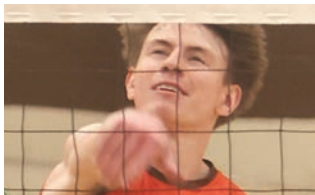




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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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Martin presents evaluation evidence

By Quinn Suomala
Correspondent

AGAWAM – Superintendent Sheila Martin presented evidence to the school committee for her evaluation.

The school committee conducts an annual evaluation of the superintendent to see how she has met her goals and improved the school community.

During her presentation Martin discussed her work on community engagement, student achievement, student attendance, and student engagement in learning.

Martin felt she had made progress towards many of these goals throughout this school year.

To improve community engagement and response, Martin and her team held several community events throughout the year including a discussion with families about the seal of biliteracy and a chance for community members to share qualities they wanted in new principals.

Additionally, she held several community listening sessions to give commu-

MARTIN | page 12



Left, Salutatorian Keira Murphy was given her salutatorian medal by her family at Agawam High School's graduation. Right, Jason Albro shook hands with school committee members as he received his diploma at Springfield Symphony Hall last Saturday.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA

★ AHS graduates Class of 2026 ★

By Quinn Suomala
Correspondent

AGAWAM – Agawam High School class of 2026 celebrated their graduation on June 13.

The graduates gathered in Symphony Hall for the ceremony. It was their last time together as a class.

Several community members came together to leave the class with some

advice before they set off into their next steps.

Mayor Christopher Johnson encouraged the seniors to do four key things: work hard, persevere, find the truth, and be kind.

He believed that the graduates could go out and improve the world if they stuck true to those pieces of advice.

"My generation is screwing up because we're start-

ing to villainize people that we disagree with," he said. "I'm hoping your generation will continue making the United States of America the greatest country on earth because you will be able to get in the same room, work together and come up with solutions to the problems we have."

Superintendent Sheila Martin also encouraged the graduates to make a differ-

ence in the world. She asked them to do so by questioning rules and traditions around them.

"Some rules need to be challenged," Martin said. "Look around and ask: why do we do it this way? Who does this help and who does it hurt?"

According to Martin, some rules need questioning, and she believes in the seniors' abilities to question

them with integrity, compassion and courage.

Both Johnson and Martin know that the graduates' time at AHS has taught them how to think critically, and they hope the students use those skills as they step into the next stage of their lives.

Additionally, Principal Jim Blain agreed with John-

AHS | page 6

Senior Center hosts Car Show

By Christina Gioscia
Correspondent

AGAWAM – On June 9, Agawam Senior Center hosted their second annual car show. The show took place in the parking lot of the senior center; spectator parking across the street at Colonial Forsatiere Funeral was available. The senior center

also provided an option of a free shuttle for spectators to and from the funeral home. The car show included antique cars and sports cars; about 80 cars were a part of the show in total. Registration to bring a car was necessary but not for spectators. Cousin Maine Lobster and The Butcher

Block had food trucks at the event; the band "Decades" played at the event.

Executive Director of Agawam Senior Center Cindy Sullivan said the event has evolved since last year and the registration process.

"As with any event, you always learn from one event to another," Sullivan said. "This year we advertised longer in

CAR SHOW | page 12



Cindy Sullivan, Kristina Lynch, Lori Arsenault, Payten Melanson, and Debbie Gibbons attend the car show.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Agawam Senior Center Executive Director Cindy Sullivan, Mayor Johnson, Housing Authority Chairperson Lori Stickle, Housing Authority Executive Director Maureen Cayer, Agawam Senior Center Deputy Director Kristina Lynch, and President of the Friends of Agawam Senior Center Joellen LeGrand.

Seniors receives golf cart to help with mobility

By Christina Gioscia
Correspondent

AGAWAM – A golf cart was purchased in collaboration with Agawam Town Mayor Christopher Johnson leading the advocating for the Agawam Senior Center, and The Agawam Housing Authority. On Wednesday, June 3 the purchase was made official with the arrival of the golf cart at the senior center, in attendance that day was Agawam Senior Center Executive Director Cindy Sullivan, Mayor Johnson, Housing Authority Chairperson Lori Stickle, Housing Authority

Executive Director Maureen Cayer, Agawam Senior Center Deputy Director Kristina Lynch, and President of the Friends of Agawam Senior Center Joellen LeGrand.

Sullivan shared how the idea became a reality with the support of the Housing Authority, Friends Group, and Mayor Johnson.

"I believe the idea came from the mayor as a way to help the seniors, so they didn't have to walk a long distance due to parking issues. The collaboration on the golf cart came from the mayor trying to help the Senior Centers issue from lack of parking during high vol-

ume times. He helped collaborate with the Friends Group and Housing Authority to purchase a golf cart to move Seniors from overflow parking from behind the housing authority to the Senior Center building. The Housing Authority will use the golf cart to transport their clients when needed and for meetings they have on an annual basis. The golf cart is a wonderful addition to our vehicle fleet. The Mayor and our Friends Group are always extremely supportive of our Seniors in Agawam. Our seniors often

GOLF CART | page 12



Historical Association hosting special July 4 event

AGAWAM – The highlight of the Agawam Historical Association’s yearlong commemoration of the United States Semiquincentennial will take place on Saturday, July 4 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the association’s historic Thomas Smith House, 251 North West Street, Feeding Hills. The Smith house, built ca. 1757, and listed in the National Register of Historic Places, is one of the few surviving Agawam structures extant during America’s fight for independence.

Present on the Fourth will be the 25th Continental Regiment, who will model Revolutionary War military life and conduct musket drills throughout the day. Continuous demonstrations of blacksmithing, open fire cooking, tinsmithing, basket weaving, flax spinning, 18th century fashion and textiles by the 25th Continental Regiment and members of the Green Valley Homestead living history group will also take place. Sheep, ducks, and rabbits will be present on the grounds, and younger visitors will be

able to partake in 18th century children’s activities.

Other activities that day will be an archeological dig on the grounds, a display of artifacts marked for the association’s America250 time capsule, a public reading of the Declaration of Independence, and a community bell ringing at 2:00 pm, continuing an 18th and 19th century tradition of ringing bells in celebration of freedom and patriotism that was made official in 1963 when President John F. Kennedy signed a congressional resolution designating Independence Day “National Bell Ringing Day.” Attendees are encouraged to bring a bell of any sort to join in.

Visitors are encouraged to provide letters to future Agawam residents describing 21st century life for inclusion in the time capsule, which will be sealed later this year and not opened for another century. Those wishing to read a portion of the Declaration of Independence should contact the association by email at 1855@agawamhistory.org by



25th Continental Regiment members from left: Maureen Richard, Joseph Potter, Rob Keenan, and John Richard, will return to the historic Thomas Smith House in Feeding Hills on July 4 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. as part of the Agawam Historical Association’s commemoration of the United States Semiquincentennial.

July 1.

The Thomas Smith House and Delmore Hawthorn Garage will be open for tours during this event, which is

free, open to the public, and supported in part by a grant from the Agawam Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cul-

tural Council, a state agency.

The private, non-profit, all-volunteer Agawam Historical Association preserves and presents Agawam and

Feeding Hills history at its two locations and provides educational opportunities at its quarterly meetings. The association archives and displays artifacts pertaining to the Town of Agawam and its Fire Department in the Marilyn P. Curry History Room and Chief Russell “Rusty” Jenks Apparatus Room of the Agawam Historical & Fire House Museum, located in the former Elm Street Fire Station at 35 Elm Street in Agawam Center. The association has preserved the ca. 1757 Thomas Smith House, at 251 North West Street in Feeding Hills, in largely original, unrestored condition; the property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 2005. The association also offers an annual scholarship to an Agawam senior pursuing higher education in a history-related field. For more information, please visit agawamhistory.org or follow the Agawam Historical Association on Instagram and Facebook. Volunteers and new members are always welcome.

Signups for youth field hockey, registration underway

AGAWAM – Girls in grades 1-8 (26-27 school year) will learn the fundamental skills, techniques, and strategies of Field Hockey while practicing and playing in this fun program. Girls will be broken into four different divisions based on grade.

New Player “Try It” day will be held on Thursday, June 18 at the AHS Stadium from 6 to 7 p.m. This is a great opportunity to try the sport and meet the coaches before registering.

Registration begins in person and online Wednesday, June 10 through July 12. Effective Monday, July 13 all registrations must be done in person and fees will increase by \$25. No new player registrations will be accepted after July 20.

New players or players purchasing a new uniform will need to visit the Parks & Recreation office to be sized. To ensure we have enough time to order uniforms all players will need to be sized by Monday, July 20.

To access online payments and registrations log onto agawam.ma.us, then go to the Parks and Recreation Department page, then click

on the “Online Payments & Registration” button, then click on agree. This will send you to the Unipay Gold site where you can select specific program registrations under transactions.

Coaches will contact players at the beginning of August. Girls will meet from mid August through October. Practices will be held in the early evenings and

games will be played against neighboring communities.

Players need to supply their own stick, shin guards and mouth piece.

The costs for the programs are as follows: Grades 1 and 2: Returning \$100, New player \$125. Grade 3 and 4: Returning \$125, New player, \$150. Grades 5 to 8: Returning \$150, New player, \$200.

Class of 1967 needs reunion help organizing

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.

Agawam Community Artists and Artisans ‘Call for Art’ Festival

AGAWAM – Agawam Community Artists and Artisans (ACAA) is inviting artists and artisans to participate in its Sixth Annual Pioneer Valley Art Festival.

The Art Festival will be held on Friday, Aug. 21, and Saturday, Aug. 22 at the Polish American Club in Feeding Hills. Show hours are from 2 to 8 p.m. on Friday, and from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday.

The ACAA is encouraging artists, artisans, and writers to submit their work for review. Among the artistic mediums included are watercolor, acrylic,

oil, mixed media, sculpture, photography, ceramic, stained glass, wood, fashion, textile, and jewelry.

All work must be original and handmade by the artist or artisan, of professional quality. Prints and giclees will be accepted. No kits, food, soap, candles, or AI-generated work will be accepted.

Tent space is available on the paved parking lot for \$50.

Students from any area high school are accepted free of charge, and must have a tent set up.

The Pioneer Valley Art

Festival is highly promoted through local TV stations; Agawam Media Channel 15 and 1074HD; Agawam Cultural Council website; newspapers; town forums; Mailchimp; the ACAA website, www.agawamarts.com; and the ACAA Facebook page, that has over 850 followers.

The week before the festival, there will be over 20 street signs placed around Agawam.

Further information, including registration forms, can be obtained by contacting Ceil Rossi at email: tocarefree2@hotmail.com.

Robinson State Park Day June 20

AGAWAM – Robinson State Park Volunteers are hosting their Annual Robinson State Park Day, a fun-filled day of science and nature activities for the whole family, on Saturday, June 20. This event starts at 7 a.m. with a bird walk. Meet on Colemore St, across from the main entrance and bring binoculars. Starting at 9 a.m. there will be various activities including big tree hikes, and an active mini-bioblitz (critter search), visual displays and educational materials. While the event is free, the parking fee is \$8 per car in-state and \$20 for out-of-state vehicles. Robinson

State Park is located at 428 North St, Agawam. Follow us on facebook for updates @Robinson State Park Volunteers.

Here is a full look at the schedule of events:

Most events start or take place at the Trestle Pavilion unless otherwise noted.

Please bring your own food, water, sun and insect protection and join us for a day of fun, adventure and education.

7 a.m.: Bird Identification Walk: led by Steve Svec, West Springfield Science Teacher & avid birder. Bring binoculars. Appropriate for both experienced birders and people who would like to learn about the birds that find habitat in the park (and their bird songs.) Meet on Colemore St, across the street from the park entrance.

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.: “Big Tree” Walks, led by Matt “Twig” Largess and Rod Parlee. Matt is a longtime friend of the park, Certified Arborist from Rhode Island, and was named the “Tree Preservationist of the

Decade” in 2006 by Yankee Magazine. Rod is an Old Growth Forest Network coordinator in CT and Director of the CT Association of Conservation & Inland Wetlands Commissions. These short walks are especially appropriate for children.

12 to 2 p.m.: Mini-Bioblitz led by Veronica Bobskill, David Matevosian, Rod Parlee and Bob Nuzzo. Join Veronica, David, Rod and Bob as they explore the park and identify the diverse array of plants & animals. Appropriate for all ages, esp. kids. Bob is a retired aquatic biologist. Veronica and David both graduated from UMASS with degrees in Natural Resources Conservation and are currently working in entomology.

Members of the Robinson State Park Volunteers will be available at the Trestle Pavilion with photo displays, maps, and a willingness to answer your questions and help you learn more about the park. Activities are free but there is an entrance fee to drive into the park.

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USDA INSP. FROZEN AT SEA JONAH CRAB FULLY COOKED.....

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STCC announces Dean's List for 2026 spring semester

SPRINGFIELD – Springfield Technical Community College and celebrates the 1,455 students who were named to the spring 2026 dean's list.

The dean's list is published each semester to recognize 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

Ava R. Albano, Rawand M. Allami, Savonna M. Almquist, Zakaria Baloune, Amber R. Bates, Yelena Beaulieu, Carmen Bergollo, Emily L. Bugli, Leah M. Chobotaru, Isabel L. Clarke, Adam M. Corbin, Finley A. Demakis, Virginia Dibeneditto, Ashley E. Duggan, Char-Les R. Foley, Jacob Fornal, Daniel Fronghkevich, Aliza M. Grealis, Dakota R. Haggerty, Melissa Harrington, Amal Hassanein, Natalie E. Jodoin, Loyal M. Jordan, Ashbala Khan, Dmitry A. Korniyenko, Melanie D. Kozlov, Josues De Leon, Kaylish M. Lopez, Jeremy A. Marcil, Yubelis Martinez, Hayley N. McAlary, Emily Miolla, Ahmad

R. Monim, Minh T. Nguyen, Jayesh Parmar, Zuowanna S. Pennant, Tyanne Pettaway, Kevin Pirogov, Diana Polyova, Addison R. Quenneville, Abdullah A. Rajee, Milan Rana, Jennifer Ribardi, Makenzie P. Richard, Margot Rivera, Xavier Rivera, Brody A. Robbins, Peyton Rohan, Ozan Sarpkaya, Sullivan Serafino-Marrin, Liliya Sereda, Nicholas T. Skorupski, Mariam Stepchuk, Nicole Thomasian, Timothy Zhupikov

Feeding Hills

Ella J. Agudelo, Jeffrey T. Atkins, Derek R. Avery, Anastasia A. Babinov, Nichelle D. Barnes, Kiana R. Bonilla, Matthew B. Burke, Jennifer A. Carmody, Emaleigh J. Cyr, Joseph A. Donovan, John J. Dougherty-Laberge, Carli A. Duga, Catherine E. Greenia, Diana Grigorchuk, Ella Gunko, Jocelyn L. Houston-Godbolt, Rhein A. Ingham, Melena St. Jacques, Zarbakht Jamal, Jason T. Kendall, Angela Kuzmenko, Olena Lazareva, Willow Lefebvre, Rachael M. Magistri, Irina Mita, Breasia J. Mitchell, Cameron Mitchell, Aaron J. Nyman, Nicholas Olson, Elif Ozdemir, Darryl R. Page, Caleb A. Phillips, Borys Pikulskyi, Maksim S. Radionov, Sana S. Rehman, Leslie A. Rivera, Natalya P. Salagornik, Aura M. Talero Valencia, Chelsea V. Vaz, Ryan Vieu, Mia A. Wilkinson



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The annual Summer Craft Beer Tasting and BBQ fundraiser will return to the historic Captain Charles Leonard House, 663 Main Street, Agawam, on Friday evening, June 19. The event will take place rain or shine, from 6 to 9 p.m.

Craft Beer Tasting event set for June 19

AGAWAM – The popular Summer Craft Beer Tasting and BBQ fundraiser will return to the historic Captain Charles Leonard House, 663 Main Street, Agawam, on Friday evening, June 19. The event will take place rain or shine, from 6 to 9 p.m., and will benefit preservation efforts at the 1805 former stage tavern, which has served as Agawam's Community House

since 1939.

The event, sponsored by McCarthy's Liquors of Agawam and Phipps Discount Liquors of Feeding Hills, will feature a wide variety of local and craft beers, live music, raffles, and food. Joey's Deli & Market will provide barbecue and Captain Leonard House Trustees will grill hot dogs and ham burgers.

Advance tickets are \$50

per person, available at McCarthy's Liquors, 430 Main Street, Agawam, (413) 786-9537, and Phipps Discount Liquors 1350 Springfield Street, Feeding Hills, (413) 786-8471. Ticket includes food.

Tickets will also be available at the door for \$55 per person.

Guests must be at least 21 years old with a valid ID to attend this event.

tend this event.

This program is supported in part by a grant from the Agawam Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a State agency.

More information about the Captain Charles Leonard House can be found at Facebook.com/captainleonardhouse.

Senior Center announces upcoming news and June activities

AGAWAM – Here are some upcoming activities happening at the Agawam Senior Center.

Some require registration or confirmation. Information in the details below:

Clean out and organize with Heide Blackak and Jerry Grondin

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 nontraditional 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.

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Opinion

Guest Column

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor



Why don't we have a minimum Social Security benefit?

Dear Rusty:
I think we should have a Social Security baseline of \$2,500 for each person.

When I retire, my Social Security benefit will not be enough to survive. There are many of us, who worked low paying jobs all our lives because we raised families and only started saving later in life. Considering all the money our government wastes on other countries and welfare programs for people who have not worked, it seems unfair that they will not reward those of us who contributed to society all our lives.

Signed: Needs More Social Security

Dear Needs More:

For information, the concept of a "minimum" Social Security benefit is not new and, indeed, already exists, but it is one which few beneficiaries qualify for.

The so-called "special minimum benefit" was meant to lift low-earning workers above the poverty line, but less than 32,000 SS beneficiaries (out of about 59 million retirees) currently qualify.

That's because Social Security's benefit formula turns out to be more generous because it is based on lifetime earnings (wages), while the "special minimum benefit" program is based on consumer prices. That causes the SS benefit formula to provide a higher SS benefit than is provided by the "special minimum benefit" option. In other words, people get a higher benefit because their SS benefit is based upon their actual lifetime earnings vs. an artificially created special minimum benefit.

In short, the existing SS benefit formula usually provides more than the estab-

lished "special minimum benefit."

The SS benefit program is based on each person's average monthly income over their lifetime.

However, it is very important to understand that the program is also designed to provide a higher monthly benefit to those with a lower lifetime income.

Thus, the percentage of "replacement income" for those with lower lifetime earnings is more than it is for those with higher lifetime earnings.

Typically, a lower-lifetime income person will get about 40% of their average pre-retirement monthly income as their Social Security benefit, whereas a higher-income person will get about 20% or less of their pre-retirement monthly average income.

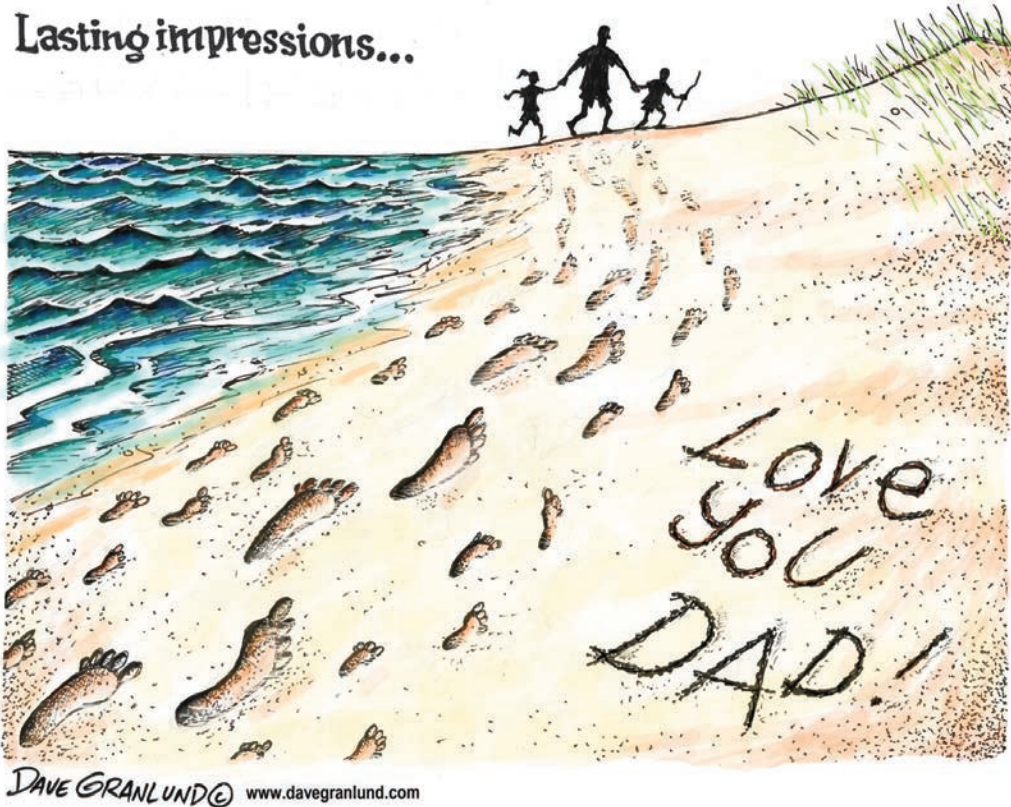
In this way, Social Security is already a "progressive" program. But it's important to understand also that Social Security, from its beginning, was never meant to provide 100% of a person's income needs in retirement.

Thus, each beneficiary should plan to supplement their retirement income in other ways such as retirement savings, investment income, working longer, working part-time, etc.

Having said that, it is also important to know that Social Security is a completely self-sustaining program and not dependent on general public funding, which would make it more susceptible to political shenanigans (imagine giving re-election seeking politicians easy access to Social Security's separately held resources).

While it is certainly true

SECURITY | page 5



Guest Column

in my BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer



Indigo bunting

A reader emailed she saw an indigo bunting at her feeder. The indigo bunting is sometimes called the "blue canary."

However, the indigo bunting like all blue colored birds, lack blue pigment. Their color comes instead from microscopic structures in the feathers that refract and reflect blue light, much like the airborne particles that cause the sky to look blue.

Bunting plumage contains the pigment melanin, whose dull brown-black hue is seen when holding a blue feather up so the light comes from behind it, instead of toward it.

The bunting is sparrow size and about 4.7-5.5 inches long. The adult male Indigo Bunting is dark blue in the spring and summer. Females are brown, usually with fine streaks on the chest and a blue tinge on the tail. A one-year-old male in summer may be blue with a white belly.

Males are often seen singing from a perch in a tall tree. For years, a male indigo bunting sang from a dead limb on a tall tree. Rarely, I spotted the female usually in a brushy area.

They inhabit brushy pastures and bushy wood edges. For nesting, the indigo bunting favors roadsides, old fields growing up to bushes, edges of woodlands and other edge habitats such as along rights-of-way for power lines or railroads.

The male indigo bunting establishes territory in the spring and defends it with song. A male may have more than one mate at a time living on his territory.

The nest site is usually one to three feet above ground, rarely up to 30 feet or more, in dense shrub or low trees.

The female lays three to four white to bluish-white eggs with brown or purple spot. Females incubate the eggs and feed the young.

Males will help feed young when they are nearly old enough to fly. Young usually leave nest 9-12 days after hatching.

The male sometimes takes over feeding of fledged young while the female begins second nesting attempt as she has two broods per year.

Indigo buntings forage at all levels from the ground up into shrubs and trees. They take insects from leaves, seeds from the ground or stems and berries from shrubs.

They eat mostly seeds and insects. In breeding

BIRDS | page 5

Strawberry culture 101

Melissa, who gardens in Belchertown asked this question of the Garden Lady.

"It's always so hard to install strawberry plants and pinch off the flowers the first year. Do you really have to? It would be so wonderful to enjoy some fruit."

I completely understand where you are coming from! Last year I was in the same boat. This year, the fruit is coming in and boy, am I enjoying it!

Removing the flowers redirects the plant's energy away from reproducing to forming strong roots and more shoots, so yes, it recommended practice.

I thought you might find this column, one of my very

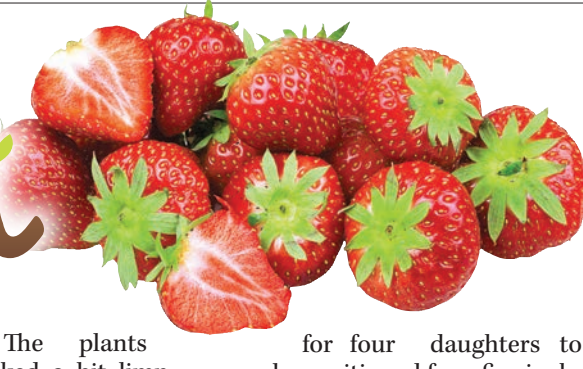
first, helpful. It contains lots of good tips for strawberry culture.

I have fond memories of strawberry picking. One of the first days of summer vacation was always spent at a local pick-your-own farm with my mom, filling boxes with luscious red berries.

Like any kid I did my share of sampling out there in the rows, and my taste buds never forgot the intense sweetness found only in fresh picked fruit. Now that I have my own space to garden I am able to go strawberry picking in my backyard.

In the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



The plants looked a bit limp from their trip so the roots were soaked in water for an hour to rehydrate them prior to planting. I set the crown of the plant right at soil level with the roots spread over a small mound of soil in the hole.

Keeping in mind that strawberries send out runners (daughter plants), I set my plants in a single row roughly two-feet apart with three feet between the rows. This wide spacing allowed

for four daughters to be positioned four-five inches apart from mom and each other.

Some gardeners prefer to pinch away all runners, and nourish only the original mother plant. Initial yields may be higher, but without replacement plants the patch will expire sooner.

All blossoms, although it is tempting to leave them, must be removed the first season so that energy will

With a lot of patience and a little labor, so can you!

My bareroot strawberry plants arrived by mail in early spring. I had prepared the sunny space intended for them ahead of time, by eradicating all weeds and tilling in two-inches of finished compost and some slow release organic fertilizer.

Lime wasn't necessary, as strawberries prefer a slightly acidic soil.

GARDEN | 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

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Agawam Advertiser News

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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.

Opinion



When we stepped onto the Appalachian Trail for a twenty-six day, 310-mile backpacking trip from Fontana Dam, North Carolina to Damascus, Virginia, we had no idea what adventures-and misadventures-lay ahead.

We had no idea that on our very first night in the Great Smoky Mountains, we would come face to face with a large black bear, who would lunge forward, clamp his enormous jaws around another hiker's backpack-which happened to be lying by my feet-and lumber off into the woods with it.

We never imagined that the same fearless bear would return to the campsite a half a dozen times throughout the night while we were snuggled in our 2-person sleeping bag. Or that we would be standing outside of our tent at midnight blowing whistles as the bear slowly approached

A 320-mile hike on the Appalachian Trail

us-the beam of light from our headlamps igniting the bears' eyes a golden yellow. Or that Tom would pick up a medium-sized boulder and lift it over his head in case the bear came any closer. Or that other backpackers who had been sleeping in the nearby shelter would race towards us with headlamps shining like spotlights through the shadowed forest, and one of them would dispense bear spray directly into the bear's face to finally ward it off for the last time.

Or that, due to this close encounter, Smoky Mountain National Park officials would close the campsite to hikers the following day.

This is the longest backpacking trip Tom and I have ever embarked on. In our attempt to hike all 2,200 miles of the Appalachian Trail, we know that we need to amp up the mileage with each trip we take. At 61 and 69 years old, we likely have limited time before our bodies protest against this type of strenuous activity.

But being out here is about so much more than making miles and achieving a goal. It's about rediscovering who we are AWAY from the creature comforts we are accustomed to. Away from the chaos. Away from the responsibilities. Away from the noise.

As I write this, we are halfway through our trip. We've been out here on trail for 13 days, hiking between 9 and 11 hours each day.



We have been awed by the power of nature in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Been pelted by torrential rain while thunder rumbled overhead and have melted in 90-degree heat under a blazing sun. We have stood on the highest mountain on the entire Appalachian Trail, the 6,640-foot summit of Kuwohi, formerly known as Clingman's Dome. Played 'who's going to blink first' with a 5-foot long snake.

We've stood atop mountains looking at views that have taken our breath away, and we've sat side-by-side on the ground in the middle of the forest, our legs stretched out on the dirt and our heads leaning back against our backpacks, simply watching the clouds dance across the

sky.

Tonight, we have pitched our tent on a bed of pine needles under a tree, not far from the summit of Big Bald. We are surrounded by twisted, gnarled trees and rocks the size of mobile homes. It feels as though we are in a cloak and dagger mystery novel.

After eating our freeze-dried dinner of beef and pasta, we walked 150 feet up the trail to a small viewpoint, where we sat down on a large flat rock for almost an hour while waiting for the sun to meet the horizon.

We talked about everything. And nothing. Important things and nonsensical things.

We relived our days out here so far. Reminiscid about past adventures and future



plans. Talked about family. Life. Dreams.

I snuggled in closer to Tom as the air chilled. And we waited.

The sun hung low. Clouds caught the fading sunlight and the golden orb blazed through them with such intensity that we briefly looked away. But when the sun drifted lower, we watched the world catch fire in shades of crimson, orange and gold. Like strokes on canvas, the sky was transformed, leaving us breathless.

Our conversation paused. The earth slowed. The world existed only in the present moment. Time stood still.

Once the sun disappeared behind the distant ridges-leaving the lingering shades of blue and pink and purple behind-Tom and I stood, bowed our heads, and praised God for his goodness.

Then we slowly walked hand in hand back to our tent as darkness descended on the forest.

Over the past 8 years of backpacking, with well over a thousand miles completed, there are about 5 nights on trail that I will never forget.

This is now one of them. Stay tuned for the second half of our backpacking trip in a future edition of the newspaper.

GARDEN I from page 4

be spent on building strong roots.

I set up a soaker hose among the plants to be sure that they would continue to grow with gusto during droughty spells. If you choose to do the same, be sure to position runners under the hose, otherwise removing it for winter storage may be a difficult and tangled task.

A mulch of chopped leaves conserves soil moisture and

prevents weeds from sprouting. Evergreen boughs laid over the row after the ground has frozen lessens temperature extremes, preventing the plants from being heaved out of the ground during winter freeze/thaw cycles.

Anticipation begins to build in the spring of the second season. It is only a matter of time before the plants will be loaded with ripe berries.

As new growth emerges remove the protective boughs. Pull stray weeds and

reapply mulch. If frost threatens during blossoming cover the plants with spun poly floating row covers or old bed sheets.

Keep up with watering. Lightweight netting works well to deter birds, while slugs can be captured in shallow containers filled with beer and buried at ground level. Remove dead slugs and top off the beer nightly.

June-bearing strawberries bear fruit for two-three weeks. Harvest when the

berries are bright red; if fruit is picked unripe it may turn red, but flavor will be sacrificed.

The season can be extended a bit by growing early, mid and late season varieties, or by growing day-neutral types which bear smaller amounts of fruit over a longer period, from June-October.

Nourse Farms (nourse-farms.com) of South Deerfield is an excellent local source for strawberry plants.

After fruiting is complete

mow down the plants with a push mower. I had to cross reference a few advice books before I had the courage to do this, but it surely did wonders to renovate the bed.

Rake away the mowed leaves, thin runners that are too close, and remove the oldest plants. Top-dress with compost and a sprinkling of fertilizer before remulching.

Although labor intensive, strawberries are worth the work. Managing a strawberry patch in this manner will

likely keep it productive for five years. Imagine, your own flavorful memories!

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.

SECURITY I from page 4

that the government spends freely on "welfare programs" for those who have not worked, Social Security is not a program, which is dependent on government largesse. Rather, it is a benefit which is earned by working and contributing to the program, which provides retirement benefits based upon each person's average lifetime work income.

If you expect financial

difficulties when you retire, I encourage you to visit this website sponsored by the National Council on Aging (www.benefitscheckup.org). Here you can enter your zip code and find many public programs which you might be eligible for where you live, including assistance with healthcare costs, housing, utilities, etc.

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.

BIRDS I from page 4

season, the indigo bunting feeds mainly on insects and spiders and also some seeds and berries.

Young in the nest are fed mostly insects at first. In winter, they eat many seeds and also some insects.

Indigo buntings migrate at night, using the stars for guidance.

The oldest recorded wild indigo bunting was a male and at least 13 years, 3 months old when he was recaptured and rereleased during banding operations in Ohio in 2013.

Other birds

Besides seeing an indigo bunting, the reader also has several Baltimore orioles, rose breasted grosbeaks and goldfinches.

She stated, "Around the corner at the Brook Road pond in West Warren, there was a lone swan. There was a lone swan there for a couple

years about six years ago and it made me wonder if it was the same one."

Pileated woodpecker

I received another email on June 6 from a Belcher-town resident.

She stated, "My husband and I witnessed a beautiful pileated woodpecker mating ritual in our backyard this morning.... They jumped around the tree on opposite sides going around several times before then jumping to other trees moving farther back into the woods during the process."

She stated, "After looking them up, I realized that I have heard their calls and rapid pecking sounds in my backyard for the past two years, but never saw them until now. What a joy to watch and video. They are beautiful birds."

She also stated her home has semi dense woods immediately behind that is a haven for several bird species, robins, yellow finch,

bluebirds and blue jays. The property also borders some wetlands that attract a variety of species from time to time, including hawks, owls and ducks.

Mute swans

My brother, who lives in Sutton, has a pond bordering his property. For several years, a pair of mute swans have raised their family on the pond. They are back this year.

Bluebirds

I often see a pair of bluebirds in my yard. After seeing them, I put out dried mealworms for them. I don't feed the birds in summer because of the black bears. Hopefully, bears are not interested in a few mealworms and the birds will eat the mealworms before the bear.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edown-er@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

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CLUES ACROSS

1. Similar

4. Have an ambitious plan or a lofty goal

10. No (Scottish)

11. ___ Aires, city

12. Morning

14. Senior's son (abbr.)

15. A notable achievement

16. European nation

18. Endings

22. Puts into place

23. Former

24. Grenadier

26. Sea patrol

27. Algerian port

28. Norwegian river

30. Precipitation

31. Sunscreen rating

34. New York is one

36. Patti Hearst's

captors

37. Soft mineral with greasy feel

39. Retired Brazilian footballer

40. An Indian nursemaid

41. Atomic #24

42. Immobile

48. Insignia of royalty

50. Seeds from which chocolate is made

51. Begin again

52. Round root

53. Beginning to end (alt. sp.)

54. What newlyweds just said

55. Empire State

56. Give back

58. College hoops tournament

59. Unstable situations

60. Young women's association

29. Cool!

31. Noteworthy 90s lawyer Kenneth

32. One who was compensated

33. National symbols

35. Raising

38. A type of talk

41. Cloud

43. Middle Eastern peoples

44. Pouches

45. 007's creator

46. A cut of meat

47. Sports entertainment award

49. Christine ___, actress

56. Relief organization (abbr.)

57. Canadian province (abbr.)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE 10

AGAWAM HIGH SCHOOL

Congratulations Class of 2026

AHS | from page 1
son that perseverance and grit would be crucial as the seniors set off to college, the

workforce, or the military. "There have been moments where you have been challenged, and even more than one where you wanted

to quit," he said. "By persevering through all of these challenges, you have developed grit that will serve you well as you leave the doors

today." The graduates' next steps will not be easy, but their community leaders believe that they are prepared.

Their fellow classmates believe in their capabilities as well. Salutatorian Keira Murphy reflected on the obsta-

cles the class has had to face during their time at AHS.

From learning how to navigate the halls of the school to challenging tests to hard sports games, the class has faced each step with the very grit Blain saw in them.

"Over the years these obstacles became bigger and harder to navigate, but your presence here today is proof that you persevered," Murphy said.

Valedictorian Matilda Larochelle reflected on some of the obstacles she has faced. She shared that she lost her home to a fire three years ago.

It was hard and Larochelle lost much, and she found she was grateful for how the community came together to support her and her family.

"There was so much to mourn, to regret and to miss, but there was even more to anticipate and be hopeful for," she said. "There came moments of love, encouragement and support[...]those acts of kindness may seem insignificant at the time, but they had to power to change someone's day, someone's confidence or even someone's future."

This camaraderie will continue to serve the class of 2026 well as they move forward. No matter where they go, they will have Agawam behind them.

The graduates shared their gratitude for everyone who has supported them in getting across the stage.

Class President Anthony Norman gave a special shoutout to the class's advisors, Giovanni Russo and Lisa Sheehan.

"You have both poured your hearts and souls into being our class advisors and we will never forget the impact you have all had on us," he said.

Overall, the class was grateful to everyone who mentored and assisted them during their time as Agawam students. Now, it is time for them to continue their lives with the foundation Agawam gave them.



Members of the class of 2026 entering the military led the Pledge of Allegiance.



Families gathered in Symphony Hall to celebrate graduation.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA



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Class President Anthony Norman told his class one final joke during his graduation speech.



Salutatorian Keira Murphy reminisced on her time at Agawam High School.



Valedictorian Matilda Larochelle left her class with one last piece of advice.



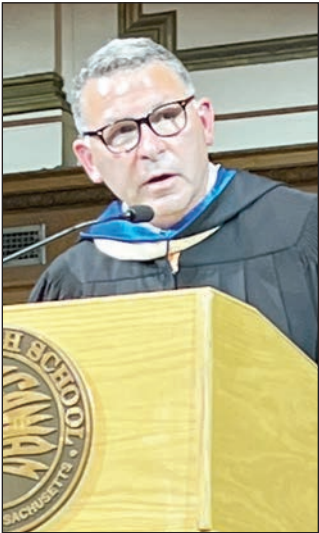
TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA
The family of Valedictorian Matilda Larochelle gave her her valedictorian medal.



Mayor Christopher Johnson sent the Agawam High School graduates off with some last words of advice.



Superintendent Sheila Martin shared her pride in the graduating seniors.



Agawam High School Principal Jim Blain welcomed seniors to their graduation ceremony.



Class of 2026 advisors Giovanni Russo and Lisa Sheehan were honored at the graduation ceremony.

Congratulations & Best Wishes to the Class of 2026

Hats off to all of this year’s hardworking graduates! Your commitment and dedication have paid off and today we salute your academic achievement. We know you’ll continue to work hard and accomplish great things, and we hope the future holds success, happiness, good health and good fortune for you.

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Congratulations to all of this year’s hardworking graduates! This milestone achievement marks the culmination of years of hard work, and we hope it fills you with pride as you take the next step.

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TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA

The Agawam High School combined choirs performed Fly Away Home at the graduation.



The seniors entered Symphony Hall for their graduation ceremony.



The Agawam High School combined bands performed Mambo Perro Loco during the graduation.



Anthony Amerigo Amato shook hands with Mayor Christopher Johnson as Johnson gave him his diploma.



Maddie Balzano proudly received her diploma.



Jordin Agosto received his diploma.

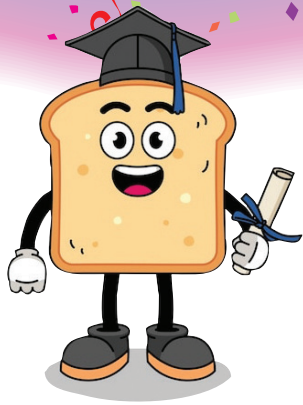
class of

2026

CONGRATULATIONS

Best Wishes to this year's
Graduating Class!

from
Councilman Peter McNair



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SPORTS

VOLLEYBALL

Boys volleyball finishes season in quarterfinals

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Chase Gerani gets a lot of air during a serve.



David Zhmaidiak gets the bump to his side.



Tim Karcha gets a set.

AGAWAM – The Agawam High School boys volleyball took on the challenge of entering the Division 1 State Tournament after a couple of wins in the Division 2 tournament in recent years. While rivals like Westfield and Comp stayed in Division 2, the Brownies took down Greater New Bedford and Methuen to open the state tournament this year. But the run for the Western Mass. champions came to an end this year as the Brownies were defeated on the road at Natick High School on Thursday, June 4 with a 3-1 decision. Overall, Agawam went 17-6 between the regular season, Western Mass. and state playoffs.

Left, Jacob Nesen sets the ball over the net.



Michael Lumkowski goes for a spike.



Jason Mihalicenco looks to tip the ball over the net.

BASEBALL

Teddy Bears Pools scores rare win over defending champs

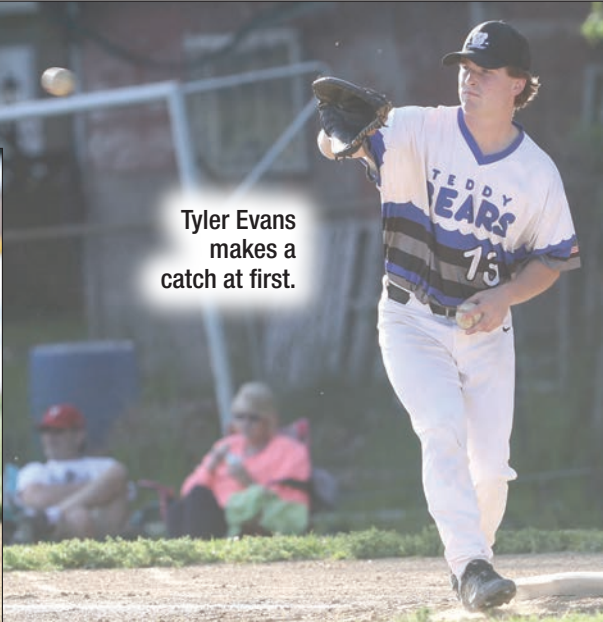
SOUTH HADLEY – Teddy Bear Pools and Spas wasted no time last Monday evening at South Hadley High School, sending eight men to the plate in the bottom of the first and not looking back en route to a 15–0 blanking of PeoplesBank. The margin was never in question.

The first inning established the tone with swift and relentless efficiency. Bailey Griggs drew a walk that scored a run, Xavion Maldonado doubled to bring home two more, a PeoplesBank error allowed another pair to score, Sean Rosemond drew a walk to push across yet another, and Alex Gochinski grounded out with enough to score one more. Six runs — before PeoplesBank could exhale.

The scoring resumed in the second when Travis Kagan singled to plate one, and



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Danny Gaines pitches for the Bankers.



Tyler Evans makes a catch at first.

Left, Dave Clark picks up a grounder for PeoplesBank.

SOCCER



Milla Lee starts up the field.



Gabby Williams goes after a loose ball.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY
WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Eva Blatz sends a free kick away.

Mutiny defeats Maine Footy

LUDDLLOW – Last Sunday afternoon, June 7, Maine Footy made their annual visit to Luistano Stadium. The New England Mutiny continued their success against the Footy, defeating Maine 4-0. The UWS win was followed by a win at the Worcester Wanderers 3-0. The Mutiny did suffer a USL-W loss against Hudson Valley 2-1 last Tuesday. The Mutiny will face Hudson Valley against on Saturday, June 20 at Luistano Stadium.



Valentina Molinari looks to get around an opposing player.



Sophia Scyocurka tries to overcome an opponent.

Blue Sox out to great start this summer

HOLYOKE – The Valley Blue Sox (6-1-1) took down the Danbury Westerners (3-5) by a score of 4-2 June 13, driven heavily by strong pitching performances from RHP Jackson Hinchliffe (Richmond) and RHP Jake LeFrancois (UMass Lowell).

It was the second night in a row where the Blue Sox's starter pitched at least five complete innings and was relieved by one pitcher who finished the rest of the game.

The ability of Valley's starters to consistently work efficiently through the fifth inning as well as head coach John Raiola's willingness to keep his starters in the game seemingly have a correlation to the team's early success. Opponents in 2026 have not left a starting pitcher in more than 3.2 innings against the Blue Sox. Valley has done so in all but one game this season.

"It's all them and their ability to throw strikes and to get off the field," Raiola said. "We talk a lot about trying to get length in five or six innings, whatever it is. But the reality is, it's pitch count more than anything. And if we have quick, efficient innings, then they can keep going."

Hinchliffe did exactly that on Saturday night. His final line from June 13 was six innings pitched, four hits, zero earned runs, three strikeouts, and zero walks, all on 70 pitches. LeFrancois, who earned the nine out save, pitched three innings, allow-

ing one hit, one earned run, striking out two and walking none.

"100 percent," Hinchliffe said when asked if his performance showcased the kind of pitcher he's built himself to be. "With the two-seam sinker thing, just getting weak contact early in counts allows you to get deep in games, save the bullpen and let the defense work."

As of the morning of June 14, Hinchliffe and RHP Dylan Reid (Brown) lead the NECBL in innings pitched, each with 11.0.

Hinchliffe's second start was a nice recovery after his first start of the season where he lasted five innings, but allowed five earned runs and five hits. For LeFrancois, it was his fourth appearance of the season and his second in three days.

With the Blue Sox still waiting on select arms to join the team for the summer, the bullpen has stepped up in a major fashion with relievers recording longer outings.

"When you play every single day you can't just go 1-1-1 and not have guys available," Raiola said. "You need some length at times and you have in this case, [LeFrancois] down for a couple days. We have the off day on Tuesday, and we'll get him back on Wednesday. And so, it sets us up nicely for Sunday and Monday."

With the Blue Sox off to one of the hottest starts in the NECBL, the team mentality will not change.

T-Birds agree to bring back head coach Ott

SPRINGFIELD – St. Louis Blues President of Hockey Operations and General Manager Doug Armstrong announced today that the team has signed Steve Ott to a two-year contract extension as head coach of the Blues' AHL affiliate, the Springfield Thunderbirds.

Ott, 43, took over as Springfield's head coach on January 19, 2026. In the club's final 34 regular-season games, he led the team to an 18-14-2 record, clinching a berth as the sixth seed in the Atlantic Division for the 2026 Calder Cup Playoffs. Ott then guided the Thunderbirds to the Division Finals following a first-round series win over the third-seeded Charlotte Checkers and a historic victory over the Macgregor Kilpatrick Trophy-winning

Providence Bruins (the regular-season champions) in the Division Semifinals. Springfield's win over Providence marked the single biggest upset in AHL history, as the two teams were separated by 38 points in the regular season.

Ott originally joined the Blues' coaching staff on May 25, 2017, spending seven seasons as an assistant coach before being elevated to associate coach ahead of the 2024-25 season. During his tenure, the Summerside, Prince Edward Island, native helped the Blues compile a 350-244-74 regular-season record and make five post-season appearances, including 2019, when he played an instrumental role in helping the organization capture its first Stanley Cup championship.

Obie wins rain shortened \$5k Winchester 101 Modified

WINCHESTER, N.H. - Modified superstar Brian Robie added to his legacy at the great race place Saturday, topping the \$5,000-to-win Open Modified Winchester 101 at Monadnock Speedway.

The reigning and multi-time speedway 604 Modified champion set fast time in qualifying and then outran a stout 18-car field to earn the big payday at his home track, the site of scores of feature victories by the Sunapee speedster over the last decade.

In other events Saturday on the high banks, Hillary Renaud survived a wild one to notch her first Limited Late Model victory of the season, Eric Pomasko ended a long drought by topping the Mini Stocks, and Young Guns sensation Dylan Stati won for the sixth week in a row.

The start of Saturday's main event was postponed earlier for one hour, ten minute rain delay but when the night's top show went green, nobody was more ready than Kimball, except maybe Robie, who started back in row four.

In qualifying Robie set

fast time with a lap of 11.713 around the high banked quarter-mile. He, Meservey, and Joey Jarvis each eclipsed the 12-second mark. With Kimball second and Meservey third in the main event, current weekly 604 Modified top points man Tyler Leary was fourth, and NASCAR Whelen Modified series regular Kyle Bonsignore was fifth.

Kimball, from row two, took the lead from Bleau on lap one, with Robie quickly up to third on lap six and blasting into second a lap later. Kimball then held an eight-length advantage.

With reigning MRS champ Brett Meservey storming into Robie's shadow, Kimball rode all alone at the front, but his advantage vanished when a Chris Pasteryak spun that brought out the caution flag and, with it, brought Robie to the leader's door on lap 29.

Robie was quick to cash in on the opportunity, taking charge on lap 30 and holding Kimball and Meservey at his bumper until heavy rain swept in mid-race, effectively ending the show. After a meeting of track management and the racing teams,

the race was declared official.

Hillary Renaud was jostled backward early in the night's Twin States Truck Services Limited Late Model main event but when the chips were on the line, the Vernon, VT star was in the right place at the right time to score her first win of the summer.

Wesley Stedt powered into the early lead, with Renaud and previous winner Robert Hagar close behind. With Renaud shuffled back in the top groove, Hagar held the point, just ahead of Stedt and Daniel Petrowicz, who, like Hagar, had trophied the night before at Claremont.

Petrowicz rubbed past Hagar on lap 28, but a caution flag put Hagar back at the top, Three laps later, with the checkered flag high in chief starter Chris Horton's hand, Petrowicz again tried to muscle his way to the front, this time sending the top three cars spinning wildly across the finish line.

Renaud, whose ride ended half way to pit road, walked away with her first victory of the summer. Hagar, who was somehow able to drive

away from the carnage, was second, and Erik Smith third. Petrowicz, whose destroyed car had to be scraped from the frontstretch wall, was credited with fourth, and Michael Lashua was fifth.

Popular veteran Pat Houle led the first 15 laps of Saturday's Keene Towing and Recovery Mini Stock 25-lapper, with Eric Pomasko challenging until inching ahead on lap 16 and the two crafty vets - each many moons from victory lane - went to work. When Houle's ride quickly dropped off pace, former track king Louie Maher was quickly into second.

Maher tried over and over to wrest the top spot from Pomasko but the Peterborough speedster refused to budge, holding strong to earn his first win in years. With Maher a strong second, potent Craig Chaffee impressed in third, Tim Paquette finished fourth and Houle came home fifth.

Pre-teen ace Dylan Stati won for the sixth week in a row Saturday, topping the Doug's Auto Body Young Guns 15-lapper with ease. Maeve Barry was second on the night.

BASEBALL | from page 9

the third inning became an exercise in patience and plate coverage. Ray Toth hit a sacrifice fly, Willie Landman singled to center, Griggs singled to right, Kagan grounded into a fielder's choice, Ty Evans doubled to center, Rosemond singled down the right-field line, and Ryan Magni singled down the left-field line — each driving in a run. Seven different players contributed to that inning. Kagan finished the night with four RBI on a single hit, the most efficient line on the card.

Nate Kelleher-Mochak was untouchable on the mound. The starter worked five innings without allowing a run, giving up just two hits, striking out four, and walking one. It was the kind of outing that makes a winning pitcher's night feel almost anticlimactic — he threw strikes, got outs, and watched his offense do the rest.

Jackson Lavalley absorbed the loss for Peoples-Bank, lasting just one inning and allowing one run on one hit. The final score reflected a difficult evening for the visitors, who managed only two hits on the night — one apiece from Hogan G and MacDonald.

Teddy Bear collected 10 hits as a club, with Magni, Rosemond, and Maldonado

each going 2-for-the-night. Equally notable was the team's discipline at the plate: eight walks drawn, with Griggs and Gochinski each earning two. Teddy Bear also played a clean game in the field — no errors, with Evans handling the most chances at five. On this Monday, everything worked.

Mason Barcomb sends a throw to first for Teddy Bear Pools.



Cam MacDonald makes a strong throw to first.

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Left, Bailey Griggs slings a throw to first base for an out.

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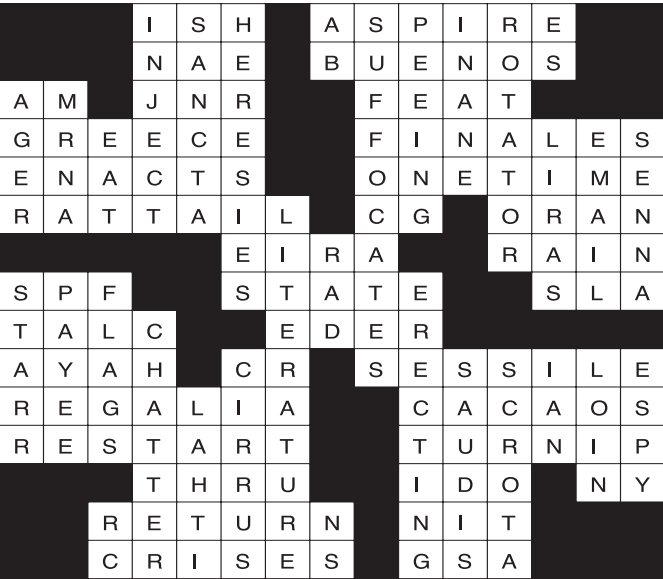
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CAR SHOW I from page 1

the newsletter, and we had our Tuesday night live events scheduled for the entire year. The event more than doubled in size from last year. We asked that cars registered in advanced, the seniors requested the same food trucks we had last year so we booked them early, and they also love the Decades band, so we also booked them early. We do not charge a fee to put cars in the show. The Friends Group has a 50/50 raffle we hope everyone participates in to bring in money for the event,” says Sullivan.

Sullivan shared why she believes the Senior Center is such an amazing resource for our community, and some upcoming events people can get involved in.

“I share in the vision Mayor Johnson has for the Agawam Senior Center,” Sullivan said. “If you introduce the Senior Center to community members of all ages with fun engaging activities and show them what opportunities and programs we have to offer, then when they are older walking through the doors, it may not have that stigma, it once had. We truly have people who participate in our programs who range in multiple decades of age from their 50’s to their late 90’s, and they are participating in the same programs. The Agawam Senior Center is a pretty amazing place to spend your time if you are retired or working part-time. If you are over 55 and you have

time in your day or on Tuesday evenings and you haven’t come yet you are missing out. Come by, take a tour. We have billiards, computers, a fitness room, and a Coffee Shop, and seminars and more to come.”

“We have our Trivia with our Celebrity Guest Host Patrick Berry on June 23 please call to sign up that’s on Tuesday at 5:30 p.m. with pizza and prizes, check out our Tuesday night live events July 10 we have a new band coming with ice cream and Karaoke is back in August. We always have our daily events like Bingo on Mondays and our exercise classes. We have so much going on at the Agawam Senior Center, we have 200 people a day walking through our doors with our awesome lunch everyday cooked on site for a donation of only \$4.00, but you must

register at least one day in advance,” says Sullivan.

The Agawam Senior Center’s Annual Car Show is just one example of the awesome events and programs the senior center offers. The car show was attended by regulars at the senior center,



Al Fini with his car. TURLEY PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA

as well as other members of the community, showing how events like these bring people together for an evening of fun, food, and music.



Rose Becker and Davis Kinsman with their car.



Leo Houle shows off his vehicle.



Peter Smus with his car at the Second Annual Agawam Senior Center Car Show.

MARTIN I from page 1

nity stakeholders a chance to share their thoughts and concerns about the school.

“We developed those this year in response to the family and community engagement survey,” Martin said. “We wanted to follow up and get more specific details.”

She also sent out several community surveys to allow students and stakeholders a chance to reflect on the districts’ vision and mission

goals.

“We had parents from kindergarteners all the way through high school who were able to give a lot of different perspectives,” Martin said.

Another goal Martin had was to improve student achievement. Unfortunately, she does not yet have the MCAS scores for this school year and the scores from the 2024-2025 school year did not show much improvement.

“Our MCAS scores are remaining pretty stagnant, but I am hopeful that some of the work and evidence you will see as we continue is going to change that trajectory,” she said.

However, there was some improvement in district-wide assessments.

“In some of our local assessments we are seeing gains in proficiency of students meeting and exceeding expectations,” Martin said.

Martin did see an im-

provement in student attendance, which was another goal she had for this year.

The goal was to see the chronic absentee rate decrease from 29.1% to under 20%.

“In non-high school students it went from a rate of 19.4% to 16.2%,” Martin said. “In high school students it went from 49.2 to 42.2%, still a lot of work to do but we are going in the right direction.”

Furthermore, Martin also saw improvements in stu-

dent engagement.

Each school was instructed to engage in instructional walks to see how students were enjoying and remaining involved in day-to-day lessons.

Based on the results collected from these walks, Martin saw improvement in students remaining engaged and feeling that the tasks they were asked to complete were meaningful.

Finally, Martin wanted to improve the achievement

gap for students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and students of color.

Martin saw improvement in this area. For example, multilingual learners increased achievement from 14% in 2024 to 32% in 2025.

Overall, Martin took pride in the achievements she has made over the past year. She is eager to see the school committee’s feedback for her as she moves forward into her next year as superintendent.



Send Us Your Community Autumn Events



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GOLF CART I from page 1

have to park away from the building, and this will help be able to get them to the building safely and quickly without having to walk a far distance during our larger events. Parking is tight due to the success of our programs so we can’t complain about that. It is also great and we are thankful the Housing Authority has also supported us in this collab-

oration as this purchase is a win win for both programs.”

LeGrand commented, saying, “The mayor felt strongly this was a good idea, and it would be useful for both entities; so, he asked if he could make a pitch for the golf cart at the “Friends” next board of directors meeting. Our board voted unanimously to spend the money required to purchase the golf cart.”

Cayer explained the role of the Housing Authority in

the project.

“The role of the Agawam Housing Authority in this initiative has included,” she said. But has not been limited to, contributing fifty percent of the cost to purchase the golf cart. This investment was made to support the safe transportation of our residents, as well as members of the broader community, who access activities and services at the Senior Center. In addition, the Agawam Housing Authority agreed to store the golf cart in one of the garages at Meadowbrook Manor. To date, however, no formal operating procedures have been established.”

“This collaboration originated from discussions involving the Mayor and the Agawam Housing Authority regarding the ongoing concerns related to parking in spaces designated for Agawam Housing Authority residents. In an effort to protect the residents of the Meadowbrook Manor Development with access to their homes, parking spaces were generously made available for use by Senior Center staff and community participants. The Agawam Housing Authority remains committed to maintaining open lines of communication and a collaborative relationship with the municipality with a focus on the Housing Authority residents,” Cayer added.

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This project will clearly greatly benefit attendees of Agawam Senior Center, as well as the community as a whole. The work of the collaboration of Mayor Johnson, Agawam Senior Center and Friends Group, and Agawam Housing Authority provides a fantastic resource for the community.