer to the mystery."

Hmm, I will have to keep on the look out for a porcupine; you never know.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 34 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

SOCIAL ■ from page 4

Finally, regarding survivor benefits from your ex-wife, you can only get a surviving ex-spouse benefit if you were married for more than 10 years and your own SS retirement amount is less than your ex-wife was receiving at her death. In other words, you can only get one SS benefit either your own or your deceased ex-wife's amount, whichever is higher.

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.

BACKYARD ■ from page 4

few more weeks. Young are reportedly capable of swimming well. These herons have one to two broods per year.

These herons forage mostly by standing still or stalking very slowly at edge of shallow water, waiting for prey to approach. Sometimes they use bait" by dropping a feather or small twig on surface of water to lure fish within striking distance.

They eat mostly small fish, but will also eat crayfish and other crustaceans, aquatic insects, frogs and tadpoles. Other items include grasshoppers, snakes, earthworms, snails and small rodents.

Black and white warbler

My daughter, Paula, saw a black and white warbler by the cross country trail at Quabbin Regional High School last week. As the name implies, the warbler has black and white feathers with black streaking on the breast and white wing bars, white eye line and white belly.

Red shouldered hawk

A Montgomery resident had a red shouldered hawk in her yard. She sent a photo of it in flight.

Whippoorwill

I received an email on May 15 from a Belchertown resident. She stated, "The whippoorwill is back in my yard again this year. The calls starts around dark and continue off and on till sunrise. She or

he perches on the roof and calls all night. It can be very annoying as you are trying to sleep, but I still feel blessed or cursed."

Common Ravens

A Brimfield couple had common ravens in their yard last month. They stated in an email, "We mostly hear them and sometimes see them flying over a local feature called West Mountain that is about 1000' elevation and runs north/south about a half a mile east of our house."

They stated, "On a Thursday a raven was in the driveway where I throw a seed mix daily for ground feeders. I saw the bird from inside the garage, my wife saw it with binoculars from inside the house."

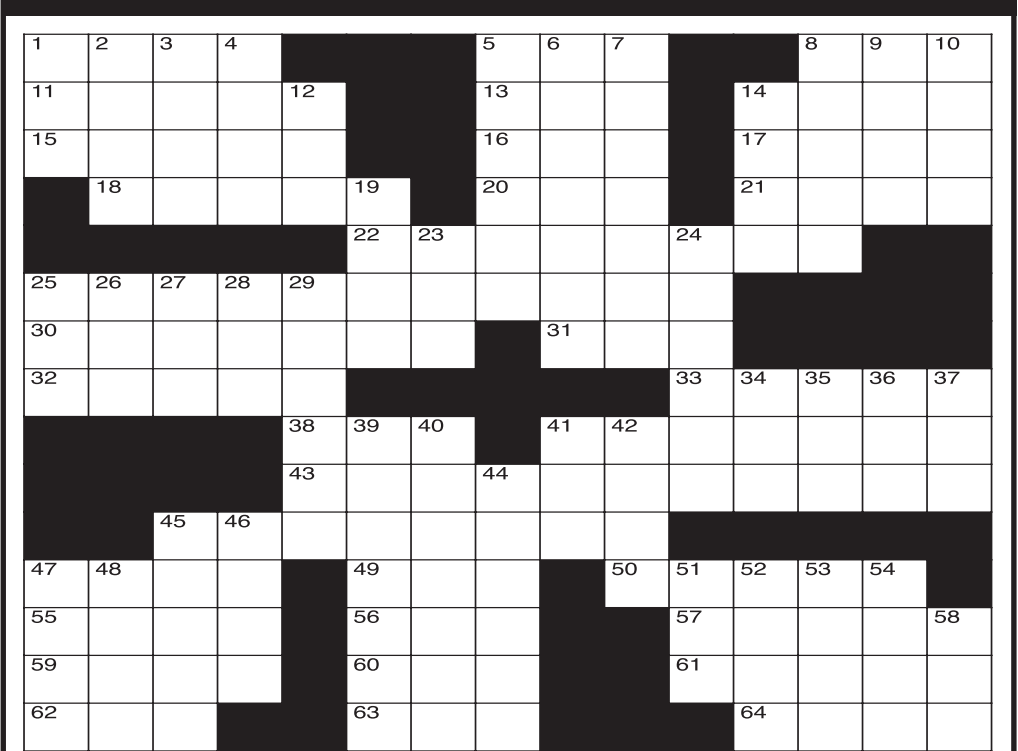
They stated, "We both noticed the larger size, bigger than the American Crows that often feed in the same area. I noticed the wedged shaped tail when it flew away and my wife saw larger, heavier bill and the shaggy throat feathers." A few days later they saw three ravens.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005. The Palmer office has a new phone system and I will be getting an extension where messages may be left. I will publish the number as soon as it is set up.

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- Habitual twitching
- Holm oak
- Willing to consent or submit
- In an early way
- Made possible
- Language in Ghana
- Relating to one's birth
- Deep-bodied fishes
- Defunct European

CLUES DOWN

- Bridge building degree
- Small American songbird
- One from L.A.
- After tenth
- Hillside
- Red deer
- Partner to "oohed" pattern
- Israeli city ___ Aviv
- Golden peas plant
- Breezed through
- Midway between east and southeast
- Frameworks
- Danish krone
- Fall back
- Influential Korean leader

- Expression of sorrow or pity
- Large, stocky lizard
- Turkish leader title
- Nag
- Blank
- Closely woven cotton fabric
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- Large African antelope
- Something you receive
- Satisfy
- Wet dirt
- No longer here
- Writing utensil
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- Alternative forms of a gene
- Buddy
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- Chicken
- No seats available
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SPORTS

Brownies come up short for WMass title

AGAWAM – After fighting through the court system to playing in the Western Massachusetts Class A Championship game, Agawam High School took to a rainy Westfield State University and faced East Longmeadow. Unfortunately, it was the Spartans day as Agawam fell 9-4 on Saturday, May 23. Agawam had an early lead 3-2, but gave it up in the bot-

tom of the third inning and East Longmeadow never relinquished it again. Madelyn Pajer had a big game for Agawam, going 3-for-4. Taylor Stairs had a 2-for-3 game with a walk. She also had two RBI. The Brownies entered the state tournament last week and are already headed for the Round of 16 on Wednesday, June 3.



Taylor Stairs makes a catch for an out at third base.



The captains of Agawam High School softball, finalists in the Western Mass. tournament.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Above, Madelyn Pajer slides back to first. Right, Kiley Ryan makes a catch at first.



Valley Blue Sox ready for the 2026 season

HOLYOKE – The Valley Blue Sox return for the 2026 season after finishing last season at 20-22 record. Despite narrowly missing out on the playoffs, The Blue Sox ended the season on a high note with a dominant 23-1 win against the Upper Valley Nighthawks in July. The Blue Sox will open up their season June 4 against the Newport Gulls at home. The Gulls are coming out of the gates as Regular Season Divisional Champions, after posting a 29-15 record in 2025. The teams last met on a rainy July day in Rhode Island, where The Blue Sox pulled off a 6-5 comeback win in extra innings. “Regardless of who we have out there ... [it’s] just creating that kind of sense of urgency from the beginning .. and you want to certainly make a good first impression,” head coach John Raiola said. “Play hard

and compete, that’s really what I ask every day, no matter what ... [and] that starts on June 4.” Raiola returns as head coach of the Blue Sox after five seasons in the front office as the team’s director of baseball operations. Following the departure of former head coach Endy Morales in pursuit of the Banana Ball League, Raiola returns to a team that he coached to back to back NECBL championships in 2017 and 2018. Returning to the same coaching job he first stepped into 11 years ago, one of Raiola’s top priorities is to put a team on the field that is ready to compete. “It’s not just summer ball,” Raiola said. “It’s an opportunity for you to put your best foot forward and show that you, in basically an all-star league, can compete against

the best throughout all over the country, and show up and do it every single day.” The Blue Sox offense ranked in the top of the NECBL last season but the pitching staff struggled, finishing with a team ERA of 4.93, the eighth best in the league. Raiola, who served as a pitching coach at Western New England University and in the Cape Cod Baseball League with the Yarmouth-Dennis Red Sox, seeks to heighten the threat of Valley’s arms. “One thing that’s really important for us, and that I tell [the players] ... is that they leave better than they came,” Raiola said. “... You should have something that you know that you need to do and that you don’t do particularly well and we should be working towards solving ... so that when you leave, you

leave better than we found you.” Raiola spent the 2015-2019 seasons as head coach of the Blue Sox, and has been the head coach of the Elms College baseball team since 2020, where he’s posted a 94-120 record. Raiola is no stranger to NECBL titles. Prior to his time in Holyoke, Raiola won a championship as a part of the Newport Gulls coaching staff in 2009, another with the Keene Swampbats in 2011, and made a championship appearance with the Sanford Mainers in 2014. Raiola has exciting names to work with this summer from all over the country. Returning for the Blue Sox is infielder Michael Elko. Elko suited up for Valley in 39 games last season, tallying 165 plate appearances. The Texas native earned 30 runs with

34 hits and finished the season off with a 0.252 batting average. A senior at the University of Richmond, Elko’s college season ended with 52 starts and was named the Atlantic 10 Baseball Player of the Week back in March. Incoming Blue Sox shortstop Anthony Grabau has made headlines in his junior season at Fordham University. In 2026, he hit for a .303 batting average across 218 at bats, posting a .911 OPS, a promising left-handed bat. Grabau finished with nine home runs and 38 RBI and earned a spot on Baseball America’s College Team of the Week on April 21 at shortstop after an 11-for-21 week where he hit for the cycle. Grabau has been a defensive anchor at shortstop, starting all 55

Sports

Boys volleyball wins state tournament opener

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

AGAWAM—After taking home the Division 2 state championship trophy twice in the past three seasons, the Agawam boys' volleyball team were promoted to Division 1 this year.

The sixth-seeded Brownies began their journey in the Division 1 tournament with a 3-0 (25-23, 25-12, 25-21) victory against the 27th-seeded Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School Bears in a round of 32 match held at Clifford P. Kibbe Gymnasium, last Saturday afternoon.

"We'll be facing a lot tougher competition in the Division 1 state tournament, and we have to be very focused in every match," said Agawam senior Tim Kar-

cha, who led the way with a team-leading 16 kills. "We started off slowly in today's match, but we picked up our energy after winning the first set. We certainly didn't want to end the season with a loss on our homecourt."

Agawam head coach Kevin Pender gave his thoughts about playing in the Division 1 tournament.

"We were one of the top teams in the Division 2 tournament the past couple of years," he said. "Being the sixth seed in the Division 1 tournament, we have the toughest path to win another state title. If we can win our next match, we'll then have to face the third seed, the second seed, and the top seed if there aren't any upsets along the way. I believe in this team, and I think we can do it, but it's a much more difficult road."

Karcha is one of the Brownies senior captains, along with Elijah Ramos (16 assists), Mike Lukowski (8 digs, 6 kills), and Chase Gerani (5 kills).

"The four of us are the team leaders," said Karcha, who didn't play any other sport in high school besides volleyball. "Coach Pender has a lot of trust in me and selected me as a captain this year. Volleyball is a very important thing at our school."

The Brownies other seniors are Jaiden Briotta, David Zhmiadziak, and Alex Williams.

Agawam, who had a 16-5 overall record following the home sweep, defeated rival Westfield, 3-2, in the Western Mass. Class A finals nine days earlier.

A year ago, the Brownies beat Wayland High School,

3-1, in the Division 2 state finals, which were held at Shrewsbury High School. They also captured the Division 2 state title in 2023.

Under the old postseason tournament format, Agawam won the Division 1 state title in 2013.

It wasn't the first time that Agawam and Greater New Bedford (16-4) had faced each other in a state tournament match. Back in 2023, the Brownies posted a 3-0 home victory over the Bears in the Elite 8.

The two squads also met each other in a scrimmage before the start of the regular season.

BOYS | page 7

Michael Lukowski sends a hit over the net.
TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Magical runs ends for Springfield Thunderbirds in Wilkes-Barre

WILKES-BARRE, PA – The Springfield Thunderbirds saw their remarkable Calder Cup Playoff journey come to a bitter ending in an 8-1 loss to the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins on Saturday night inside Mohegan Arena at Casey Plaza in a deciding Game 5 of the best-of-five series.

After getting shut out by Georgii Romanov and the T-Birds in Game 4 in Springfield two nights earlier, the Penguins came out with renewed purpose, and Tristan Broz's second goal of the series just 3:56 into Game 5 put Wilkes-Barre/Scranton in front, 1-0.

Harrison Brunicke would follow with a goal of his own on a 2-on-1 at 7:43 to make it 2-0. Broz added his third point of the period with a power play goal at 16:17, and Rafael Harvey-Pinard completed the Penguins' prolific first period with a rebound finish with just 20 seconds left in the frame to

make it 4-0 at intermission.

The T-Birds swapped goals heading into the second as Vadim Zherenko took over, but the Penguins still managed to find offense when Atley Calvert swatted a loose puck through Zherenko at 17:21.

As the third period be-

gan, the Penguins power play found a second connection when Ville Koivunen finished off a passing play at 2:52 to extend the lead to six.

Akil Thomas finally got one back for Springfield at 4:30, but it would prove to only delay the Penguins' continued attack, as Harvey-Pinard and

Koivunen each would add another tally to their night's work to finish off the victory and the series.

The T-Birds' storybook season may have come to an end, but the excitement is only building as Springfield prepares to celebrate 100 years of hockey in the city.

New England Mutiny battles Hartford Athletic to scoreless draw



LUDLOW – On Friday, May 22, the New England Mutiny battled the Hartford Athletic to a scoreless tie. The Mutiny is now 1-1-1 on the season. They previously defeated the Worcester Wanderers and had a defeat against the Hudson Valley Crusaders. More on the Mutiny and their new challenges in next week's edition.

Clockwise from left:
Kendall Bodak, of Monson, sends a free kick away;
Kayleigh Lukasik sends a pass away;
Nadia Cassmajor sends a pass away;
Kurstien Shade looks to shoot in traffic;
Se-Hanna Mars fights for the ball.



Obituaries

Muriel Jane Conkey

1927-2026

Muriel Jane (McCarthy) Conkey, 98, passed away peacefully on May 15, 2026. She was born in Worcester, MA on November 29, 1927, to the late John J. McCarthy and Mary (Butler) McCarthy. Muriel was a woman who basked in the warm glow of a lifetime of always striving to find the good in people, and who was in turn loved by so many of the people that she met along her path. That path began in Worcester, MA, where she was raised and always held close to her heart. Muriel graduated from Worcester High School of Commerce and the Worcester School of Business Science – along the way, becoming an award-winning speedskater. After becoming married, Muriel moved to Agawam, MA and as her family grew, created a nurturing, loving household for each of her four children. She was well-known in the community, with work that included being a teller for Shawmut Bank, a school bus driver for the DePalma Bus Company, and as a Realtor. She enjoyed many sporting activities, such as cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, bowling, and golf. All of her golfing friends knew that if you were playing with Muriel that day, a whiff counted as a stroke – and she put it on the scorecard. Muriel loved flowers. When she moved into her first house, on Doane Avenue in Agawam, she spent many hours tending to a rose garden, savoring every moment.



Throughout her life, the best present anyone could ever bring Muriel were some flowers. And, of course, some candy. Hershey's Kisses, to get the gold star. Muriel moved from Agawam to Cape Cod 15 years ago, and there she continued to leave her mark on so many people, who all came to appreciate her warm smile and her willingness to always help, in any way she could. But perhaps her most enduring legacy is the never-wavering love and support that she had for her family. To her children, she was a consistent, loving, guiding light: when the streetlights came on, and it was time to head home, you always knew that a warm dinner and a smile would be waiting for you. To her grandchildren, "Grammy" was someone who brought them for their first library card; who always tried to get to every game; who always had banana bread or blueberry muffins waiting for them; whose birthday card always had a \$5 bill; and, most importantly, Grammy was someone who was always there for them, doing whatever she could to make sure they knew that if something was important to them, it was important to her. And to her great-grandchildren, she was someone always ready to give that warm, special hug that only special great-grandmothers can give, the hug that makes them know that they are loved. Muriel will be remembered as someone who always – always -- found a way

into people's hearts. Muriel leaves four children: Donald Conkey and his wife Karen of Southwick, MA; Pamela Burke and her husband William of Mashpee, MA; Diana Hawkins and her husband James of Cape Coral, FL; and Craig Conkey of Westfield, MA and his soulmate, Marian Watterlond of Windsor, CT. She also leaves five grandchildren: Megan Tracy and her husband Christopher of Plymouth, MA; Kelly Chandler and her husband Jonathan of Plymouth, MA; Evan Conkey and his wife Lauren of Boxford, MA; Bryan Burke and his wife Jenna of Sandwich, MA; and Colin Conkey and his wife Maggie of Boston, MA. Muriel also leaves five great-grandchildren: Amelia and Mabel Conkey, Morgan and Oden Chandler, and Bodhi Burke. Muriel was predeceased by her former husband, Donald E. Conkey of Agawam. Muriel was also predeceased by her brothers John, Butler, Robert, William and Richard McCarthy; and her sister, Evelyn Poirier. We are profoundly grateful to the entire staff at Cape Cod Senior Residences and The Pavilion Rehabilitation and Nursing Center for the compassionate support shown to Muriel and our family. A celebration of life will be held for Muriel on Cape Cod in September. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to the Ellie Fund (200 Reservoir St, Suite 300, Needham, MA 02494) to support local breast cancer patients, or the charity of your choice. For online guest book www.chapmanfuneral.com

Amber Georgianne Hoague

October 29, 1997 – May 25, 2026

Amber Georgianne Hoague passed away on May 25, 2026, at the age of 28. A lifelong resident of Agawam, Amber attended Agawam Public Schools and spent most of her life in the community she called home. Amber's life was filled with both joys and challenges, but those who loved her will remember her for far more than the struggles she faced. She was funny, creative, passionate, stubborn, and deeply caring. She had a quick wit, a memorable laugh, and a way of leaving an impression on everyone she met. Beneath her strength was a sensitive heart that longed for love, acceptance, and peace. Amber was the mother of two daughters, Autumn Scott and Grace Dmitriev. Her girls were forever connected to her heart, and her love for them remained a constant part of who she was. James Dmitriev was a central part of Amber's life for nearly 24 years. Though they were no longer together at the time of her passing, their lives remained deeply intertwined through years of friendship, shared experiences, love, and the daughter they brought into the world together, Grace. No matter where life led them, they remained part of one another's story from childhood into adulthood. Amber was predeceased by her mother, Dayna Hoague, and her brother, Nathan

Stebbins. She carried both of them in her heart throughout her life, and her family finds comfort in believing they were there to welcome her home with love and peace. Family was not always defined by blood in Amber's life. From the day she was born, Mary Mellinger Kirk and her husband, Robert "Bob" Kirk, were a constant presence in her life. As the lifelong best friend of Amber's mother, Dayna, Mary was honored to become Amber's godmother and, over the years, a mother figure whom Amber lovingly called "Mom." Bob was more than a family friend. He became the father figure Amber needed throughout much of her life, offering guidance, support, encouragement, and unconditional love. Their bond grew so strong that Amber proudly called him "Dad," a title that reflected the special place he held in her heart. Amber also shared a special bond with Paul Mellinger. Only two years apart in age, they grew up side by side and spent so much time together that, as young children, they genuinely believed they were brother and sister. As they grew older, that bond never faded, and Amber continued to consider Paul her brother in every way that mattered. Amber shared a special bond with her beloved great-aunt, Alice, who held a cherished place in her heart. The love and admiration Amber



had for Aunt Alice was so profound that she chose the name Grace for her daughter in her honor. Those who knew Amber will remember her smile, her sense of humor, her resilience, and the moments of kindness and love she shared with others. While her time here was far too short, the memories she created and the lives she touched will not be forgotten. Amber's memory will live on in the stories shared by those who loved her, in the photographs that capture her spirit, and most of all in the lives of her daughters. A celebration of life will be announced by the family at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to support Amber's daughter, Grace, through the family's GoFundMe: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-us-lay-amber-hoague-to-rest-support-baby-grace> Rest peacefully, Amber. You were loved more than you knew.

Public Notices

Town of Agawam Legal Notice
The **Agawam Planning Board** will hold a public hearing on Thursday, June 18, 2026 at 6:00pm and the **Agawam City Council** will hold its public hearing on Monday, July 13, 2026 at 7:00pm at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. The purpose of these hearings will be to hear the petition of Council President Russo for a proposed zoning amendment for "An Ordinance Regarding Fence Height in the Town of Agawam." The City Council's public hearing will be livestreamed on the Town of Agawam's website at www.agawam.ma.us and will also be televised on Cable Access Channel 15 or Channel 1074. Copies of the proposed zoning amendment can be obtained from the Planning Department between the hours of 7:30am and 3:30pm at the Agawam DPW, 1000 Suffolk Street, Agawam, MA or by emailing the Office of the City Clerk for an electronic copy at vgioscia@agawam.ma.us.
By Order Of:
Violet Baldwin, Chairman
Agawam Planning Board
Anthony Russo
City Council President
06/04, 06/11/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Division Docket No.

HD26P0991EA Estate of: Ernest E Lagacy Jr. Date of Death: April 26, 2026 INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE
To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Siobhan R Murphy of East Longmeadow, MA** a Will has been admitted to informal probate. **Siobhan R Murphy of East Longmeadow, MA** has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond. The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner. 06/04/2026

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Sports

WMass Pioneers fall to NEFC

LUDLOW – On a very rainy evening, the turf was not kind to the Western Mass. Pioneers as they fell at home against NEFC 4-2. The Pioneers, which have a lot of new players

on the roster this season, fell to a disappointing 1-2 on the short regular season. The Pioneers had another home game scheduled during the weekend,

and were in action on the road against Black Rock FC. The Pioneers are on a lengthy road trip and are not playing at home until Friday, June 19.



Ben Alexander gets ready to clear the ball.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Michael Gouvin sends a pass away.



Jaiden Williams makes his way up the field.

DEATH NOTICES

Muriel Jane Conkey
Died May 15, 2026.
Celebration of Life in September

Amber Georgianne Hoague
Died May 25, 2026,
Celebration of Life at a later date



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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.

Jarvis, Beecher top guns at Monadnock

WINCHESTER, N.H. – Joey Jarvis survived a slugfest to win his first Modified feature of the summer on May 23 at Monadnock Speedway. The second generation Vermont pilot accomplished the feat by sitting in the best seat in the house, the pole, from where he was immune to the wildness behind him.

Jarvis was one of five first time 2026 winners on the high banks of the fast quarter mile Saturday. Justin Beecher, in house for the night's special R&R Open Street Stock show, duplicated his victory of the same event a summer ago, and reigning speedway Mini Stock champ John Fultz - in his first run of the summer - picked up where he left off last September.

In the Pure Stocks, red hot rookie Josh Brigham scored the first win of his career. New England Dwarf Car pilot Ryan Carman scored his first career victory on the high banks, and then there was 11-year-old Dylan Stati.

Stati, a quiet fifth grade student at the Old Mill Pond School in his hometown of Palmer, Mass. on weekdays, puts on his super hero personality every Saturday, when he dominates the speedway's Young Guns division. On this Saturday, he cruised to victory for the fourth time of his rookie campaign.

Jarvis and open-wheel rookie Kyle Kenny sat up front as Saturday night's All-states Materials Group 604 Modified main event went green. They would run in that order until Ben Byrne blasted into second on lap four, with Nate Wenzel close behind.

Wenzel took third on lap 11 and with the two veter-

ans battling for second, Jarvis was able to open some breathing room at the front. That, though, went out the window when a lap-21 caution brought Byrne back to his side.

Jarvis was again up to the task, holding a perfect line for all 40 laps to score his second career victory on the high banks. And he may not have had the fastest car.

A grinding lap-25 multi-Mod dance out of turn four heavily damaged the Patnode and Martin rides, among others, and brought Nate Wenzel to the front row for the restart. Electrical issues, though, sent Wenzel quickly to the pits, returning now seventh at the green.

Flying back through the field, Wenzel would finish second, three lengths behind the speedy Jarvis. Andrew Brousseau, victorious seven days earlier, gobbled up Tyler Leary in turn three to come home second, Leary was fourth on the night, and Ben Byrne, in the mix all 40, came home fifth.

The R&R Open Street Stock feature saw three dominant Bay State stars again take center stage, Justin Beecher - who makes a habit of swooping onto the high banks to score victories in these specials - took first from Chris Buffone on lap eight and never looked back.

Top hometracker JD Stockwell, representing his Saturday night home well, got up for second on lap 11 and kept Beecher close until exiting in a cloud of smoke 51 circuits later, leaving Buffone to finish second, a third-lap shy of the high flying Beecher, Former speedway regular Adam Gray completed his hard night's work in third.

BLUE SOX ■ from page 6

games in the position and posting a .946 fielding percentage.

Behind the dish, junior Jacob Dilley has had a monster year at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. In 50 games, Dilley has hit for a .325 batting average, recorded a .960 OPS, left the yard for 10 home runs and recorded 38 RBI. Dilley has spent less time behind the plate in 2026 but has moved around the field for UNCG, making appearances in the outfield and first base in addition to his catching duties.

Junior Gavin Degnan brings a solid bat to the Valley outfield from the University of Pennsylvania. Degnan drove in 41 over 42 games which led his team, and had a .306 batting average and a .898 OPS to go with it. Degnan went deep for seven home runs and at times was a threat on the basepaths, swiping 14 bags.

Raiola has also assembled a diverse bullpen with a wide range of arms. Coming from UMass Lowell, Jake Le-Francois posted a 2.03 ERA on a little over 11 innings

pitched for the Riverhawks, emerging with potential to be a reliable arm for the Blue Sox. Right-handed pitcher Dylan Reid brings some more experience on the mound, logging nearly 60 innings pitched with a 3.77 ERA for Brown University. Averaging 4.9 innings pitched per game for the Bears in 2026, Reid profiles as a durable arm and can compete deep into outings.

Returning to the mound for Valley is Justin Masteralexis. A Western Massachusetts native, the left-handed pitcher logged over 19 innings for UMass Amherst this past season. Masteralexis struck out 19 batters for the Minutemen and earned Atlantic 10 All-Rookie Team honors back in 2024.

"It's not just about picking the best players and the stats and all that, it's about getting the right guys," Raiola said. "[Seeing] how they mesh together, pull for each other and show up every single day.

The Blue Sox will kick off their 2026 season on June 4 at Mackenzie Stadium in Holyoke. First pitch is set for 6:30 p.m.

BOYS ■ from page 7

"I'm good friends with their head coach (Richie Gomes Jr.)," Pender said. "He's an assistant women's coach at Providence College where I went to school. They host a play day before the start of the regular season. It was a long time ago, but we played well against them. Both teams have improved a lot since then."

During the past couple of years, Pender was the head coach of the women's volleyball team at Anna Maria College. The private Catholic college in Paxton closed at the end of the spring semester.

"It's a heartbreaking situation," Pender said. "I feel bad for my girls, but all of them have found a new home. I have no plans to stop coaching the boy's team here, but I do want to coach a college women's volleyball team in the fall."

The Bears players played with a lot of energy and emotion during the opening set.

They held a 7-3 lead, but the Brownies never allowed their deficit to get more than five points.

The score in the first set was tied eleventh time at 23-23 before the Brownies managed to win the final two points.

The home team dominated the second set from start to finish.

An ace by Zhmiadziak and a kill by junior Jason Mihalicenco gave the Brownies a 12-6 lead.

They also led 18-7 following another ace from Mihalicenco.

Agawam's largest lead of the second set was 22-9.

"We served and passed very well in the second set," Pender said. "We started to play our brand of volleyball in that set."

The Bears held a slim lead at the beginning of the third set before a 6-0 spurt gave the Brownies a 17-13 advantage. Karcha sealed the victory with a thundering kill.

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Jacob Nesen goes to his side to get a hit.



Elijah Ramos sets the ball up near the net.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Jason Mihalicenco goes for a block.



Dominic Manes gets a set.

INTERNET ■ from page 1

sachusetts. This legislation would require the owners of utility poles to allow a single construction crew to make changes to multiple utility wires.

Borgatti said the legislation would be helpful to the community in its efforts.

"Showing our representatives from our district that Agawam supports this legislation is an important step in supporting better

services and pricing for internet access for our residents," Borgatti said.

Hendrickson said other New England states have passed similar laws.

Both the House and Senate versions of the bill have been voted "Ought to Pass" in their respective Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy Committees, and have both been referred to the House and Senate Ways and Means Committees.

Sapelli had initiated the

process with GoNetSpeed and the Internet service provider firm was working through the process of trying to be able to install fiber optic cables throughout the community so the town would be able to offer a more affordable high-speed Internet service. For high-speed Internet, Comcast, or Xfinity, is typically the only main option in Agawam.

Several communities, including Chicopee and

Westfield, have since installed their own fiber optic networks, and neighbor Southwick was also exploring the possibility of joining Westfield's infrastructure.

When Johnson received word that GoNetSpeed was suspending its effort due to difficulty negotiating with utility pole owners, the reason given was due to "challenges related to Make Ready costs that [GoNetSpeed has] not been able to resolve with the pole owners."

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PLAN ■ from page 1

occur after the project has gone through the bid process. It is likely no work will

take place in late September during the 17-day Big E, in which Suffield St. going north is a major access way to the fair.



A proposed intersection project at the location of Pajer Superette will now become a reality after the city council approved the project and eminent domain takings at a recent meeting.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIABELLI