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AGAWAM

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Mayor proposes early voting for municipal election

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM – Early voting and unrestricted mail-in voting have grown in popularity since the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing voters options other than showing up to the election polls on one designated day in early November.

City Councilors in Agawam turned away mail-in voting for a previous local election due to the timing of the primary being so close to the general election. It made the processing and mailing out of ballots nearly impossible to have enough time for people to turn them in by Election Day.

While mail-in balloting has been an issue, early voting has not, and Mayor Christopher Johnson, is up for election this fall after his first term back in the mayor's seat, has proposed allowing early voting for both the pri-

mary and general elections.

This year, the Board of Registrars recommended that Johnson be able to set early voting hours for the municipal election at his discretion. Their vote, taking place on April 16, was unanimous and the city council will be asked to adopt the resolution.

The start of the election cycle is now underway in Agawam. Candidates for public office were able to begin taking out nomination papers to run.

All 11 members of the city council, six school committee members, and the mayor are up for election every two years, and municipal elections in Agawam take place in November of every odd year.

In 2023, Johnson was returned the mayor's office after more than a decade on

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SEMIFINAL BOUND



The Agawam High School boys volleyball team is looking for another state title since the new format was established in 2022. The Brownies are the No. 1 seed once again in this year's state tournament and have made it to the state semifinals. Last Friday in the quarterfinals, the Brownies defeated East Longmeadow with a 3-0 sweep. More photos on page 8.

TURLEY PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Agawam City Council presented with budget for fiscal year 2026

By Amanda Munson
 Staff Writer
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AGAWAM – The Agawam High School band recently hosted on June 2, Mayor Christopher Johnson presented the city council of the FY26 budget with general updates, beginning that the general operating budget

is up 4.75 million dollars or about 4.1% over the last fiscal year. "It's based upon a tax levying increase of 2.5% with new growth of half a million dollars. Please keep in mind that Agawam has \$18.2 million or will at the end of 2026, in levy capacity, which means we are taxing \$18.2 million below the maximum allowed by Proposition 2 ½

without an override. Right now, in Agawam, we are taxing at less than 80% less than - 80 cents on a dollar of what Proposition 2 ½ allows to tax at."

The MMA, Massachusetts Municipal Association, is working on a study about the impacts of Proposition 2 ½, which refers to the maximum amount cities and

towns can levy raised by taxation (on real estate and personal property) can increase each year.

Johnson continued, "One of their findings is only about 30% of the communities in Massachusetts have any levy capacity, which means 70% are taxing at the full amount that Proposition 2 ½ allows them to tax at. So, I bring this

point up because it shows how conservative the leadership in Agawam has been over the last few decades. We have the second lowest average single-family tax bill in the area. We have the lowest combined water sewer rates in the area. We're still a community that provides full-service without fees. So, take those into consideration and

understand that we are taxing at less than 80% of what Proposition 2 ½ allows us to tax us without an override, that says a lot about how you do your jobs and how we do ours. There were some minor personnel changes on the town's side of the budget. We eliminated the Assistant

BUDGET | page 12

Banding together



The High School Band hosted the annual Band Time Concert with the Junior High and Doering School Bands and dazzled the audience with their selections and the traditional "America the Beautiful" grand finale.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Boys Track 4x100 team fundraises for Adidas Nationals

By Amanda Munson
 Staff Writer
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AGAWAM – Occurring on June 20 to 22, the boys 4x100 team qualified for the Adidas Nationals in Greensboro, North Carolina, and needs the community's help in raising funds to cover registration, travel, lodging, and uniforms. Submitted to the Agawam Advertiser News from the athletes, Chris Bates, Julian Gebo, Dom Rodriguez and Marcus Stallworth, with Lisa Trimboli; "These athletes have worked hard all season, and they dedication and tireless training has led them to break school records and qualify for the

Adidas Nationals. We are trying to raise funds to help cover the cost. Every dollar goes directly to helping these young athletes compete safely, confidently and to proudly represent our community. Please consider helping us by donating whatever you can, no amount is too small and sharing our story."

Trimboli commented saying, "The kids are really excited to go and the parents of these four kids are trying hard to get them to nationals."

The 2025 Adidas Track Nationals will be held at the Marcus T. Johnson Track and Field complex on the campus of North Carolina A&T State University.



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Library summer activities continue this month

AGAWAM – June is an exciting time at the Agawam Library. Library staff are busy preparing for our annual Summer Reading Program which will begin on Monday, June 23 and run through Friday, Aug. 8. We are excited to offer summer reading for all ages, so stay tuned for later this month when we kick off “Level Up at Your Library”. This summer, the library encourages everyone to reach new heights with reading, gaming and trying new challenges. Adults can participate in fun programs and earn prizes just for reading. In the meantime, the library is ready for summer and all the celebrations that come in the month of June

Tea & Trivia returns on Tuesday, June 17 at 6:30 p.m.

and Wednesday, June 18 at 2:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room. Get ready to have your wits matched and enjoy a nice cup of hot or iced tea! Please note that our trivia sessions are for ages 18 and older and registration is required. Our June Library Tech Sessions will feature all the information you need to use Beanstack - the online reading tracker that we'll be using for our summer reading challenge. Participants can register for either session: Wednesday, June 18 at 6:30 p.m. or Tuesday, June 24 at 10 a.m. Participants are asked to bring whichever mobile device you are most comfortable using.

Join us for our summer reading kick-off on Monday,

June 23 at 5:30 p.m. Join us for fun and games for all ages, including a host of indoor and outdoor games, weather permitting. We will have yard games, a puzzle race, a mobile arcade, board games, and a visit from the Moolicious ice cream truck! Be one of the first to sign up to participate in summer reading and begin working toward the goal of achieving a collective 5,000 hours of reading while earning chances to win a variety of great raffle prizes. Level up your brain and level up your game this summer at the Agawam Public Library! This event is for all ages and no registration is necessary.

The Library Writers Group will meet on Thursday, June 26 at 6 p.m. in the

Peirce Conference Room. The virtual author line-up for June features three excellent authors, starting with Smithsonian Scientists Brian Gratwicke and Dr. Gina Della Tonga on Wednesday, June 4 at 2 p.m. This will be an informative and fun discussion of the Smithsonian's book, Extinctopedia. Best-selling thriller writer Lisa Jewell will introduce readers to her new book, Don't Let Him In on Tuesday, June 10 at 2 p.m. And children's author Katherine Applegate will talk to viewers about her heartwarming novel, Odder on Tuesday, June 24 at 4 p.m. Please note that these author talks will be held virtually. More information and registration can be found by visiting: <https://library.org/agawamlibrary>

Join world sailor Amy Alton on a voyage around the globe and Level Up your Travel. On Monday, June 30 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room, the library welcomes Amy Alton for a presentation on her world travels. From 2014-2024 she lived on a sailboat full time with her husband, traveling tens of thousands of miles and visiting dozens of countries. If you've ever wondered what it would be like to cast off the lines and set sail into the sunset, Amy will talk about the highs and the lows about setting off to sea. She'll share photos and stories from her trip and the romance books that were inspired by her adventures and written under the pen

name Liz Alden. Please register for this event.

Registration for adult programs is open now. Registration for the Summer Reading Challenge will open on

June 23. Please visit our online calendar at www.agawamlibrary.org to register, or call the Information Desk at (413) 789-1550 X4. Our programs are often supported by the Agawam Center Library Association. Please note that the library will be closed on Thursday, June 19 for the observance of Juneteenth. Please note that our last Saturday will be June 7. We will be closed on Saturdays during the summer. Please visit our website for more information www.agawamlibrary.org.

Museum to offer passport series

HOLYOKE – Take a trip to Wistariahurst Museum this summer for our Summer Passport Series at Sensory Friendly Sunday Fundays. We have an array of themed Sunday Fundays that will delight the whole family visit after visit. Wistariahurst visitors will get their own passport that will be stamped at every event. Guests will get rewarded prizes based on how many stamps they collect by the end of the Summer Passport Series. From toys, to coloring books, to limited Wistariahurst merch, you don't want to miss earning a prize! Aiming for the biggest prize? Make sure to visit Wistariahurst during each of the following Sunday Funday events:

June 8, June 22, July 13, July 27, Aug. 10, Aug. 24, Sept. 7, and Sept. 21 all from 12 to 3 p.m. Each day features a different events from Celebrate Pride and June-

teenth to Garden Grooves and Dino Days.

Each of these events has unique activities and opportunities for engagement. From Drag Storytime at Celebrate Pride, to a Dino Dance Party at Dino Days, there's something new every visit. Sunday Fundays are designed for guests of all ages, with our friends with sensory sensitivities in mind. Throughout the first floor, children will be able to interact with fine motor activities, puzzles, and board games to engage with and enjoy. Gross motor activities like hula hoops, hopscotch, and bounce balls will get everyone moving and grooving. Need to take a break from the energy? A low sensory area will be available to guests as well. Throughout the first floor, guests can also interact with activities such as our Where's Winston scavenger

hunt. During your self-guided tour, keep your eyes open for our lethargic, little lion. Take a picture or selfie with him and show your picture to our front desk attendant to get an exclusive Winston sticker.

Our Sensory Friendly Sunday Fundays provide an excellent opportunity for families with sensory sensitivities to experience our museum in a relaxed environment at their own pace. Wistariahurst is thrilled to host these open hours, allowing families to explore, discover, and connect with our museum. This is why these events will be free and accessible to the public for all to enjoy. The first event of the Sunday Funday Passport Series is right around the corner. Join us Sunday, June 8 for Celebrate Pride. Pack your bags, pick up your passport, and start collecting stamps- and memories.

Girls lacrosse supports veterans



Prior to the Memorial Day holiday, The Agawam High School girls lacrosse program helped place over 10,000 flags at the Agawam Veterans Cemetery. Coach Taylor DeGeorge, a first-year coach at Agawam and former player, led her group on the volunteer effort.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

St. John the Evangelist Church to host a 'Women of Grace' Session

AGAWAM – Women in the Diocese of Springfield, Massachusetts are invited to attend an information session for an upcoming “Women of Grace” group study. The non-committal information session will be held Thursday, June 19, 6:30 p.m., in the parish center at St. John the Evangelist Church, 833 Main Street, Agawam. For more in-

formation, contact the parish office at 413-786-8105, or sje.pariahsecretary@gmail.com.

More about this program: Full Of Grace: Women And The Abundant Life - Are you looking for a group study that would help to affirm your dignity and vocation as a daughter of God? The Women of Grace Foun-

dational Study was developed by Johnnette Benkovic Williams who has an EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network) program of the same name (www.womenofgrace.com).

This nine-week study will be held at St. John the Evangelist Church July 10 through Sept. 11, 6:30 p.m. at St. John's.

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Grange holding Strawberry Shortcake luncheon

AGAWAM – Celebrating 100 years, Community Grange #382 of Feeding Hills will hold a Strawberry Shortcake Luncheon “to-go” on Saturday, June 21. The Grange Hall is located at 47 North West Street in Feeding Hills. Pick-up hours will be 11 a.m. until 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 \$12.00. Please pre-order your meal(s) by calling (413) 789-2061. The last day for orders is June 18.

Proceeds will benefit 2025 community projects and building fund.

Holyoke Community to host Fourth of July fireworks

HOLYOKE – The City of Holyoke will be hosting the annual Fourth of July fireworks on Friday, June 27 (with a rain-date of June 29). The event will take place on the grounds of Holyoke Community College, at 303 Homestead Avenue.

Vendors interested in taking part in the event should contact the Parks and Recreation Department before June 13, for a permit application at 413-322-5620.

music and food from a variety of vendors as well as many children's activities. The event begins at 6 p.m., with the fireworks display scheduled to start at dusk.

Many of the streets around the college will close early, please plan for alternate routes. We are currently searching for volunteers, please call the Mayor's Office at 413-561-1600. If you are planning to bring your dog to the fireworks, the dog must be always kept on a leash.

Sheriff's Office celebrates new training program

LUDLOW – The Hampden County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) recently hosted a celebration of the Emerge Career tech-driven Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Training Program at HCSO's All-Inclusive Support Services (AISS) facility in Springfield. The event honored the accomplishments of justice-involved individuals who transformed their lives through their CDL training.

The Emerge Career CDL Program, made possible through funding from Governor Maura Healey's Commonwealth Corporation, is one of the few in the nation that provides incarcerated individuals with the opportunity to receive fully accredited commercial driving instruction while still in custody, allowing them to step directly into careers upon release. Due to the high demand for licensed CDL drivers in logistics, delivery, and construction industries, participants in the program often secure high-paying employment offers with starting salaries ranging from \$65,000 to \$85,000 annually.

Since its establishment, the Emerge Career CDL Training Program has graduated more than 200 individuals across several states, and over 94% have gained employment within 90 days of completion. The program's public-private partnership reduces recidivism, strengthens families,

and fills critical labor shortages.

"The Emerge Career tech-based CDL Program is proof that when you invest in people and believe in second chances, the results are transformative, not just for the individuals, but for our entire community. These graduates are leaving with more than a license – they're leaving with purpose, opportunity, and a path to long-term success," said Sheriff Nick Cocchi.

Sheriff Cocchi, Emerge Career co-founders Uzoma "Zo" Orchingwa and Gabriel "Gabe" Saruhashi, as well as Massachusetts State Representatives Shirley Arriaga, Brian Ashe, and Carlos González attended the event, all commenting on the life-changing opportunities the program provides.

"The Emerge model demonstrates how AI- and software-powered vocational training, paired with supportive coaching, transparent processes, and direct job placements, can transform lives and build sustainable careers at scale," said Orchingwa.

Honored at the event were two graduates who spoke about their experiences with the Emerge CDL program. The graduates spoke of their ability to take care of themselves and their families as a result of the program, emphasizing the crucial opportunity for redemption. One of the grad-

uates, who arrived in a tractor-trailer, shared how the program had transformed his life.

"When someone walks out of our care and custody with the skills and certification to earn a solid, honest living – often upwards of \$70,000 a year – it fundamentally changes the trajectory of their life. It breaks the cycle of incarceration by replacing desperation with stability and pride. That's how you reduce recidivism. That's how you build safer, stronger communities," said Sheriff Cocchi.

The Sheriff's Office's partnership with Emerge Career demonstrates the ongoing commitment to providing innovative reentry and vocational training opportunities that provide justice-involved individuals the skills necessary for successful reintegration.

For more information about the Emerge Career CDL Training Program at HCSO, visit <https://hcsoma.org/emerge-career-cdl-training-program-at-hcsoma/> to complete.

Eversource will send a letter to customers whose meters are being upgraded to the latest technology in the next few months, and all customers will be notified several times in advance of work to install their new smart meter.

Learn more about Eversource's transition to the modern power grid of the future.

Opportunities in technology



The EASTEC/SME student affiliated manufacturing event at the Eastern States Exposition gave Agawam students in the Manufacturing/Engineering pathway the opportunity to make connections with more than fifty industry leaders and explore the latest in manufacturing technology.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

ACAA announces new exhibit at Cooper's

AGAWAM – Celebrating 100 years, Community Grange #3 AGAWAM – A new art exhibit is on display at Cooper's Commons, 159 Main Street, Agawam.

The exhibit, sponsored by the Agawam Community Artists and Artisans, will be on display throughout the display.

The ACAA is an Agawam art group consisting of many professional artists and artisans who par-

ticipate in quality juried art shows and galleries. The group conducts the Pioneer Valley Art Festival each year in August, attracting visitors from throughout the region.

The art is displayed in the historic building of Cooper's Commons on all floors and in all of the quaint rooms.

This art show depicts scenes of tobacco barns, whimsical farm animals,

and covered bridges in oil, acrylic, lithographs and watercolor. All of the art is beautifully framed and would look wonderful in any style home.

Proceeds from any sold art goes directly to the artist.

For further information please contact Ceil Rossi at (413) 207-1247 or email tocarefree2@hotmail.com or contact the artist listed on the art.

Senior Center announces more activities for June

AGAWAM – The Agawam Senior Center will be holding the following activities and events in the coming weeks:

Hampden County Sheriff Triad Division Educational Seminar

Thursday, June 12 at 1 p.m. in the Seminar Hall

The Hampden County Sheriff's Office Triad Division is one way we are working proactively to help our senior neighbors stay safe and stay educated. Join us to learn about the free and tangible programs we offer to our community.

Senior Center Brainstorming Session

Tuesday, June 17 at 5:30 p.m. in the Dining Hall

Senior Center Staff, Friends of the Agawam Senior Center, Agawam Council On Aging, and Agawam Media are pulling together resources to better serve Senior Center members with future programs and events. Please join us for this important session as your input is vital in helping us understand the wants and needs of our members. The Brainstorming Session

will be held on June 17 at 5:30 p.m. in the Dining Hall. Each of the four previously mentioned groups will give a brief introduction of their involvement, purpose, and commitment, to the Senior Center followed by Q&A and an exchange of ideas with those in attendance. Please plan to attend and help us to truly put our best foot forward to make this a Senior Center worthy of your continued membership.

Coffee and Chats with Mayor Johnson

Wednesday, June 18 at 10 in Friends Coffee Shop

Join Mayor Johnson in the Friends Coffee Shop at 10 a.m. for all the latest and up to date information regarding the beautiful Town of Agawam and Feeding Hills.

Coffee Talk With Veterans - Coffee Shop

Wednesday, June 18 at 1 p.m. in the Friends Coffee Shop

Are you a Veteran? We here at the Agawam Senior Center would like to offer you a space to have a coffee or tea on us. Come alone or bring a buddy. We would love to get to know you.

The Dementia Experience

Monday, June 23 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. in Seminar Hall

The Dementia Experience is a powerful, 30-minute interactive training using sensory modification. Participants will engage in typical daily activities while encountering what it feels like to live with dementia. Stephanie Schellenger MHS, CDP the Memory Care Program Director from Heritage Woods will be here at the Senior Center to conduct this educational experience. Please call Kristina to register for a time slot.

Forastiere Pre-Planning Presentation Lunch and Learn

Wednesday, June 25 from 12 to 1:30 p.m. in the Veterans Hall

Join Forastiere Funeral Home for a lunch and learn. We will have a pizza lunch and dessert as you dive further into the benefit of pre-planning services for your future and peace of mind.

Please call Kristina at 413-726-2836 by Friday, June 20, 2025 to register for this event.

Read the Agawam Advertiser News online at www.agawamadvertisernews.turley.com

Support Agawam Boys Track!

Our Agawam High School Boys 4x100 Relay Team is headed to the Adidas Nationals in Greensboro, NC June 20-22, 2025!

These hardworking athletes have broken school records and earned their place on the national stage. Now they need your help to get there! We're raising funds for registration, travel, lodging, and uniforms.

Every dollar helps our team compete and represent Agawam with pride!

Please Donate & Share: <https://gofund.me/5df3e958>

Thank you for supporting local athletes!



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Opinion

Guest Column



Social Security questions asked over coffee

Dear Rusty:

My coffee conversations among a group of friends have resulted in several questions about Social Security.

1. What happens to the Social Security account of someone who dies before retirement age. What happens to that money and where does it end up?

2. How does the decreased birth rate of the USA affect future Social Security benefits?

3. Is a person, who has never contributed to the Social Security System entitled to any benefits from the Social Security Administration?

4. Is there a central location online that a person can access that explains the history and current status of the Social Security System, that explains all of it in simple terms. I would like to be able to give this location to people I talk with about Social Security.

Most of the articles we read are like slogging through mud. I enjoy AMAC articles and am college educated, but the average reading level in the U.S. is less than sixth grade. Thank you for considering these questions.

Signed: Curious Reader

Dear Curious:

Thank you for your readership and I'll be happy to tackle your "over coffee" questions about Social Security.

1. Social Security is a "pay as you go" program, where all money collected from workers is used to pay benefits for all those, who are currently receiving Social Security. In other words, all money contributed is used to pay benefits to others already receiving benefits. It is not put into a separate account for each person and that is a good thing. Most people get more from Social Security than they ever contributed, but benefits are paid for life, regardless of how long one lives. The specific answer to your question is that if someone dies before retirement age, the money contributed has already been used to pay benefits to others. Keep in mind though, that a surviving spouse or minor or disabled adult child may also collect benefits on a deceased person's Social Security record.

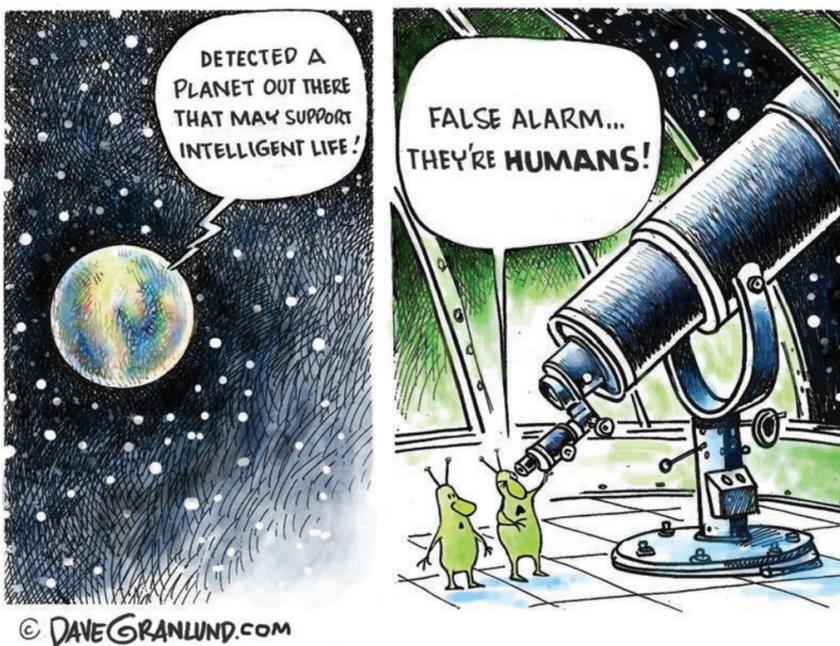
2. The decreasing birth rate in the U.S. hurts Social Security. That's because fewer babies mean fewer future workers contributing to the Social Security program. FYI, in 1950 there were about 15 workers contributing to SS for every one person collecting benefits,

but today there are less than three workers for each SS beneficiary. That problem is exacerbated by the steadily increasing U.S. life expectancy. Beneficiaries are now often collecting SS benefits for decades from a program designed to pay benefits for only a few years.

3. Only those who have worked and contributed to Social Security through payroll taxes for about 10 years (40 quarters of SS credit) are eligible to collect SS Retirement benefits. However, some dependent spouses and/or dependent minor or dependent disabled children who have never worked might also be eligible for benefits from the worker's Social Security record. Along with each U.S. state, the SSA also administers another program, known as Supplement Security Income, on behalf of the federal government. However, federal "SSI" benefits are not paid with Social Security funds. "SSI" is a separate government benefit program, with federal benefits paid from the general U.S. Treasury.

4. There are lots of places to get information about Social Security, but I suggest you start at our AMAC Foundation Social Security information website, which can be found at www.socialsecurityreport.org. Here you will find numerous articles about Social Security, retirement, Medicare, etc., as well as all the Ask Rusty articles I have published weekly over the last 8 years. You can also find excellent Social Security information on our AMAC Foundation main website, www.amacfoundation.org. And, of course, you can always ask any questions you have via email to ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. Or, if you prefer, you can just call us on 1-888-750-2622 if you have questions about Social Security or about Medicare enrollment.

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.



Guest Column

Bush beans are a great succession

I was "late" planting my bush beans this year, at least according to the calendar. But with the garden being under water for awhile and then mucky for days on end, this past week was the first time conditions were favorable.

We want to grow a lot of beans this year. The kids like them steamed, then stir-fried with garlic. My hope is to have lots of them to freeze, and to do that it will require multiple plantings.

Bush beans are a good example of a vegetable that works well as a succession crop. What that means is that they can be sown multiple times throughout the summer.

Why? Because unlike most other vegetables, beans produce less than 8 weeks from sowing, are not finicky about heat, and as long as you have full sun and average garden soil they can be grown with relative ease.

Consider making additional sowings of this versatile vegetable now before you get busy with the harvest. That way you can enjoy a continuous supply all summer long.

You might still refer to snap or bush beans as "string beans" even though the tough strings that connected the two halves of the pod were bred out of the snap bean beginning in 1884 with Calvin N. Keeney's introduction of the Stringless Refugee Wax Bean.

Today's modern stringless beans are a result of those early breeding efforts.

nation will take place in a week to 10 days.

It is good practice not to work among the plants after a rainstorm or in the early morning when dew is present. Touching wet foliage can encourage diseases and spread them from plant to plant.

When the foliage is dry you will want to be on the look out for the Mexican Bean Beetle. A bit larger than ladybugs, and all brown, these pests and their fuzzy yellow larvae can decimate a stand of bean plants. Vigilance is the key.

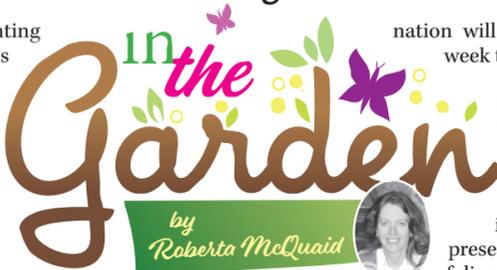
If squashing bugs isn't for you, dropping them into soapy water will also do them in. Try planting marigolds nearby to deter them.

I have also found through experience that subsequent sowings are best sited away from one another. It will take the beetles a longer time to find the new plants than if they are planted side by side.

Harvest beans when they are still relatively thin. Depending on the variety, pods can average five to seven inches long at maturity. When inner seeds start to swell and fatten up the bean they aren't nearly as tasty.

As mentioned, bumper crops are possible, and sometimes it may be difficult to keep up with the harvest. One variety known especially for its holding power is Jade. Beans from this variety retain a deep green color and sport thin pods.

I have also enjoyed grow-



All types of beans require warm soil in which to germinate; 60 degrees at least. White seeded varieties are especially picky about soil temperatures.

Black and tan seeds regulate moisture intake more effectively, and therefore are less likely to rot in cool, wet soils. If you want to gamble with an early sowing, sow these instead.

Many seed companies even tell you the seed color in a description. Usually by May 20 the ground is warm enough to sow all types of beans.

Succession plantings can be made every 10 days through July 30. After that it is unlikely that plants will produce a viable crop before frost hits.

Rather than sowing bean seeds in rows, I make good use of garden space by planting them in a four-foot wide block. Anything wider than four feet would make it difficult to reach in among the plants to harvest.

If soil has been turned over or rototilled first it is easy to simply place the bean seeds on top of the soil four inches apart and push them into the ground with your index finger, up to the first knuckle. Pat the surface of the soil with your palm to firm, and water well. Germination



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Thanks to those who took part in CROP Walk

To the Editor:

On April 27, people of all ages gathered at West Springfield United Methodist Church for the annual Agawam/West Springfield CROP Hunger Walk. It was a good day for a community event that raised funds to fight hunger both locally and around the world. The CROP Planning Committee's goal to raise \$10,000 was surpassed!

As of this writing, \$11,400 has been donated. The number of walkers also exceeded expectation - over 70 people showed up to help end hunger, one step at a time.

Agawam Congregational, Feeding Hills Congregational, First Congregational West Springfield, Grace Lutheran Church, St. David's Episcopal and West Springfield United Methodist churches

all contributed both walkers and funds. Cub Pack 570 from WS United Methodist Church participated, and a dozen children enjoyed playing at the newly constructed playground behind Bagg Brook Trail. Members of the West Springfield High School Class of 1975 and people from the community also signed up to walk.

The West Springfield Li-

on's Club provided lunch to participants at the rally prior to the walk. Grace Lutheran's Back Row Bank provided joyous music. Painted rocks were provided by St. David's Sunday School kids and First Church's Care Team and Youth Group. Door prize baskets were provided by Feeding Hills Congregational Church and the Parish Cupboard.

Our gratitude goes out to all participants and the two communities that take part in this annual event. Raising awareness about the needs of our neighbors near and far reaps benefits for all.

In thanksgiving,
Diana Forfa
Coordinator
Agawam/West Springfield
CROP Hunger Walk

Schools & Youth

Registration open for many summer programs

AGAWAM – Registration has begun for all of our summer programs. Some of our programs are at full capacity. Doering PE Academy, C0-Ed Basketball Clinic, Boys Lacrosse Clinic, and Girls Lacrosse Clinic have openings as of this week.

Doering PE Academy

Doering Middle School PE Teachers will offer fun and physically engaging activities in a safe structured environment fostering fitness, teamwork, and social skills. The academy will consist of a variety of games, sports, and activities. Participants need to wear sneakers, bring a snack, and plenty of water.

Session I July 1 through July 3
 Session II August 5 through August 7
 Days Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
 Location: Doering Middle School Field & Gym if raining

Ages: Boys and Girls in Grades K - 8 (24-25 school year)

Times: 8 to 11 a.m.

Cost: \$100 per person

Registration: Begins in person and online on Tuesday, June 3.

Boys Lacrosse

Agawam High School Lacrosse Coaches will focus on the basic, skills, strategies, and rules of the game in this four day program.

Participants need to bring their own equipment, bring a snack, and plenty of water.

Days Monday through Thursday (Friday will be used as a make-up day if needed)

Dates: July 28 through July 31

Location: AHS Stadium

Ages: Boys in Grades 1 - 8 (24-25 school year)

Times: 9 a.m. to 12 noon

Cost: \$100 per person

Registration: Begins in person and online on Tuesday, June 3.

Girls Lacrosse

Agawam High School Lacrosse Coaches will focus on the basic, skills, strategies, and rules of the game in this four day program.

Participants need to bring their own equipment, bring a snack, and plenty of water.

Days Monday through Thursday (Friday will be used as a make-up day if needed)

Dates: August 11 through August 14

Location: AHS Stadium

Ages: Girls in Grades 3 - 8 (24-25 school year)

Times: 9 a.m. to 12 noon

Cost: \$100 per person

Registration: Begins in person and online on Tuesday, June 3

Co-Ed Youth Basketball

American International College (AIC) Men's Basketball Coaches will lead players through a series of drills and games that will enhance their ability in the game of basketball. Participants need to wear sneakers and bring plenty of water.

Days/Dates Monday, July 14 through Thursday, July 17

Location Agawam High School Gymnasium

Session I Ages 7 - 10

Times: 9 to 11 a.m.

Limit: 35 per session

Session II Ages 11 - 14

Times: 12 to 2 p.m.

Limit: 35 per session

Cost: \$50 per person

Registration: Begins in person and online on Tuesday, June 3.

The Cows Are Coming Home!

Old Sturbridge Village teams up with World-Renowned CowParade and regional artists to design an Udderly Moo-ving Experience

STURBRIDGE—This summer, Old Sturbridge Village, New England's premier living history museum, is partnering with CowParade, the world's largest public art event, to bring history and imagination to life with more than two dozen, artistically decorated cows grazing the Village grounds.

The world-renowned cows, made of fiberglass and weighing 100-pounds, are being transformed by local artists into creative works of art that represent early New England life, America 250 and more. The exhibit will be unveiled to the public the weekend of June 21-22 and will run into September, culminating with a cattle auction to sup-

port the Museum's non-profit educational programs.

In March, more than 130 New England artists responded to the Village's call to create one-of-a-kind cow designs with over 261 submissions. Those chosen to go "on parade" range from revolutionary-inspired cows such as the "Bull of Rights" to more contemporary masterpieces like, "Salted," which represents a giant stick of butter. The selected artists will receive a \$1,000 honorarium and are now hard at work - painting, staining, and even knitting their imaginative creations to life.

"By welcoming the internationally known CowParade to Massachusetts, we

COLLEGE NOTES

STCC announces spring 2025 Dean's List

SPRINGFIELD – Springfield Technical Community College announces students who were named to the spring 2025 dean's list.

Published each semester, the STCC dean's list recognizes excellence in academic performance. To be considered, degree-seeking students must earn 12 or more college level credits in the current semester, or a total of 12 or more combined college-level credits earned during the fall and spring semesters, and achieve a 3.3 or above grade point average.

Student names are listed under the towns or cities in which they reside.

Agawam

Abdullah Atwan Rajee, Allison F Cohen, Amal Hassanein, Ashbala Khan, Brickelle C Leitl, Brody Aaron Robbins, Carianne Haluch,

Emin Olgun, Evelina Lapsova, Grant Steven Lanier, Hailley Ouellette, Holly Buffam, Isabel Laurie Clarke, Joseph Christian Higgins, Joseph Wesley Brewster, Joshua Nathaniel Joubert, Juliana Madison Sheehan, Katherine Felicia Baukman, Kaylish M Lopez, Kevin Pirogov, Krysten Paquette, Laura Ostas, Lena Oliyevskaya, Lilivette Denise Colon, Liliya Sereda, Magdalena Ostas, Melissa Harrington, Nicholas Taylor Skorupski, Nicole J Stefano, Oksana Morgun, Peter John Rochford, Rawand M Allami, Salman Eshraghi, Samuel Ostas, Scott Edward Minalga, Stacey M Ramsdell, Sulivan Serafino-Marrin, Thuy T Nguyen, Yelena Beaulieu, Yolimar Sanchez, Zachary Stephen Rivers, Zahide Cure, Zuowanna Sadae Pennant

Emmanuel College awards degrees to local students

BOSTON – Emmanuel College awarded more than 450 degrees to the Class of 2025 at the College's 103rd Commencement on May 10.

The following local students were awarded degrees:

Delaney Brown of Agawam was awarded a BS in Nursing

Jaylee Hiersche of Feeding Hills was awarded a MED in Education Moderate Disabilities

Local students named to Emmanuel 2025 Dean's List

BOSTON – In recognition of their outstanding academic achievement, Emmanuel College has named more than 850 students to the Dean's List for the Spring 2025 semester. To earn a spot on the Dean's List, Emmanuel stu-

dents must achieve a grade point average of 3.5 or higher for a 16-credit semester. The following local students were named to the Dean's List:

Delaney Brown of Agawam, who is majoring in Nursing.

Rhode Island students make Dean's List

KINGSTON, RI – The University of Rhode Island is pleased to announce that several area students have been named to its Spring 2025 Dean's List. Among them are:

Emily Gamelli of Agawam
 Marissa Hermans of Agawam

Madison Hill of Feeding Hills

Jack Patterson of Agawam Nursing.

Therapy dog to visit library

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Public Library will host a visit from Maki the Therapy Dog. He will appear on June 9, 16, 23, July 7, 14, 21, and 28, Aug. 18 and 25 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. on the fourth floor. Call for a 15-minute time slot.

Congressman Neal to Speak at Walter S. Barr Awards Ceremony

U.S. Rep. Richard Neal will be the Keynote speaker at The Horace Smith Fund 125th Anniversary Celebration and Scholarship Awards Ceremony. The event will take place on Thursday, June 19 at 6 p.m., at the Carriage House of Storowton Tavern for recipients, their parents, school counselors, and Corporators.

Scholarships and Fellowships totaling \$309,000 will be awarded to residents of Hampden County. Walter S. Barr Scholarships of \$12,000 will be given to 18 graduating high school seniors and two students currently attending college. A Sidney S. Letter Scholarship, named after a recent benefactor, will be awarded to a college student of significant merit. The William R. Rooney Award will be granted to a high school senior who has received special education services. Three Walter S. Barr Fellowships of \$15,000 will be given to students pursuing full-time graduate studies.

The Horace Smith Fund was established in 1899 by

the successful and generous philanthropist named Horace Smith. He and Daniel Wesson were the founders of Smith & Wesson, located in Springfield. Mr. Smith's will provided that the residual of his estate, after several bequests to relatives and institutions, was to be used for public purposes at the discretion of his executors. They decided that it should be used to help deserving students finance their education.

The Walter S. Barr Scholarships and Fellowships are named for a West Springfield businessman, whose widow left the bulk of the family estate to The Horace Smith Fund in 1950. The William R. Rooney Award is named for a past Executive Director with a desire to assist special needs students. All recipients must be residents of Hampden County.

This year's scholarship recipients who are graduating seniors are from the following high schools:

Agawam High School: Isabella M. Oliveira, Hannah M. Parker

JOB OPPORTUNITY

newspaper correspondent

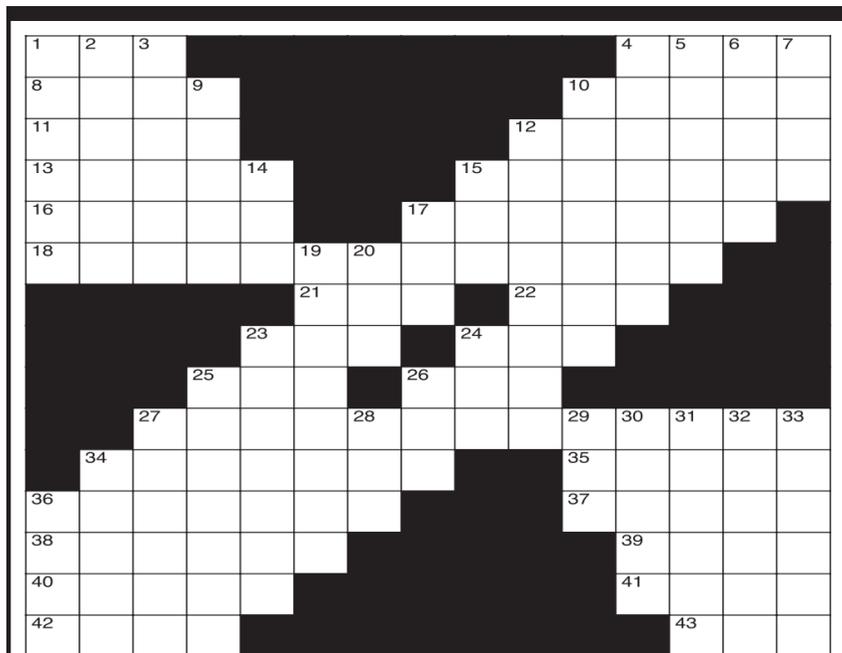
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CLUES ACROSS

- Racquet sports association
- Places to sleep
- Native American tribe
- Small platforms
- Egg shape
- Running out
- French painter
- Some are "of the Caribbean"
- Painful intestinal problem
- More irritated
- Prove yourself
- Catch
- Supplement with difficulty
- American automotive giant
- Form of "to be"

CLUES DOWN

- Consisting of uncombined atoms
- Island country
- Heavenly body
- Caribbean island
- Copyread
- A place to eat
- Drops down
- Native group of Alaska
- Engage in
- "Desperate Housewives" lane
- Thyroid-stimulating hormone
- Foot (Latin)
- A place to bathe
- Animosities

CLUES DOWN

- Partner to cheese
- Venus ____, plant
- A donation
- Pokes holes in the ground
- Midway between northeast and east
- Looked into
- Not young
- Annoy constantly
- Something one can strike
- Most glacial
- Ten less than one hundred
- Idle talker
- Has moved through the air
- Container for shipping

GARDEN ■ from page 4

ing French beans "Haricot Verts" because they are very long and thin, never tough.

Fresh beans are easy to freeze. Blanch in boiling water for three minutes then plunge into ice water until

cooled. Air-dry thoroughly, pack in plastic bags, and place in the freezer. Easy breezy.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 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.

Summer Reading for kids and teens offered at the Agawam Library

AGAWAM – The Summer Reading Challenge at the Agawam Library is a seven week span full of activities, reading, and prizes following the theme of Level Up at Your Library. That means we are embracing all things gaming.

The Summer Reading Challenge will begin on Monday, June 23 and end on Friday, Aug. 8. Each week, kids & teens can enter raffle tickets for prizes and work to secure a spot in the Grand Prize Raffle. This year the grand prize is a Kindle Fire 7.

The library is challenging the entire community to work towards logging a total of 5,000 hours of reading during the Summer Reading Challenge. You will be able to follow our progress by checking out the life-sized game board by the Circulation Desk. To log your reading go to the website agawamlibrary.beanstack.org.

We will also have lots of activities for kids and teens. All activities are free and open to public. Some events require registration. Registration starts June 16. To register go to the website agawamlibrary.org, or call 413-789-1550 ext 3.

The following events are happening June 23 to July 5. To view the full listing of Summer Reading events go to our website: agawamlibrary.org

Monday, June 23

Family Take and Make Craft – Summer Treat Magnet. For kids of all ages. Available all day while supplies

last. Drop-in, no registration is required.

Kirby Scavenger Hunt – For grades 7-12. All Week. Stop by the Teen Space anytime the library is open to do this scavenger hunt. Everyone who completes a Kirby Scavenger hunt will be entered into a raffle for a special scavenger hunt prize, separate from the Beanstack raffles.

9:30 a.m. Toddler Time – For ages 19 m. – 36 m. Drop-in. Join us for stories, activities, and playtime.

1 p.m. Pre-K Pals – For ages 2 years 9 m. – 5 years old. Drop-in, no registration is required. Come practice the skills you'll need for Kindergarten. This program is provided by Pathways for Parents

5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Summer Reading Kick-Off – For all ages. Drop-in, no registration is required.

Kick off your summer reading with an evening of fun and games.

Tuesday, June 24

9:30 a.m. Art & Stories – For ages 3-5. Drop-in. Hear a story and make a fun art project.

3 to 4:30 p.m. – Dungeons & Dragons for grades 7-12. Registration is required. Create your own character and journey through a magical world full of beauty and danger! Join Dungeon Master Evan for 7 sessions of dice-rolling, roleplaying, and imaginative adventuring. No D&D experience? No problem! This is a begin-

ner-friendly program.

6 p.m. Poop Museum with Susie Maguie – For All ages. Registration is required. At The Poop Museum, everyone learns many fantastic, fabulous and fun facts about human, animal and insect poop, many of which truly amaze and surprise. At The Poop Museum, everyone learns A LOT, and some of the facts that are shared are mind blowing! But The Poop Museum is also full of laughter ... because ... well ... our subject is poop and Susie has found a wonderful way to blend solid science, with the hilarity that humans love, when it comes to poop.

Wednesday, June 25

Joke Day – For All Ages. All Day. Tell a joke to a librarian in the Children's Room and get a small prize.

9:30 a.m. Grow, Play & Learn – For ages birth – 2 years old. Drop-in. Stories, songs and skill building, led by an Early Childhood Developmental trained staff member, guiding caregivers in strengthening interactions with their child. This program is provided by Pathways for Parents.

10:30 a.m. Grow, Play & Learn – For ages 3 years old – 5 years old. Drop-in. Stories, songs and skill building, led by an Early Childhood Developmental trained staff member, guiding caregivers in strengthening interactions with their child. This program is provided by Pathways for Parents.

Thursday, June 26

Family Take and Make Craft – Summer Treat Magnet. Available all day while supplies last. Drop-in, no registration is required.

9:30 a.m. Baby Story Time – For ages birth – 18 months. Drop-in. We will read stories, sing songs, learn a little American Sign Language and play together.

6:30 p.m. Family Paint Night for grades 1-6. Registration is required. Join special guest Stephanie Gaboury for a family friendly paint night. This is an acrylic-paint program designed for families, but welcome to children and adults of all ages. Students will learn about brush stroke, color mixing, gradient blending, and more as they receive step-by-step instructions to complete their paintings on canvas.

Friday, June 27

Extra Fun Fridays – All Day. For kids of all ages. Kids of all ages can stop by the Children's Room anytime on Fridays and do special activities.

9:30 a.m. Grow, Play & Learn – For ages birth – 2 years old. Drop-in. Stories, songs and skill building, led by an Early Childhood Developmental trained staff member, guiding caregivers in strengthening interactions with their child. This program is provided by Pathways for Parents.

10:30 a.m. Grow, Play and Learn – For ages 3 years old – 5 years old. Drop-in. Stories, songs and skill building,

led by an Early Childhood Developmental trained staff member, guiding caregivers in strengthening interactions with their child. This program is provided by Pathways for Parents.

Monday, June 30

Family Take and Make Craft – Hatching Dino Craft. For kids of all ages. Available all day while supplies last. Drop-in, no registration is required.

1 p.m. Pre-K Pals – For ages 2 years 9 m. – 5 years old. Drop-in. Come practice the skills you'll need for Kindergarten. This program is provided by Pathways for Parents

Tuesday, July 1

11 a.m. Ready for Kindergarten – For ages 3-5. Registration is required. Come practice the skills you'll need for Kindergarten. This program is provided by Pathways for Parents.

3 to 4:30 p.m. – Dungeons & Dragons for grades 7-12. Registration is required. Create your own character and journey through a magical world full of beauty and danger. Join Dungeon Master Evan for 7 sessions of dice-rolling, roleplaying, and imaginative adventuring. No D&D experience? No problem. This is a beginner-friendly program.

6 p.m. Cardboard Drive-In – For kids entering K-2nd grade. Registration is required. Come create your own custom cardboard race car while we watch the Super Mario Bros Movie!

Wednesday, July 2

Joke Day – For all Ages. All Day. Tell a joke to a librarian in the Children's Room and get a small prize.

9:30 a.m. Grow, Play & Learn – For ages birth – 2 years old. Drop-in. Stories, songs and skill building, led by an Early Childhood Developmental trained staff member, guiding caregivers in strengthening interactions with their child. This program is provided by Pathways for Parents.

10:30 a.m. Grow, Play & Learn – For ages 3 years old – 5 years old. Drop-in. Stories, songs and skill building, led by an Early Childhood Developmental trained staff member, guiding caregivers in strengthening interactions with their child. This program is provided by Pathways for Parents.

Thursday, July 3

Family Take and Make Craft – Hatching Dino Craft. For all ages. Available all day while supplies last. Drop-in, no registration is required.

4:30 p.m. Younger LEGO building for kids entering K-2nd grade. Registration is required. We will have a contest to see who can build the tallest tower that can hold up 5 rubber duckies.

If you have questions about these programs or would like to know more about upcoming programs for kids & Teens at the Agawam Library please call 413-789-1550 ext. 3 or email [Pamela Weingart](mailto:Pamela.Weingart@agawamlibrary.org) at pweingart@agawamlibrary.org.



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BBB: Sponsored ad could be a scam

Sponsored content is everywhere online. From the top results of your search engine to the tempting deal you scrolled past on social media – it's hard to avoid.

While most sponsored ads are legitimate, some aren't. Just as real, trustworthy businesses can purchase sponsored ads to boost their content in your search results or social media feeds, so too can scammers that create impostor websites.

BBB Scam Tracker continues to receive reports from consumers who are tricked into clicking on fake websites that are advertised on search engines and social media as "sponsored." These scams are not only specific to retail websites and merchandise – there are also reports of sponsored ads for fake passport renewal services, healthcare open enrollment websites, lost and found services, puppies for sale, and more.

How the scam works

It starts with a simple search. Let's say you're looking to buy sneakers, and the top result of your search is a "sponsored" ad for a retail-

er selling your item. Or, you may see a sponsored ad on your social media feed for the same product.

You click on the link and are taken to what appears to be a legitimate website. The merchandise may even be majorly discounted, and you think you're getting a great deal. At checkout, you enter your personal and financial information and make your purchase.

At this point, you may never receive your merchandise. If you try to contact the company's customer support, they may not have a record of your purchase, making you realize that you purchased from a fake website. You may not be able to find the original website that you purchased from or their contact information may be disabled.

As mentioned, these sponsored ad scams are not always tied to fake retail websites. One person shared their experience on BBB Scam Tracker, "I did a [search engine redacted] search for 'Apply Global Entry' and I clicked on the first link that showed up. I didn't realize it was a sponsored link. I filled

out all my daughter's personal information including name, date of birth, address, passport information thinking I was on the U.S. government's website and realized only when I arrived at the payment page that this was a scam."

How to avoid sponsored ad scams

- **No matter what, always confirm you are on a legitimate website.** Even if a website is sponsored and shows up at the top of your search results, always confirm that you are on the correct website before making a purchase or entering your personal information. Scammers are easily able to create lookalike websites that seem like the real deal. See BBB's tips for identifying a fake website.

- **Use caution when making purchases through social media shops.** Sometimes, sponsored ads on social media platforms take you to purchase products on the app's shop. You may not be able to tell if the retailer or merchandise is legitimate through the app's shop. If you're unsure, you can search for the retailer on your own

and find their real website to purchase from. See BBB's tips for buying from social media ads.

- **Be wary of too-good-to-be-true deals.** Major discounts on otherwise expensive products often trick people into purchasing items on fake websites. If the deal seems too good to be true, it probably is. Do a quick search to compare prices on other sites to get an idea of what the item really costs.

- **Use BBB to verify business information.** If you're questioning whether the website you're visiting is an impostor site, check with BBB.org to find the business's information and verify its web address. If you're not familiar with the business, you can also see if there are any customer reviews or complaints listed.

- **Be proactive and keep trusted contact information handy.** Having official websites bookmarked or customer service numbers saved can help you avoid scams when you're in a hurry and searching for a business. See BBB's recommendations for what contact information to save.

Read the Agawam Advertiser News online at www.agawamadvertisernews.turley.com

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Sacred Heart holding special Mass

AGAWAM – Sacred Heart Parish in Feeding Hills will be hosting a special Mass in honor of St. Anthony of Padua on Friday, June 13 at 9 a.m. It

will include the blessing and distribution of the St. Anthony bread and veneration of the relic. All are welcome to attend.

Are you having difficulty communicating with your partner, struggling with boundaries, and healthy relationships?

**We invite you to join us
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Please contact **Pat James 413-726-8661.**



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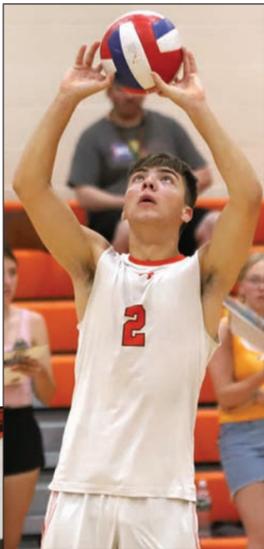
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SPORTS

Top-seeded Brownies cruise toward semifinals

AGAWAM – Its tough under the new state tournament format for teams from Western Massachusetts to get especially high seeds in the playoffs. But Agawam boys volleyball holds the No. 1 seed in this year's Division 2 state tournament. As a result, Agawam has now cruised through three rounds of tournament play,

with the latest win coming last Friday evening with a 3-0 sweep of East Longmeadow. The Brownies were not in any trouble throughout the match and moved on to the final four. Agawam was scheduled to face rival West Springfield in the state semifinals. Westfield vs. Wayland is the other semifinal.



Left: Eric Nazarets gets a set from the back. Above: Andrei Betranceic gets a long hit from the back line.



Above: Andrei Betranceic gets a long hit from the back line. Right: Joseph Culhane lunges for a bump.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Western United Pioneers celebrate 37 graduating seniors

By Abigail McCoy
Staff Writer
amccoy@turley.com

LUDLOW — The evening of May 31 was filled with pride, emotion, and celebration as the Western United Pioneers Football Club honored 37 graduating seniors during a special halftime ceremony at historic Lusitano Stadium. Held under the lights and light rain, the event brought together families, coaches, alumni, and soccer fans to recognize the achievements of student-athletes who have helped shape the club's legacy.

"These individuals have been more than just players

on the field," said Western United Pioneers FC President Carlos Chaves in his opening remarks. "They have been ambassadors of the club and pillars of our community. Their dedication, passion, and sportsmanship have left an indelible mark on our organization."

The evening's recognition ceremony honored graduating players from the club's junior academy, many of whom are continuing their athletic careers at the collegiate level. Chaves emphasized that the event was more than a send-off, it was a celebration of personal growth, commitment, and the role these

players have played in the club's success.

Among the honorees were standout players such as Chloe Laizer, Abigail Toomey, and Hudson Manzolini. One graduate, Chloe Laizer, was even the starting goalkeeper for the night's match with the New England Mutiny, the region's senior women's professional team that shares a deep connection with the youth academy.

"Most of the women on the Mutiny roster are NCAA Division I collegiate athletes," Chaves explained. "And

PIONEERS | page 9



Those honored had been part of the Pioneers youth program.

Bankers grab win as Tri-County opens season

HOLYOKE – The Tri-County Baseball League, which still contains the best quality adult baseball in the region, was back in action last week. Multi-time champion PeoplesBank opened up

their season last Thursday at Holyoke's Mackenzie Stadium and defeated Hilltown Tents 15-5. James Flahive got the win while catcher Pete Hogan homered for the Bankers.



Catcher Pete Hogan slides safely into third.



Lefty James Flahive delivers home.



Cam MacDonald comes up throwing home.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGHOTOS.COM



Cam Rivest catches a fly ball to right.



Dave Clark fields a ground ball to second.



Johnny Gegetskas is safe at home.

Sports



Left: Laci Lewis looks to deke out an opponent.
Above: Chloe Laizer gets ready to send the ball away.
TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Mutiny return home to record win over Eagles

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—Even though the weather was miserable, it was still an enjoyable evening for the New England Mutiny players and their faithful supporters.

The Mutiny, who scored a pair of second half goals, defeated the Ole' Eagles, 2-0, in front of a large crowd on a rainy night at Lusitano Stadium last Saturday.

"It's always nice to win at home," said Mutiny head coach Federico Molinari. "I thought we played very well tonight, especially during the second half."

The Mutiny (2-0) began the regular season by posting a 4-1 home win over Maine Footy two weeks earlier. That match was stopped by the referee in the middle of the second half due to a thunderstorm.

The Ole' Eagles (0-1), who are from Trumbull

Connecticut, is a first year member of United Women's Soccer, which is celebrating its tenth season.

A couple of the Mutiny players saw their first action in the second home match of the regular season.

Chloe Laizer, who's graduating this week from West Springfield High School, was the starting goalie.

During the second minute of the first half, Alexa Pino fired a shot from the left side of the box, but Laizer made the diving save keep the visiting team off the scoreboard.

"This was my first start with the Mutiny, and I was a little bit nervous before the game. I had a lot more confidence after making the early save," said Laizer, who'll be a freshman on the St. Michael's College women's soccer team in the fall. "Playing a game in the rain and wind is very challenging, especially as a goalie."

Pino, who'll be a freshman at the University of South Carolina in the fall, is the two-time Connecticut Gatorade Player of the Year.

The Mutiny back-up goalie was Maddie Riley, who's a member of the girls' varsity soccer team at Ludlow High School.

Both teams had several corner kicks during the first half, but the match was still scoreless at halftime.

The Mutiny finally broke the ice with a corner kick goal in the 56th minute.

Avery Galante sent the ball into the box from the left corner where Maya Mathis, who's a defender, sent a shot into the back of the net past goalie Emily Robinson for her first goal as a Mutiny player.

"Avery and I are best friends. We used to play on a club soccer team together," Mathis said. "My younger sister, Sadie, was also on the field when I scored my goal,

so it was very exciting sharing that moment with them."

Maya Mathis, who graduated from Acton Boxboro Regional High School, was a member of the UConn women's soccer team during the past two seasons before entering the transfer portal. She'll be joining the University of Kansas women's soccer team this fall.

"I just wanted to make a change and go to a part of the country where I've never been before," Maya Mathis said. "I'm really exited about playing soccer at Kansas."

Sadie Mathis will be playing soccer at Boston College.

About twenty minutes later, the Mutiny were given a penalty kick following a foul inside the box.

Taylor Jenkins, who also plays at UConn, put the PK into the right corner making the score 2-0.

MUTINY | page 12

T-Birds bringing back Community Caravan

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds are proud to announce the return of the T-Birds Community Caravan, with support from MassMutual, marking the third annual summer tour designed to bring the excitement of Thunderbirds hockey to communities across the region.

This year's Caravan will include three stops throughout the Greater Springfield area during the summer months, continuing the initiative's mission to keep the T-Birds top-of-mind in the offseason while deepening the team's connection to local families and fans. This summer's Caravan dates are as follows:

- Saturday, June 14 - Forest Park, Springfield – 12 to 2 p.m.

- Saturday, July 19 - Sonny's Place, Somers, CT - 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

- Saturday, August 9 - Amelia Park Ice Arena, Westfield - 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. *

*The Westfield Community Caravan will also feature the annual T-Birds Street Hockey Tournament on the outdoor deck hockey court at Amelia Park. The Street Hockey Tournament features teams of players ages 9-12. To register your team, click here.

"After a fantastic continuation of the program last summer, we're thrilled to bring back the Caravan and keep building on its success," said Thunderbirds President Nathan Costa. "We're equally excited to welcome back MassMutual as a partner and thank them for embracing our mission of being champions in the community beyond the Thunderdome."

Each free-to-attend event will feature appearances by

Thunderbirds mascot Boomer, team staff, and a lively mix of interactive games, street hockey, family-friendly activities, and local vendors. Fans can also enjoy delicious food options, with each Caravan date spotlighting a local nonprofit beneficiary, helping to raise awareness and support for impactful community organizations.

"We're delighted to support the Springfield Thunderbirds not only on the ice but also throughout the local community," said Dennis Duquette, head of community responsibility at MassMutual and president of the MassMutual Foundation. "Their caravan provides terrific activities for local kids and families, and we're proud to be a part of it."

The Springfield edition of the Caravan will be collecting donations benefiting The Gray House. Among the requested items are baby food, diapers and wipes, school supplies, and non-perishable food items. The Thunderbirds will also be hosting food drives at the July and August Caravan stops. The July Caravan at Sonny's Place will benefit the Enfield Food Shelf in Connecticut, while the August Caravan in Westfield will collect items for the Westfield Food Pantry.

Additional information for all Community Caravans will be released in the coming weeks via the Thunderbirds' website and social media channels.

For more information on upcoming events, including the Community Caravan, stay tuned to the T-Birds on social media @ThunderbirdsAHL, or visit the Community Tab on www.SpringfieldThunderbirds.com.

Valley Blue Sox walk off against Ocean State Waves at Mackenzie Stadium

HOLYOKE – It was a great day for baseball on Sunday afternoon at MacKenzie Stadium, the home of the Valley Blue Sox. Valley took on the Ocean State Waves in what was a close game.

Ocean State's shortstop Greg Pettay started at the plate with a productive at bat. Pettay hit a ball in the gap towards center field for a lead off single. Valley's catcher Cade Carr tried to catch the speedy shortstop but he missed the throw to second allowing Pettay to also steal third. The Blue Sox defense held strong, not allowing any runs in the top of the first despite the error made by Carr.

In the bottom of the first, center fielder Tyler Bak kept his dominant success at the plate and walked in his first at bat. Carr was second in the lineup for Valley and hit a nice single into center field to give the Blue Sox two run-

ners on base. Right fielder Clay Burdette hit a sacrifice pop fly to give the Blue Sox a quick 1-0 lead after one inning of play.

Valley had another productive inning at the plate in the bottom of the third thanks to Sebastian Mexico's first homerun of the season to extend their lead to 2-0.

The Waves fought back and scored their own two runs thanks to the leadoff batter, right fielder, Ryan Gerecht being walked and successfully stealing second. Blue Sox's pitcher Jack Levine had a wild pitch and Gerecht stole third. Center fielder Gavin Greger hit a double that drove in one run to put Ocean State on the board.

Catcher Brandyn Durand hit a pop fly to drive in Greger to tie the game at two apiece. In the bottom of the fourth Valley almost jumped back out in front but shortstop

Michael Elko was not able to steal home successfully due to being hesitant initially on his steal. Blue Sox Head Coach Endy Morales likes to stay aggressive even if it does not always workout.

"I want to get starting [opposing pitchers] out of the game. If we can put pressure on early and steal runs on their miscues, I want to do that," Morales said. "[Elko] hesitated and was not quite ready but we're going to continue to be aggressive."

The game remained at 2-2 until extra innings started in the top of the tenth. In extra innings in the New England Collegiate Baseball League, a runner starts on second base to start the inning and for the Waves that was Kolton Reynolds. Valley's pitcher Ethan Slowik started the inning for the Blue Sox. Slowik threw a wild pitch and Reynolds was able to steal third base easily.

Ocean State's Left fielder Zach Plasschaert hit a nice single to drive in Reynolds to push the Waves in front 3-2. Plasschaert stole second to put another runner in scoring position for his team. The Blue Sox managed to get one out but then Slowik balked, leading to two runners on base. Slowik's struggles continued as he walked yet another batter to load the bases.

Waves' first baseman Jack LaRose hit a pop fly ball for the second out of the inning. Ocean State did not allow the last out to come easy. Slowik walked second baseman Sam Seidel with the bases loaded and the Waves jumped out in front by another run to make it 4-2. Center fielder Greger hit a beautiful line drive to drive in two more insurance runs, helping the Waves cruise out in front 6-2. Slowik was taken out of the game after that hit. Carson

Walsh came in to pitch for Valley and got them out of the inning down 6-2. Heading into the bottom of the tenth would be a tough comeback for the Blue Sox.

Ocean State's pitcher Andrew Rogovic had his struggles on the mound as first baseman Chris Walsh stole third. The designated hitter for Valley Rees Kozar put up a fight in his ten pitch at bat, but was eventually walked to leave runners on the corner bases. The Blue Sox called in a pinch hitter for Wyatt Hunt which was Nicholas Spaventa. Spaventa had a great at bat hitting a single to knock in a run to make it a score of 6-3.

Rogovic had another wild pitch allowing runners to advance to second and third. Blue Sox's Bak was walked a third time this game to load the bases up yet again for Valley. Carr stepped up to the

plate and was drilled by a fast ball to cut the deficit to two runs. Left fielder Sebastian Mexico reached first base on a walk to make the game 6-5.

The Waves saw enough of Rogovic and made a pitching change to bring in Kayden Faulcon. Ocean State was able to get one out from Valley before third baseman Michael O'Connor was hit by a pitch to tie the game at six apiece. The shortstop for the Blue Sox stepped up to the plate. Keeping his calm, cool composure, Elko ripped a ball out of reach for the Waves and walked it off for Valley in the bottom of the tenth. The Blue Sox head coach was impressed with how his team played today.

"We learn from our mistakes, [last night's 4-3 loss to North Shore]. We faced adversity last night but I knew we'd learn from it," Morales said.

Rain hurts racing schedule

WINCHESTER, NH – Once again, Mother Nature has forced the Management of Monadnock Speedway to cancel the Saturday, June 7 event.

Next event will be on Saturday, June 14 featuring the

Teddy Bear Pools & Spas Triple Crown Series and Open Track Party.

If Saturday, June 14 rains out, the speedway is working on approval to hold that race on Sunday, June 15.

Follow Turley Sports on Instagram

Turley Publications sports department has recently joined Instagram. You can find our account by searching "turleysports." We will regularly feature samples of photos that you will see in our publications on a weekly basis. Please follow and

share with your friends and loved ones. We will be featuring photos from all 11 of our sports sections, but as always, you can see all the photos that appear by subscribing to your local paper or picking up a copy in your community.

Lions Pride Sports clinics return this summer

LUDLOW – The Lions Pride Sports Clinics return this summer with a dynamic lineup of programs designed to support youth athletic development, foster sportsmanship, and prepare athletes for competitive success. Hosted at Ludlow High School, the clinics will run from late June through August and include offerings in basketball, soccer, volleyball, beach volleyball, athlete preparation, and track & field.

With a strong roster of experienced coaches and a focus on skill-building, these clinics provide athletes from kindergarten through 12th grade with opportunities

to grow in a fun, supportive environment. Registration is now open.

Summer 2025 Clinics Include:

- Basketball Clinic
 - o Grades: 1st-9th
 - o Coach: Tim Brillo
 - o Dates: July 7-11 | 9 a.m. to 12 noon
 - o Fee: \$100
- Soccer Clinics – Session 1 & 2
 - o Ages: 5-12
 - o Coach: Greg Kolodiezny
 - o Session 1: June 23-27 | 9 a.m. to 12 noon
 - o Session 2: July 21-25 | 9 a.m. to 12 noon
 - o Fee: \$100 per session
- High School Volleyball
 - o Grades: 10-12

- o Coach: Ethan Campbell
- o Dates: June 24-August 14 | Tuesdays and Thursdays | 6 to 8 p.m.

- o Fee: \$200
- Volleyball Basics
 - o Grades: 7-9
 - o Coach: Ethan Campbell
 - o Dates: July 8-August 14 | Tuesdays and Thursdays | 4 and 6 p.m.
 - o Fee: \$200
 - Beach Volleyball
 - o Grades: 10-12
 - o Coach: Ethan Campbell
 - o Dates: June 24-August 14 | Tuesdays and Thursdays (6 to 8 p.m.), Sundays (10 a.m. to 12 noon)
 - o Fee: \$350
 - Athlete Prep
 - o Grades: 8-12

- o Coach: Brian Walsh
- o Dates: June 23-August 7

- o Sessions: Monday and Thursday at 8 a.m., Monday and Wednesday at 10 a.m.
- o Schedule subject to change
- o Fee: \$130
- Youth Track and Field
 - o Grades: K-8
 - o Coaches: Brian Walsh
 - o Dates: June 30-August 11 | Mondays | 5 to 6:30 p.m.
 - o Fee: \$100

All sessions will be held at Ludlow High School, featuring high-quality facilities and a supportive environment for young athletes to learn and grow.

BBB: Recognize wedding photographer scams

You've hired a photographer to capture every magical moment of your special day, only to find out at the last minute that they've disappeared without a trace.

BBB has received reports of wedding photographer scams on BBB Scam Tracker. Some scammers take couples' money and disappear before the big day, leaving couples scrambling, while others never receive the treasured photos they paid for in advance.

What are the signs of a wedding photographer scam?

After searching online for a wedding photographer, you find one you like on social media or another wedding vendor site and reach out. After discussing the details and confirming your wedding date with the vendor through email or social media, you de-

cide to book them. You sign a digital contract and send your deposit through a peer-to-peer payment app. Your final payment will be due just before your wedding date.

This type of scam can take a few different turns as wedding dates approach. Some brides report after making the final payment to the photographer before the wedding, the photographer reaches out a few days before the big day to cancel. In other instances, the photographer may not show up to the wedding at all. When you try to contact the photographer to get your money back, they are unresponsive, or their contact information no longer works.

One person shared their experience with BBB Scam Tracker, "After receiving my money, she stopped contacting me and all of her contact information went out of ser-

vice. After digging I found she had done the same if not worse to 30+ other brides, some who never received their wedding photos." This person reported losing \$1,700. Another report states, "...She began the process of setting up a plan for our wedding day. She took our deposit. She took our payment in full the week before the wedding. She cancelled two days before the event and kept the entirety of the money." This person reported losing \$5,300.

Other couples say that the scam doesn't take place until after the wedding when waiting for their photos to arrive. Another BBB Scam Tracker entry reads, "...He charges a deposit and has you sign a contract. Full payment is due before the wedding/event and he would either show up and do the work and you never hear from him again or he

doesn't show up at all, either way you never get any photos [or] videos and he stops all contact with you." They reported losing \$2,400.

How can you spot and avoid vendor scams?

- Do your research ahead of time. Before you book with any vendor, look at several sources for ratings and reviews. Don't rely on one website. A great place to start is BBB.org, where you can check the business's BBB Accreditation and read complaints and reviews. If you suspect a potential scam, search BBB Scam Tracker to see if any reports have been filed.

- Check out the photographer's online presence. In addition to reading ratings and reviews, look for the photographer's website and social media pages. Photographers

usually share their work on social media, so seeing a long history of happy clients on their pages is typically a good sign.

- Use caution on social media. Be wary of booking services with someone who only operates and communicates through social media. If you can't find anything else online about the photographer, obtain some references from the photographer and call them to get feedback.

- Ask for a phone call or in-person meeting. Before booking your photographer, ask to speak on the phone or to meet in person to finalize the details and sign the contract. If the photographer refuses a phone call or a meeting, take that as a warning sign.

- Review your contract and keep it on hand. Check that the terms and conditions

meet your expectations, especially regarding cancellations and refunds. Confirm the details for the day of the wedding and the expected turnaround time to receive your edited photos. Review the terms for making your payments, and make sure the contract includes the photographer's contact information. Be sure to ask for a copy of the contract that is signed and dated by both you and the photographer.

- Peer-to-peer payment apps can be a red flag. Businesses that only accept payments through peer-to-peer payment apps can be a red flag for a scam. If you're being asked to send a large amount of money through one of these apps, ask if you can instead pay via a different method like a credit card, cash, or cashier's check.

Senior Center starting ping pong every Thursday

AGAWAM – The Agawam Senior Center is pleased to announce its ongoing weekly ping pong program, "Ping Pong with Jerry," held every Thursday from 1 to 2 p.m.

Players of all skill levels are welcome to join this inclusive and engaging activity. "Whether you're a beginner looking to learn the basics or an experienced player wanting to maintain your skills, this program offers a supportive environment for every-

one.", added Ping Pong host Jerry.

Jerry has been an avid ping pong player for many years, and is an enthusiastic player and teacher.

"Ping Pong with Jerry" provides an excellent opportunity for physical activity, social interaction, and friendly competition in a welcoming atmosphere.

Equipment is provided, but participants are welcome to bring their own paddles if

preferred.

Ping pong (table tennis) offers numerous health benefits, including improved hand-eye coordination, mental acuity, and cardiovascular exercise in a low-impact format that's appropriate for various ages and physical abilities.

For more information about this or other programs offered at the Agawam Senior Center, please call 413-821-0604.

Yoga at Stanley Park

WESTFIELD – Yoga will be starting for the 2025 season on Thursday evenings beginning May 8 through Aug. 21 from 6 to 7 p.m., on the Acre Lawn next to the Pavilion Annex. Please join certified instructor Michelle Gagnon, as she leads the yoga classes. This class is for all levels of yoga practitioners, and all abilities are welcome. The poses are foundational, and modifications are always available. As

a class we will harness the power of our breath in alignment with the movement of our bodies.

Children 10 and up are welcome accompanied by an adult. Please bring your own mat and any props as needed, wear comfortable and stretchy clothes. Prepare to strengthen, stretch your body, and open your minds. Bring lots of water (you might also want a small towel). Pre-registration is

strongly encouraged.

Donations to the Park are welcome, with a suggested donation of \$5 per person per class.

Registration forms are available on our website at www.stanleypark.org and will also be available at class. You may sign up on our website, by e-mailing us for the registration form at development@stanleypark.org, or register at the Park at your first class.



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Deadline for Calendar submissions is August 11.

Community Autumn Events

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Event Name _____

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Location _____

Description _____

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MAIL YOUR LISTING INFORMATION TO:

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or email* them to: jamie@turley.com

*Be sure to indicate "Autumn Event" in the subject line of your email.

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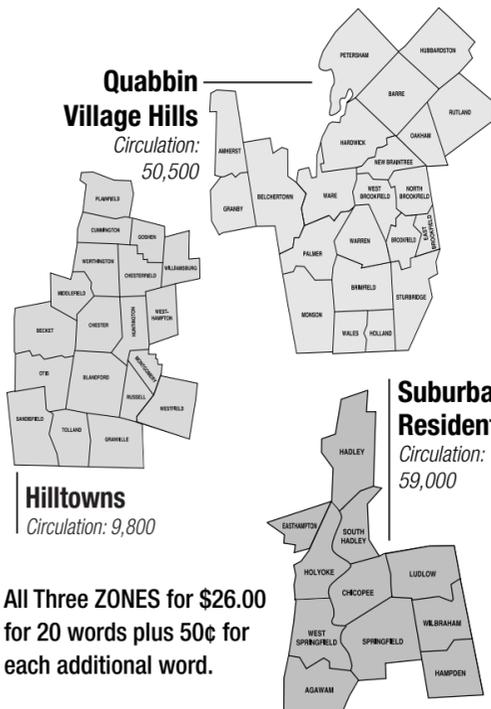
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Olivia Crespo makes her way up the field.



Taylor Jenkins tries to out run an opponent.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Maddy Theriault, of Palmer, makes her Mutiny season debut in their most recent home game.



Avery Klingensmith sends the ball deep.

MUTINY ■ from page 8

A couple of local players who played in the home match are Maddy Theriault (Palmer), Tennessee Murphy (Monson) Kylie Ray (Minnechaug), Bella Meadows

(Pope Francis/ Chicopee) Olivia Crespo (Ludlow), and Avery Klingensmith (Belcher-town).

The New England Mutiny will be one of the four teams competing in the inaugural Brandi Chastain

Cup. The Mutiny will be facing Richmond Ivy of the USL W-league at City Stadium in Richmond, VA. On Thursday night.

"It's really special for us to be regarded as one of the top teams in our league,"

said Klingensmith, who's a member of the American University women's soccer "We're very exciting about playing in that game. The team that we'll be playing has some quality players, so it'll be a challenging match

for us."

If the Mutiny defeats Richmond Ivy, they'll be hosting the finals of the Brandi Chastain Cup on June 18 at Lusitano Stadium. The California Storm beat Pan World Elite, 4-1, in the other semifi-

nal, which was held in May.

The Mutiny will also play two regular season road matches against NJ Alliance and the Ole' Eagles before returning home to face Racing Power FC on June 14.

VOTING ■ from page 1

the city council. He was the council president for most of that time. Johnson was Agawam's first mayor when it changed to that form of government in 1990. Johnson served as mayor for the decade before going in to the private sector. He briefly returned to town government as solicitor in 2008 for a one-term run by former Mayor Susan Dawson, then was elected to the city council a few years later.

Johnson then chose to succeed former Mayor William Sapelli in 2023 when Sapelli chose to retire. He defeated former City Council Vice President Cecilia Calabrese handily to win back the mayor's seat.

Johnson, Calabrese, and Paul Cavallo all departed the city council, with Cavallo choosing to retire after many years on the council. With three openings, Ed Borgatti, Peter Smus, and Maria Valego were elected as new councilors. Thomas Hendrickson

won his first full-term on the council. He was selected to the council following the passing of longtime Councilor Gina Letellier.

Johnson has yet to announce if he is running for re-election, and councilors and school committee members running for re-election or election should be emerging during the next two months.

This year's primary is scheduled for Oct. 7 with the general election scheduled for Nov. 4

BUDGET ■ from page 1

Planner position, cut that funding, and created a Grant Writer/Administrator position. We've been somewhat successful getting grants from the state and federal government, and even from some private resources, and at this point we simply need help not only writing more grant applications but administering the grants we currently have. We're moving

a Principal Clerk from the Treasurer/Collector office into the Procurement Office."

The big monetary changes that Johnson explained were electricity and gas are both up 5.6% or about \$300,000, the solid waste is up 5.6% or about \$146,000. "We have a new contractor starting on July 1st and it will not change the day your trash gets picked up, it will not require you to get new barrels, they will be picking up weekly for

trash and bi-weekly for recyclables."

Johnson continued speaking about the town for the next couple of years will try to be as cheap and conservative as they can, with expectations of the new high school build and expected tax increases. "Trying to keep our taxes as low as possible."

A final vote on the FY2026 budget is pending at the next city council meeting, scheduled for June 16.

Preservation Trust announces annual Garden Tour

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Preservation Trust has announced it will host the Fifth Annual Garden Tour in the city. This year's event will feature new gardens, a pho-

tography contest, a tree tour with Forester Tom Kass, and a lecture from Bernie Conway, Assistant Gardener at NY Botanical Garden. The event will be held on Saturday, June

28 and admission is \$20 per person with children 12 and under free of charge. For more information and to purchase tickets, go to www.holyokepreservationtrust.org

ROOFING ■ from page 9

org and do your homework before hiring.

- Get your insurance company to inspect your roof, and/or get a second opinion. Filing a claim with your insurance company goes on your record and could affect future claims or your continued cover-

age. Before signing any paperwork or contracts with a roofing company, you can have your insurance company come out for an inspection to verify the need for repairs or replacements. You can also call another reputable roofing company to take a look.

- Research roofing com-

panies before you hire. Look at a company's business rating on BBB.org. Keep a close eye on previous reviews and any complaints other consumers might have had. Doing your own research is one of the best ways to know if a roofing company is reputable or just a cover for a scam.

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