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AGAWAM

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Boys track 4x100 team makes Nationals

By Christina Gioscia
Correspondent

AGAWAM – On June 21, Agawam Boys Track 4x100 Relay Team went to nationals and placed 15 out of 79 participating teams. Raheem Allen, the team's coach, had a great experience coaching the team all the way to nationals and is proud of their spectacular accomplishment.

"As a coach - I felt happy for the boys, they have worked extremely hard all season long and it was great to watch them see the results after all the work they put into their training," Allen said. "It was an experience that they will be able to share with each other forever. The standard of excellence that was set from the beginning pushed each athlete to the next level. Those standards helped them to hold each other accountable and helped with forming a special bond between them as runners. I am proud to be called their coach.

"Qualifying for nationals was amazing and a plus for

the Town of Agawam. Being able to achieve this the first year as a Track Head Coach is humbling - but allows me to acknowledge that there is still more work to be done and to continue to build The Agawam Track Program. My job as the coach was to keep these guys grounded, finish the season strong, stay competitive, and win at each meet. We found out we qualified for nationals after our third meet of the season while suffering our first loss of the season to an outstanding Longmeadow team. However, the loss was the driving force for us to work harder at practice as a relay team and overall track team. As their coach I wanted to teach them how to humble themselves after a loss, accept some success and show them this is something that we can build off as individuals and as athletes. I have told them from day one that 'I am looking to change the culture of the team and create a winning atmosphere here at Agawam.' My only ask



Agawam Boys Track 4x100 Relay Team, Julien Gebo, Dominic Rodriguez, Chris Bates, and Marcus Stallwoth, participated in Nationals.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

TRACK | page 10



After a bit of a rough June, USA Trash and Recycling spent last week helping town residents get caught up on trash and recycling removal. They are the new vendor doing trash and recycling removal.

TURLEY PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

On the job: USA takes over trash and recycling removal

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – Trash and recycling issues have been on the minds of residents throughout the community for the past month.

The good news is, as of the end of last week, outstanding trash and recycling has had the opportunity to be picked up thanks to new vendor USA Trash and Recycling.

USA took over the trash and recycling contract from Republic Services, which under its current name and other previous business names, has been in charge of trash services for multiple decades, Mayor Christopher Johnson said.

Unfortunately, it was a rocky end to their relationship with the town. Though Republic did not confirm, there were issues with man-

power and Johnson said the company was also down a truck. The issues ballooned during the month of June, leading to trash and recycling pickup to fall behind.

"Unfortunately, they had some issues that caused them to fall behind," said Johnson. "But for many years, they have done an excellent job providing their service to

TRASH | page 10

Town part of grant funding round to address energy efficiency in public buildings

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – With energy costs continuing to rise in terms of electric, natural gas, as well as the fluctuation of gasoline, residents are always looking for a way to save money on those bills.

The Town of Agawam, which owns many buildings, is looking to do the same.

Last week, the mayor's office announced the town would be receiving a grant from the sponsors of Mass Save.

Mass Save has been in existence for many years, going around and doing audits of homes and helping residents find numerous programs related to saving on energy costs through upgrades as well as green energy programs.

Agawam Mayor Christopher Johnson announced

before the Fourth of July holiday that the town would be receiving funding from the Mass Save Municipal Energy Manager Grant program. The town will be able to hire an "energy manager" who will lead efforts to reduce the municipality's energy use and carbon emissions in municipal buildings.

According to a press release from the mayor's office, the energy manager would work to find savings and upgrades for the town's municipal buildings by utilizing the various MassSave programs. The town would seek to use the incentives for energy efficiency and building decarbonization projects in municipal buildings, with a focus on the public school buildings.

Agawam High School is already under construction and will likely include energy-saving materials and

upgrades. But there are six other school buildings that could very much benefit from the Mass Save programs.

"We're grateful to the sponsors of Mass Save for awarding Agawam this grant," Johnson said. "Which allows us to engage a dedicated energy consultant to advance our energy efficiency goals. This support will be instrumental in implementing an Energy Management Services Contract to upgrade critical infrastructure in our municipal buildings, especially our schools, while reducing long-term energy costs and emissions."

Agawam was one of 63 municipalities that received funding in this first round of grants made by the Sponsors of Mass Save.

ENERGY | page 10

ACC holding family day

AGAWAM – Please join us for Family and Friends Day at Agawam Congregational Church at 745 Main

St., Agawam on Sunday, July 13. Pastor Dan's wife will be preparing a non-spicy Jamaican meal di-

rectly after our 9:30 a.m. service. To sign up, please call the church office at 413-786-7111.



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State passes FY2026 operating budget

BOSTON, MA – The Massachusetts Legislature today enacted a \$61.01 billion state budget for Fiscal Year 2026, a fiscally responsible plan that protects core services for the state's most vulnerable residents, maintains critical investments, and positions the Commonwealth to confront the underlying budget challenges that are a result of federal funding uncertainty.

Approved on a bipartisan basis in both chambers, the budget neither raises taxes on residents and businesses nor spends dollars from the state's stabilization fund—also known as the 'Rainy Day Fund'—which currently stands at a historic \$8.1 billion.

"This budget is a commitment to a more affordable, accessible, and inclusive Commonwealth. It responsibly manages taxpayer dol-

lars while at the same time investing in the areas that matter most to every region of Massachusetts—housing, education, transportation, and protecting residents threatened by federal actions," said Senate President Karen E. Spilka (D-Ashland). "No matter what part of our state you live in, this budget will expand opportunity, reduce everyday costs, and protect the services people rely on. I am deeply grateful to Chair Rodrigues, Vice Chair Comerford, Assistant Vice Chair Feeney, the committee, and all my Senate colleagues and staff for their thoughtful and collaborative work on this budget, as well as Speaker Mariano and our partners in the House who worked to get this done for Massachusetts."

"This FY26 budget makes key investments that better

support Massachusetts students and families, that increase access to affordable health care, and that provide for a safer and more reliable public transportation system – all without raising taxes. In a moment of incredible uncertainty at the federal level, this budget is proof that government can be both fiscally

responsible and an agent of good, the kind of government that our residents deserve," said House Speaker Ronald J. Mariano (D-Quincy). "I want to thank Chairman Michlewitz and my colleagues in the House, as well as our partners in the Senate, for working diligently to craft a budget that delivers for our constituents in a fiscally responsible manner."

"This final \$61 billion Fiscal Year 2026 conference committee report will better

position the Commonwealth for the challenges that lie ahead while also ensuring that we protect the programs that some of our most vulnerable populations rely on the most. Whether it is greater investments into programs like housing stability, food security, or early education the initiatives contained in this budget are a reflection of our shared values," said Representative Aaron Michlewitz, Chair of the House Committee on Ways and Means (D-Boston). "By reinvesting in the people of the Commonwealth we will continue to assist those in need while making our economy more competitive and equitable for years to come. I want to thank Speaker Mariano for his leadership during this budget process, as well as my fellow House conferees,

Representative Ferrante and Representative Smola. I also want to thank my counterparts in the Senate, specifically my co-chair Senator Rodrigues, for their partnership in bringing this proposal over the finish line."

"The \$61.01 billion FY26 budget is fiscally responsible, protects our most vulnerable, and does not raise taxes – period. I'm proud to have worked with colleagues in the House and Senate to deliver a balanced, inclusive budget that respects both our values and our taxpayers," said Representative Shirley Arriaga (D-Chicopee).

The Legislature's final budget increases spending by \$3.3 billion over Fiscal Year 2025, with the much of the increase attributed to MassHealth. Aligned with estimated tax revenue

growth, the spending plan is based on a consensus tax revenue estimate of \$41.214 billion for the coming fiscal year, a 2.25 percent increase over the current fiscal year's benchmark. Based on strong Fair Share surtax revenue collections to date, the Legislature's budget includes \$2.4 billion in available Fair Share generated revenues to support education and transportation investments, an increase of \$1.1 billion over the last fiscal year.

The Legislature's budget invests an additional \$33 million in the Commonwealth Stabilization Fund. With the addition, the Fund's balance would reach a historic high of \$8.26 billion by the end of FY26. Since 2017, when the Fund's balance was \$1.3 billion, the Legislature has grown the account by 523 per cent as of FY24.

Holyoke Community College adds two to Advancement team group holding of tournament

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College recently added two members to its Institutional Advancement team: Natalia Castagno, of Suffield, Conn., as assistant director of alumni relations, and Heather Haskins, of Westfield, as assistant director of annual giving.

Prior to HCC, Castagno worked at Springfield College as senior assistant director of undergraduate admissions and coordinator of diversity recruitment. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology from Brigham Young University and is pursuing a master's degree in education

from Springfield College. "Natalia brings exceptional relationship-building skills and strategic thinking to HCC that will strengthen our alumni connections," said Julie Phillips, HCC executive director of development. "As a natural networker, she will champion our alumni relations program and elevate alumni engagement."

Haskins, a 2020 graduate of HCC, returns to the college after serving as advancement operations associate at the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. She began her HCC education at the age of 15 as a dual enrollment student

from Westfield Technical Academy. After receiving her associate degree in business administration, she transferred to Bay Path University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in nonprofit management and marketing.

"Heather's extensive advancement experience and expertise in donor database management, event planning, and data analysis make her an excellent addition to our department and will enhance our annual giving efforts," Phillips said.

Castagno and Haskins started their respective roles in June.

Ortho MA Walk-In Clinic opens new Westfield location

WESTFIELD – Ortho MA is proud to announce that its walk-in orthopedic urgent care clinic in Westfield, Massachusetts is now open and serving patients across Western MA. Conveniently located at 53 Southampton Road, just off Exit 41 on I-90, Ortho MA provides fast, expert care for musculoskeletal injuries. At Ortho MA, patients find expert care close to home—without the stress and delays of a crowded emergency room.

Open seven days a week with extended evening and weekend hours, the clinic is designed for immediate access to orthopedic care without the need for an appointment. Patients are seen by a skilled team of orthopedic physician assistants with decades of experience in both routine and complex musculoskeletal care.

Clinic Hours: Monday-Friday: 4 to 8 p.m. Saturday-Sunday: 8 a.m. to 12 noon

Walk-In Services Include:

Evaluation and treatment of sprains, strains, and other orthopedic injuries

Fracture management and casting

Joint injections and other non-surgical orthopedic care

"We're proud to bring accessible, specialized orthopedic care to all of Western Massachusetts," said Joseph V. Zwirko, PA-C, co-founder of Ortho MA. "For many, it's just a short drive to receive the right care right away—without sitting in a crowded ER for hours."

Tamer Bahgat, PA-C, added: "This clinic was built with the patient in mind—convenient hours, no appointments necessary, and experienced providers who are ready to treat injuries quickly and effectively."

Meet the OrthoMA Team:

Joseph V. Zwirko, PA-C – Over 15 years of orthopedic and emergency medicine experience

Tamer Bahgat, PA-C – More than 20 years in trauma and orthopedic care, including military medical service

Timothy B. Rice, PA-C – Board-certified, with 20+ years of experience in orthopedic and sports medicine

With over 50 years of combined expertise, the Ortho MA team is committed to keeping Western Massachusetts active and pain-free—one patient at a time.

For more information, visit www.orthoma.org or call 413-83-ORTHO.

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.

Holyoke Medical Center offers Cancer Support Group

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Medical Center will host an ongoing Cancer Support Group for community members and/or caregivers dealing with cancer. The group will meet in the Fran Como Conference Room of Holyoke Medical Center, 575 Beech Street, Holyoke, from 4:30 to 6 p.m. on the following dates: July 10, Aug. 14, Sept. 11, Oct. 9, and Nov. 13.

Holyoke Medical Center will provide a safe place for active and surviving cancer patients, families, and care-

givers to share thoughts and feelings with others dealing with similar concerns and emotions.

"Support groups are a safe place to talk about emotions and difficult subjects. Our group members have developed a community through shared experiences and feelings, and create a welcoming space for others to feel heard, understood, supported, cared for, and accepted," said James Haskins, MSW, LICSW, ACSW, HMC Oncology Social Worker.

The Holyoke Medical Center Cancer Support Group offers a light meal, along with education, activities, as well as facilitation of discussion around a variety of topics. Open feedback from support group members is encouraged, and a survey is provided at every group meeting to enhance future meetings.

Participants are asked to please register in advance to ensure enough food and materials are available for all. Please RSVP by calling (413) 534-2520.

Multiple game events at Holyoke Library

HOLYOKE – In July, the Holyoke Public Library will be holding multiple game events for adults and children. On Monday, July 7 from 1 to 3 p.m. in the community room, there will

be yard games. On July 24, there will be an event featuring tabletop games in the first floor board room from 3 to 5:30 p.m. And then on July 29 from 2 to 5 p.m., Nintendo Switch

games will be available to play in the community room. For more info, contact Abbey at 413-420-8101 or email abuendinger@holyokelibrary.org

AHS Class of 1975 to hold reunion

AGAWAM – The Agawam High School Class of 1975 will hold a reunion on Saturday, Oct. 4 from 4:30 to 10 p.m. at the Polish

American Club in Feeding Hills. Please email connie-beaudette@yahoo.com for any questions. There is also a Facebook page dedicated

to the reunion, which can be accessed by searching "Agawam Class of 75 Reunion."

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Senior Center announces activities for start of July

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

Stroke Lecture Thursday, July 10 at 1 p.m. in Seminar Hall

Things we will discuss:
-What is a Stroke? Different Types of Strokes How to recognize symptoms of strokes using the “BE-FAST” method. Risk Factors and things we can do to help prevent strokes from happening. What to expect when you call 9-1-1. What to expect when you arrive at the hospital and things to think about after having a stroke.

Computer Classes Monday, July 14, Aug. 18 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

The Agawam Senior Center in conjunction with Revitalize Community Development of Springfield will be provide Computer Literacy Work Shops twice a month at the Senior Center. Andrew Fluit who is a Digital Navigator/IT Support from Revitalize will be here to provide this service at no cost to you. The class will be available to 9 students per time. We will be sharing the computers. Please call Kristina at 726-2826 to register. First come first serve.

Nutrition and Cooking Educational Seminar July 16, 23, 30 at 1 p.m. in the Garden Room

Ascentria Care Alliance SNAP-Ed is pleased to offer

a four-week nutrition and cooking course. During the course we will cover a variety of topics including healthy eating guidelines, demystifying food labels, grocery shopping on a budget and more. Each class includes an interactive cooking demo with the opportunity to taste test the recipe. Please call the Senior Center to register for this four-week seminar.

Coffee Talk with Veterans Wednesday, July 16 and Aug. 20 in the 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.

Hearing checks available Thursday, July 17

The next New Ears hearing care clinic will take place on Thursday, April 17. Gary Winn a licensed Hearing Instrument Specialist, and owner of New Ears Hearing Care, will conduct a free hearing clinic. He will check ears for wax build-up, perform hearing screenings, and counsel people about hearing loss. Hearing aids will be cleaned and adjusted if possible. The Agawam COA invites residents of Agawam and surrounding towns to benefit from this service. Call 821-0604 to make an appointment. Hearing checks will take place in the seminar hall.

Agawam Senior Center Computer Tech & Support Club

July 22, Aug. 12 and 26 from 10 to 11 a.m.

The Agawam Senior Center Computer and Technology Club will meet on July 8 and 22 and again on Aug. 12 and 26.

Continuing Sessions with Glenn Olsen

Friday, July 25 and Aug. 22 at 1 p.m. in the Conference Room

A little about me, I was a long term successful Physical Science Special Educator. In January of 2010 I had a severely disabling stroke. For the past 15 years I have focused on rehabilitation from my injuries with both

traditional and non-traditional methods. We have discussed topics essential to living a healthy life style such as foods, nutrition, and vitamins. We will continue to talk about fascinating topics such as muscle testing, energy levels, orbs, the significance of color and more. I look forward to having you a part of our discussion.

Jewelry Making With Sandy Tuesday, July 29 at 5 p.m. in the Garden Room

We are excited to offer Jewelry Making with Sandy. Sandy will bring all the materials you need and you bring your creativity. Cost for the class is \$3 per person plus the cost of your supplies. Call Kristina at 413.726.2836.

Football scholarships awarded

AGAWAM – During the weekend of June 21 and 22, The Hank Drewnowski Family hosted their 35th annual Hank Drewnowski Sr. Scholarship Golf Tournament at Oak Ridge Golf Course. Each year since 1991, more than 90 senior Agawam football players have been honored and awarded a scholarship and a place on the trophy.



Mike Drew, Coach John Benjamin, Adrian Barretto, Colby Mikuszewski, Michael Elias, Coach Chris Benjamin, Steve Drew, Hank Drew Jr., Hank Sr.'s great grandson Noah Henry Drew.



Hank Jr., Michael, Stephen and Brett Drewnowski at the annual golf event. SUBMITTED PHOTOS



Adrian Barretto, Colby Mikuszewski, Coach Chris Benjamin, Michael Elias

Library announces upcoming children's activities

The Summer Reading Challenge at the Agawam Library is off to a spectacular start. Kids and teens have been logging their reading, winning prizes, and participating in fun, free activities. If you haven't signed up yet, it's not too late! Our Summer Reading Challenge goes through August 8th. We are 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 is

open. To register go to the website agawamlibrary.org, or call 413-789-1550 ext 3.

The following events are happening July 7 to 18 at the Agawam Public Library. To view the full listing of Summer Reading events go to our website: agawamlibrary.org

Thursday, July 10

Family Take & Make Craft – 3-D Floating Ship. For kids of all ages. Available all day while supplies last. Drop-in, no registration is required.

Teens 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.

Kids Scavenger Hunt & Riddle – All Ages. Available all day. At the end of the week two winners will be chosen and they will each get a small prize. This week we will have a Pac-Man-themed hunt & riddle.

9:30 am 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 pm Balloon Twisting Story Time – For ages 2 and older. Registration is required. Join us for this special story time with special guest Miss Brie. We will read stories, and play with balloons.

Friday, July 11

Teens 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.

Kids Scavenger Hunt & Riddle – All Ages. Available all day. At the end of the week two winners will be chosen and they will each get a small prize. This week we will have a Pac-Man-themed hunt & riddle.

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

Extra Fun Fridays – All Day. For kids of all ages. Kids of all ages can stop by the Children's Room anytime on Fri-

days and do special activities.

9:30 am 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 am 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.

2:30 pm stay Cool at the Movies Elf: Buddy's Sing & Cheer Along. For all ages. Registration is suggested.

Senior Center holding bus trips

AGAWAM – Bus trips are here. Join us on Aug. 6 to visit the iconic Saratoga Race-track. Witness the home of Sovereignty, the celebrated winner of the 2025 Kentucky Derby and Belmont Stakes. We have only 10 seats left for this thrilling experience. \$125 pp. Contact Jo and Debbie / InsidersTravel2025@gmail.com for details. Two new trips to be announced soon.

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Opinion

Guest Column



Can I switch to a taxi driver job without hurting my Social Security?

Dear Rusty:

I opted to draw my Social Security retirement benefit early and work part time. The company I work for has decided to pull me from field work due to my age and health. Although they are great keeping me at 20 hours per week running for parts and doing office work, I'm not sure how much longer it will last. I'm thinking of taking a taxi driving job to keep my income enough to live on. The way it would work, I would lease the cab for some amount of dollars per day, set my own hours to work and collect anywhere from \$1.40 to \$4.00 per mile, depending on what type of fare. My question is: how does Social Security look at that type of employment? Would I be held to the 15 - 45 hours a month standard? I could never come close to making the \$1,200 to \$1,300 a month I need by working so little. Any advice is greatly appreciated.

Signed: Seeking Advice

Dear Seeking:

If you go ahead with your plan to lease a taxicab instead of continuing your current employment, you would, in effect, be considered "self-employed" and would submit your income tax return to the IRS accordingly. Social Security would get your earnings information as reported to the IRS and it would be your net earnings from self-employment after deducting all your business expenses that is reported to SSA by IRS.

There is, however, a special rule which would apply to you in your first calendar year of self-employment while collecting early Social Security benefits. Since, in your first year, some of your earnings would be as a part-time employee paying SS FICA payroll taxes, Social Security would first look at your earnings as an employee to see if you exceeded the annual earnings limit (\$23,400 for 2025).

Then, upon starting your self-employment, Social Security would look at the hours you spent performing "substantial gainful activity" (e.g., driving your taxi) each month and, if you spent more than 45 hours per month in that capacity, you would not be considered "retired," and thus, not eligible for Social Security in any month you exceeded that amount of hours.

If you earned less than the annual limit in total both as an employee and while self-employed, you would get benefits for all months of the year. But if you earn more than the annual limit,

you will get no benefits for any month you exceeded 45 hours as a self-employed person. Again, this only applies during the first calendar year of self-employment - in the following year only your net earnings from self-employment would count toward the annual earnings limit.

In effect, SSA would use the hours-worked standard to see if you are truly retired or actually working. If the latter, they would withhold SS monthly benefits for any month you exceed 45 hours working while self-employed (up to and including December of your first calendar year of self-employment), and only if your total income (as an employee and while self-employed) exceeds the annual limit.

So, if your goal is to net \$1,200 - \$1,300 per month as a self-employed taxi driver, that would be well within the limits of the annual earnings test (\$23,400 for 2025 but changes yearly). But there may, or may not, be a reduction in your Social Security benefits during your first year of self-employment, depending on when you start as self-employed. Note that SSA will ask about your work plans when you apply, and if you expect to stay under the annual limit (working part time in both capacities), you should get full SS benefits. Just be careful to stay under the annual earnings limit for those collecting early Social Security benefits. FYI, earnings from before your SS benefits started don't count toward the earning limit.

Note, too, that your monthly Social Security benefit will be actuarially reduced according to how far in advance of your full retirement age you claim SS. Whenever SS benefits are claimed prior to one's full retirement age, those benefits are permanently reduced.

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 ssadviser@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.



Guest Column

A self-sown surprise

I was pleased to come home from vacation and see the changes in my work gardens over 10 days time. It was astounding to witness the growth that many of the plants put on!

One other thing I enjoyed seeing was a few "volunteers" that had popped up here and there. Celosia, portulaca and my favorite, the cleome, had germinated in bare spots in the garden.

While most of these plants did not fit in to the current year's design and had to be removed, the cleome, better known as "spider flower," popped up exactly where I would have wanted it. In a month or so I will have dome gorgeous flowers in the center of a bed, providing height right where I need it.

Spider flower goes by the scientific name *Cleome hasslerana*. Older cultivars such as "Helen Campbell" and the "Queen" series top off at an airy four or five feet tall, while the newer "Sparkler" hybrids are a bit shorter and bushier. Besides white, spider flower comes in pink, cherry and lavender.

It was given such a unique name because of the flower's long, slender stamens that remind one of spider legs protruding from the plant. The stamens hold the eventual seed pods a distance away giving them even more "popping power" once ripe.

thrive- perhaps if I met those requirements I'd have better luck.

I had always known that cleomes prefer full sun and well-drained soil. What I didn't know was that they also like fertile soil and space away from one another. Regular doses of liquid feed are a must!

In the north, the cleome's habit of self-sowing doesn't become annoying, but in warmer areas it can become weedy. Clipping the seed-pods as mentioned above would "nip this problem in the bud." Seedlings that develop from volunteers will likely be a blend color-wise of the plants you grew last year because they are cross-pollinated by insects.

I will have to wait and see what color my self-sown cleome seedlings end up being, but lucky for me the rest of the flowers in the garden bed are in pink and lavender shades and will blend perfectly the volunteers.

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.



As a child, I was drawn to the seed pods of this peculiar plant - if you waited until they were "just right" and gave them a squeeze, the seeds would fly everywhere. What fun!

This attribute gives the plant tremendous "staying power" in the garden- in other words it pops up everywhere the following season! This can be a very good thing if you enjoy having the cleome around as much as I do.

Because cleomes are flower producing powerhouses they sometimes become exhausted by midsummer; their lower leaves yellow and flowers start to fade. I always thought that if they were dead headed like other, more common annuals were, maybe they would last longer into the season.

So, as an experiment I clipped the seed-pods close to the plant as soon as they began to form. Unfortunately, the overall form of the plant was altered- not for the better- and with little reward for my work. Then I began to search out what exactly cleomes need in order to

Volunteering at Harmony House

CHICOPEE - Harmony House of Western Massachusetts is a social model home for hospice care located in Chicopee.

The beautiful new facility reopened in the spring of 2024 and has been a safe and loving home for people with limited support who cannot live on their own. Potential volunteers are invited to explore the opportunity to help care for individuals who are in the final stage of their lives. Harmony House is currently in need of caregivers

and support people. Whether it's a few hours a week or a few hours a month, Harmony House is a welcoming place for people looking to help people.

A Meet-and-Greet event is scheduled for Tuesday, July 29, at 6 p.m. at the South Hadley Library, 2 Canal Street, South Hadley, in their Common Room. Please come and meet members of the Board of Directors and current volunteers to learn more and have your questions answered by those who

are directly involved in resident care.

Harmony House is a local, non-profit organization whose mission is to provide a loving home offering compassionate care for people who are on hospice and are in need of care. If interested in learning more or becoming a volunteer, please complete the online volunteer application form at www.harmony-housewma.org/volunteer-1 or email us at admin@harmonyhousewma.org.

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*.

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper

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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

Friday'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.



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Programs continue in busy July at Agawam library

AGAWAM – Summer is in full swing as we “Level Up” at the Agawam Library. The Adult Summer Reading Program kicked off on June 23 and runs through Aug. 8. Adults 18 and older can win up to 66 raffle tickets throughout this challenge by logging their reading and doing activities. Raffle tickets can be entered to win one of our grand prizes. We’ve also challenged the Agawam community to collectively read 5,000 hours, and every hour logged during this reading challenge will help reach our goal. All ages may contribute! Stop in throughout the summer to track our progress on the summer reading game board display. For more information about and to register for the adult summer reading challenge, please visit agawamlibrary.beanstack.org or stop at the Information Desk for a summer reading packet.

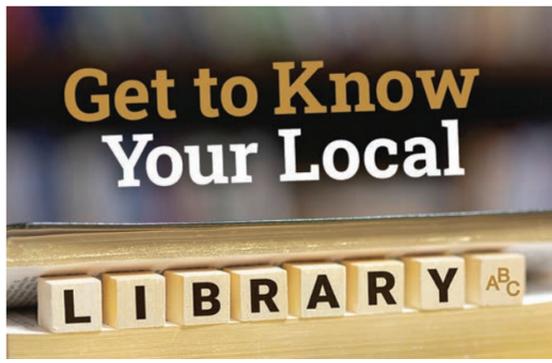
Join for an interesting and informative program on Monday, July 14 at 6:30 p.m. in the Cline Community Room. Let’s talk about death—over something sweet. Death over Donuts is a welcoming, no-pressure space to explore death, loss, and the liminal spaces in between. Inspired by the Death Café movement but with a looser structure, this gath-

ering invites open conversations through books, movies, art, poetry, and nature. This inclusive meet-up is for girls, guys, and ghouls alike—because death touches us all. Come as you are, and let’s navigate the unknown together—one donut at a time. A partnership with Agawam Public Library, West Springfield Public Library and Hidden Hollow Holistic. This program is sponsored by the Agawam Center Library Association.

Qigong Instructor Pamela Cincotta is back with us for a “pop-up” qigong class on Tuesday, July 15 at 11:00 a.m. in the Cline Community Room. Explore balance and calm movements to stay energized, cool, and calm during these warmer months.

The July Library Tech Sessions will focus on Libby. Come learn the essentials on how to find and borrow new eBooks and audiobooks, along with some helpful hints and tips. Tech sessions will be held on Wednesday, July 16 at 6:30 p.m. and Tuesday, July 22 at 10 a.m. in the Cline Community Room. Please register for either session.

Tea & Trivia returns on Tuesday, July 22 at 6:30 p.m. and Wednesday, July 30 at 2:30 p.m., also in the Cline



Community Room. Come by yourself or with a team; prizes will be awarded to the winning players. We will use the same questions for both sessions, so register the time you prefer and join us for some fun. These programs are for patrons ages 18 and older.

The Agawam Writer’s Group will meet on Thursday, July 17 at 6:00 p.m. in the Peirce Conference Room.

The library is excited to welcome back Julia Nadolny on Thursday, July 17 at 6:30 pm for Chakra Healing. If you have experienced Julia’s sound healing sessions, this next class will bring you deeper into exploring your energy. Discover the power of your energy centers in this gentle, guided class. Learn about each chakra and how to recognize imbalances.

Clear energetic blockages in your chakras through a guided meditation with Julia and her crystal bowls. No experience needed—just come with an open heart. This event is sponsored by the Agawam Center Library Association. Please register for this event.

Adult Services Librarian Cher Collins will present an Introduction to Genealogy on Monday, July 28 at 6:30 p.m. in the Cline Community Room. Come learn about basic research strategies and tips and tricks for getting and staying organized. For a more advanced introduction to research,

Cher will present an Introduction to Ancestry-Library Edition on Friday, Aug. 1 at 10 a.m. Search for census records, vital statistics, immigration and military

records and start to piece together the story of your family’s history. Registration is required for both sessions.

Back by popular demand. Level Up your puzzle-solving with this literary-themed Escape Room. Eccentric mystery novelist and book collector Penelope Nightingale has recently passed away, leaving her vast fortune and collection of rare books behind. However, the prized jewel of her collection – an antique book valued at \$6 million – is nowhere to be found. A month after her death, a group of her friends and family members each receive a letter in the mail from the deceased stating that she has constructed an elaborate puzzle, the solution of which will reveal the location of the book. These participants have one hour to search her study, solve the puzzle, and claim this vast fortune for themselves. Register for one of three time slots on Tuesday, July 29: Session 1: 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.; Session 2: 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.; Session 3: 7 – 8 p.m. Sign up with a group during your preferred time slot or join on your own to make some new friends. Please register for only one time slot. This event is for adults age 18 and older.

The library is pleased to

partner with Ashland Public Library on two virtual programs this month. The first is on Friday, July 18 at 10 a.m. and it’s called Artificial Stupelligence: The Hilarious Truth About AI”. Author, finance expert and tech enthusiast Lynn Raebsame will shine a hilarious light on Artificial Intelligence that will just knock the fear out of us.

On Monday, July 21 at 7 p.m. join us online for The Wisdom of Morrie with Author (and son of Morrie), Rob Schwartz. For 30 years, Morrie Schwartz’s wisdom has resonated with people around the world largely due to the beloved, best-selling memoir, Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom. Now we have the opportunity to speak with Morrie’s son, Rob Schwartz, about the book The Wisdom of Morrie. Please note these are virtual programs that will take place via zoom. Registrants will receive a link via email to access the Zoom Webinar. Our virtual Author Series will feature writers that may interest teachers this month. For a complete list of featured authors, please visit our virtual author talk events page <https://library.org/agawamlibrary>. Please note the library is closed Saturdays during the summer.

It’s ‘Dino Week’ at Wistariahurst Museum

HOLYOKE – You’ve heard of the Asparagus Trail and the Appalachian Trail but what about the Dino Trail? Piti Theatre, Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, the Beneski Museum of Natural History, Springfield Museums, Wistariahurst Museum, Great Falls Discovery Center, Jurassic Roadshow, the Rock, Fossil and Dinosaur Shop and The Trustees of Dino Footprints in Holyoke have joined forces to create the Connecticut River Valley’s own Dino Trail with its own Dino Trail Week. Events are planned up and down the Valley from July 5 - 13 as these seasoned organizations offer a series of family-friendly events to engage all ages with our region’s unique dino, deep time and local histories. All events are free (Springfield Museums with museum admission). More at dinotrail.org.

Here are the remaining events for the week

July 10: Dino Day at Springfield Museums: Hands on activities & preview the New Dino Exhibit, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

July 11: Kidleidoscope Story Hour: Dinosaurs and Talk by Dr. Paul Olsen at the Great Falls Discovery Center, Turners Falls: Learn more about giant creatures from the past that roamed the Connecticut River Valley. The program includes a story, activities, and crafts for ages 3 - 6 from 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. and then Dr. Olsen will offer “Climate Cycles & Volcanic Singularities During the Dawn of the Age of Dinosaurs”, 7 to 8:30 p.m.

July 12: Great Greenfield DinoFest on the Lawn in front of Second Congregational Church, 10 a.m. to 12 noon - interactive exhibits, live music, games and a Dino Wizards Story from Piti Theatre.

July 12: Art Naturally: Gel Printing Trace Fossils at Great Falls Discovery Cen-

ter, 2 to 3:30 p.m.: Create an art piece inspired by the valley’s fossilized dinosaur footprints using paint, paper and gel, with instruction and techniques - for adults, teens and children ages 6 and up.

July 13: Dino Family Fun Day at the Wistariahurst Museum, Holyoke, 12 to 3 p.m.: Outdoor and sensory friendly dino-themed activities for the whole family. Learn about the dinosaur tracks leading up to the museum, see the official Massachusetts state Dinosaur Podokesaurus Holyokensis, and dance with a dino.

July 20: Dinosaurs in the Driveway at the Wistariahurst Museum, Holyoke, 1 to 2 p.m. - Local history and dino expert Sarah Doyle, director of the pop-up Dino exhibit Jurassic Roadshow, dives into the history and science of Wistariahurst’s dino footprints leading to the museum.

Bonus event:

Springfield Museums full of activity

SPRINGFIELD – Now open seven days a week, the Springfield Museums are ready to embrace the season with activities and highlights throughout the weeks of Summer at the Museums, happening July 7 through Aug. 15. Free with museum admission.

The Museums are elevating the 2025 summer experience with opportunities to gather, tinker, and jam as a community. Family-friendly exhibitions and hands-on explorations in the Cat’s Corner, Hasbro Games Art Discovery Center, and Spark!Lab are available daily for visitor enjoyment.

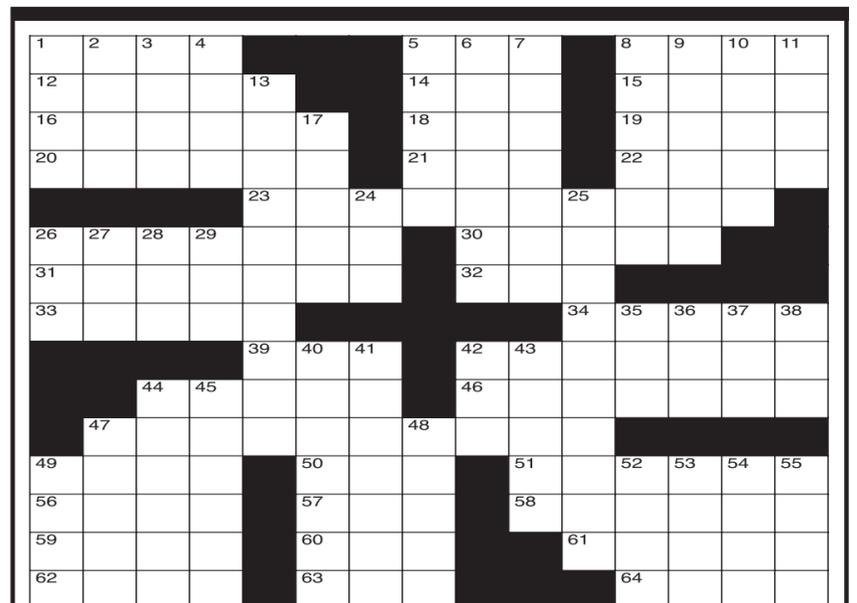
“Summer at the Museums is such a fun time of year! Explore four interactive special exhibits, become an inventor or artist in one of our hands-on educational spaces, and play out on the Quadrangle lawn” says Larissa Murray, Director of Education at the Springfield Museums.

Then, from Wednesday to Friday, visitors can participate in a variety of special program offerings. On Wednesdays, dance and jam to performances from a variety of local acts. On Thursdays, kids can get crafty with the Museum School for Tinker Thursdays, available at an

additional charge. Lastly, on Fridays, welcome the weekend with bubbles, a performance by the Toe Jam Puppet Band, and other featured activities.

“We have so much happening this summer, from our Wednesday and Friday performances to our daily drop in spaces and exhibits. There are so many reasons to visit the Springfield Museums this summer,” exclaims Abby Garner, Family Engagement Coordinator.

All exhibits and activities are FREE with museum admission unless noted otherwise.



CLUES ACROSS

- 50 percent
- Records electric currents
- Charlize Theron flick “Flux”
- More frosty
- Disfigure
- Sky color
- A thoroughfare in a town or city
- Actress de Armas
- Spend time in a relaxed way
- California peak
- Lodging option
- Small amount of a thing
- Expresses sorrow
- Keeps an ear warm
- Babies (Spanish)
- A conceited and self-centered person
- No seats available
- Pouches

CLUES DOWN

- Snakes do it
- Hormone
- The standard monetary unit of Turkey
- Fixed charges
- Electronic communication
- Artilleries
- “Strangers on a Train” actor Farley
- Burning
- Makes ecstatically happy
- Greek liqueurs
- Tropical Old World tree
- Someone who takes vengeance
- Style of cuisine
- Select
- Immunized against disease
- Old world, new
- Honorable title (Turkish)

CLUES ACROSS

- Hip joints
- A place to bathe
- Evading
- Minute, one-celled unit
- Losing one’s hair
- A country in W Africa
- One point north of northeast
- Pointed end of a pen
- Extreme
- Norse personification of old age
- Doctors’ group
- Member of U.S. Navy
- Mens’ fashion accessories
- A way to allow
- Gloomy
- Grads wear one
- Between south and southeast
- Jaguarundi cat

CLUES DOWN

- Court case: ___ v. Wade
- Supervises interstate commerce
- Not divisible by two
- Twelve
- Commentator Coulter
- Encourage
- Plumbing fixtures
- Early
- One point north of due east
- King of Thebes
- Short-tailed martens
- Impose a penalty on
- Consort of Poseidon
- A way to lessen
- Brooklyn hoops team
- Female of a horse
- Do as one is told
- A way to prepare meat
- Unit of measurement

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- Unit of measurement



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SPORTS

Mutiny closes out regular season

BELCHERTOWN – The Third Annual Julia’s 3v3 Soccer Jamboree is scheduled to be held at the State Street Fields in Belchertown on August 16th, 2025. The annual event is held in memory of 13-year-old

Julia Haynes who passed away in March of 2023 following a battle with brain cancer. All of the funds the Jamboree raises benefit the Julia Haynes Scholarship Fund, which is a 501(c)(3) founded by four of Julia’s

classmates.

The first two events hosted more than 60 teams, each year, in grades 3 through high school for the all-day event bracket which also featured food trucks, raffle and dunk

tank.

Registration is open until July 20 and is \$100 per team for up to four players and includes an event t shirt. There is also a new bracket for class of 2022 - 2025 participants.

There will again be food trucks, a DJ and some fun activities for attendees including a raffle. Those interested in registering a team, becoming a volunteer, sponsor or donating to the raffle can get more

details on the @julias3v3jamboree Instagram or Julia’s 3v3 Soccer Jamboree Facebook pages or through Runsignup: <https://runsignup.com/Race/MA/Belchertown/Julias3v3SoccerJamboree>



Samantha Breton, of Chicopee, tries to fake out an opponent.



Bella Santaniello, gets in the action for the Worcester Fuel during a recent matchup with the Mutiny.



Mila Dillard, of Chicopee, heads down the field.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Agawam’s Hope Santaniello fights for possession of the ball.



Maddy Theriault, a Palmer graduate, corrals the ball.



Avery Klingensmith, of Belchertown, tries to get a pass away.

Agawam players playing summer ball with West Side

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

CHICOPEE—The only sport that allows mulligans is golf.

The Aldenville Post 337 Legion baseball team could’ve used a mulligan against West Springfield Post 207.

After giving up four runs in the top of the first inning, the Post 337 squad entered the bottom of the fifth inning trailing, 6-1. The home team closed the gap to 6-3, but West Side scored five more runs in the sixth and celebrated an 11-3 victory at Szot Park in Chicopee, last Monday night (June 30).

“We battled back a little bit after falling behind early in the game,” said Aldenville co-manager Nate Carillon, who remained upbeat fol-



Nolan Longo takes a swing.

Pioneers punch playoff tickets with victory

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW—After winning the USL D-3Pro League championship title in 1999, the Western Mass. Pioneers only qualified for the playoffs five times during the next 20 years.

Since joining USL League Two in 2019, the Pioneers have qualified for the playoffs each season.

The Pioneers clinched a berth in this year’s playoffs following a 5-0 win over the Albany Rush before a large gathering at historic Lusitano Stadium, last Wednesday night.

“This is the sixth time in a row that we’ve made the playoffs,” said Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari, who’s been coach-

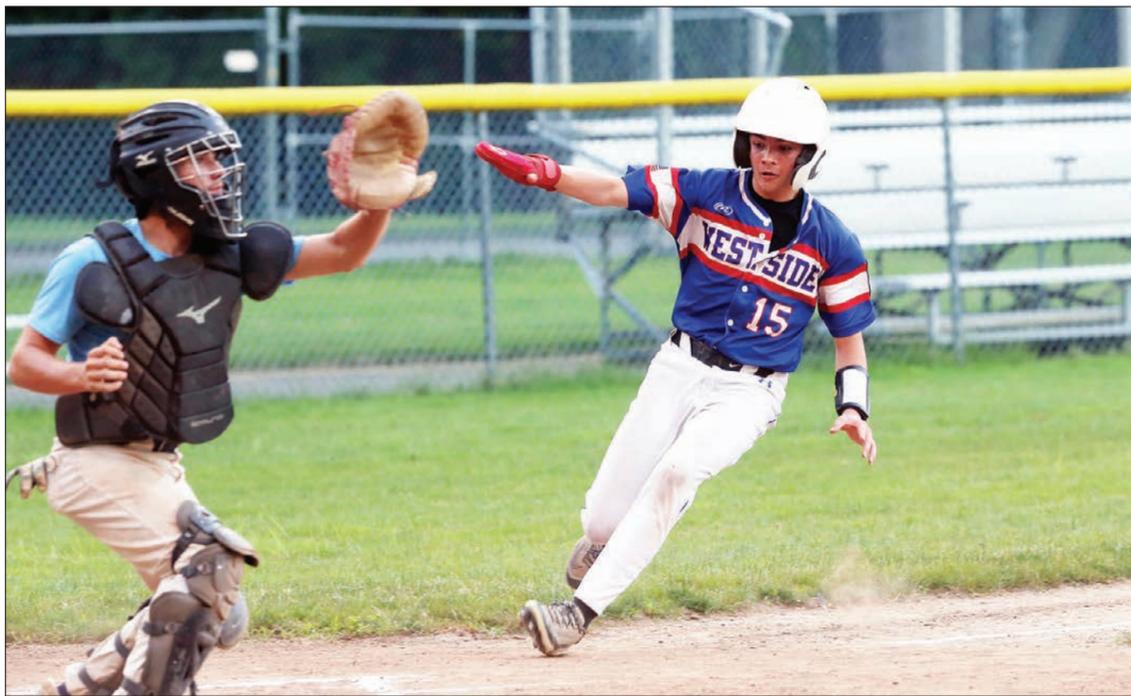
ing the men’s squad since 2012. “I think it’s a very good accomplishment for the club. We need to win our last two regular season games to have a chance to finish in first place.”

The Pioneers (9-1-2), who have finished in second place in the league standings during the past three years, are battling Vermont Green FC (9-0-2) for the top spot in the Northeast Division table.

“We accomplished one of our goals tonight by clinching a playoff berth,” said Pioneers midfielder Augustine Boadi. “We’re now trying to win the league title.”

The Pioneers were scheduled to play a road

Sports



Aiden Wykes gets ready to slide home.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Shortstop Aiden Wykes makes a throw to first for Post 207.

LEGION ■ from page 6

lowing his team's third home loss of the regular season. "They just caught us on a bad day. Hopefully, we play much better in our next game."

Aldenville (3-5), who won their first three road games, needed a victory to enter the month of July with a .500 record.

Carillon, who shares the coaching duties with Mason Scott, is hoping his squad can put together a winning streak just like they did a year ago.

"We got hot at the end of the regular season last year," Carillon said. "We won six or seven games in a row before losing to Belchertown in the championship game by one run."

One of the bright spots for Aldenville in the home loss was catcher Alex Savlick. He had two base hits with a walk and scored two runs. He also threw out two runners trying to steal.

"Alex played very well in tonight's game," Carillon said. "He had a couple of base hits and also threw out two runners. He's a very good catcher."

Savlick, who plays several different positions, lives in Springfield and attends Minnechaug Regional as a school choice student.

Memphis Huertas, who goes to South Hadley High School, is normally the starting catcher for Aldenville. Huertas missed a couple of Legion games because he was playing in a baseball tournament in Georgia with his travel team.

Matt Drobiak, who was Aldenville's starting pitcher against West Springfield (2-6), also had two base hits.

The home team's only other hits were by centerfielder Noah Carillon, leftfielder Lincoln Belsky, and shortstop Brandon Carillon.

West Springfield took advantage of a couple of errors to build a 4-0 lead in the top of the first inning.

Shortstop Aiden Wykes, who's from Agawam, fouled off several pitches leading off the game before lining a single into right field. He scored the game's first run on a passed ball.

The other four Post 207 players from Agawam are Jonah Higby, Owen Lavelle, Joe

Szemela, and Nolan Longo.

The visitors scored another run when Lavelle (2-for-3), who started in left field, hit a ground ball single into left field. The other two runs crossed the plate following a throwing error.

Noah Carillon and third baseman Matt Sutton, who was a freshman on the Chicopee Comp varsity baseball team this past spring, reached base on walks during the first two innings.

Post 337 scored a run in the third inning.

With one-out, Savlick drew another walk before stealing second base. Then Noah Carillon belted a double to the gap in right center and Savlick scored easily.

West Side took a 6-1 lead in the fifth following another RBI single by Lavelle and a fielding error.

Aldenville got those two runs right back in the bottom half of the inning.

Belsky drove home the first run with a line-drive single to center field with one-out.

At that point, Higby, who began the game as the designated hitter, replaced right-

hander PJ Greenia on the mound.

Higby, who's also a righty, allowed an inherited runner to score when Drobiak blasted a double to left.

Then second baseman Charlie Maxwell walked which brought the potential tying run to the plate.

Higby, who wound up as the winning pitcher, escaped the jam by recording back-to-back strikeouts.

The two West Side pitchers combined for twelve strikeouts.

The visiting team pretty much put the game out of reach in their next at-bats. Szemela capped off the big inning with a two-run single. Lavelle and first baseman Michael Zarelli also provided RBI hits during that frame which helped West Side build an 11-3 lead.

With one-out in the seventh inning, Drobiak singled to left. After stealing both second and third, he scored on a throwing error by the catcher.

Higby retired the next two batters on flyballs ending the game, which lasted more than two hours.



Joe Szemela winds up to throw down to second.

Polewarczyk grabs win at Hudson Speedway

HUDSON, N.H. - Joey Polewarczyk left no doubt Sunday night as to who holds the home track advantage at Hudson Speedway.

The Hudson, N.H., native and 2020 Granite State Pro Stock Series champion, led every lap en route to his second straight victory in the series' annual Gate City Classic 100.

Only a pre-race redraw could keep "Joey Pole" from starting on the pole, as the veteran clocked in fastest in time trials but redrew second. Two-time GSPSS champ Joey Doiron led the field to green, but Polewarczyk nosed out front before the field even reached turn one.

Polewarczyk and Doiron showed the way for the first nine laps, until Bobby Frappier nosed into the turn three concrete to bring out the evening's first caution

flag. On the restart, Polewarczyk reasserted himself out front, keeping Doiron at arm's length but setting a brisk pace around the high-banked quarter-mile.

While the two veterans held firm out front, former Hudson winner Angelo Belsito diced for third with recent winner Evan Beaulieu and first-time starter Connor McDougal. Eddie MacDonald lingered in the distance, cracking the top five by halfway as he gave Belsito fits for fourth.

Polewarczyk and Doiron were well ahead of the pack when Cory Casagrande ran up on a slower car in heavy traffic, sending the car for a spin and drawing a yellow flag with 25 laps to go.

Once again, the lead duo took off from the field, but the battle for third heated up as "The Outlaw" cleared Bel-

sito, then Beaulieu, to claw his way toward the podium. Belsito and Beaulieu quickly found their hands full with a charging Casagrande and Cole Robie, both trying to make up for lost time in the closing laps.

But not even Doiron could chase down Polewarczyk, who gapped Doiron by nearly half a second on the way to his fourth GSPSS win at his home track.

Doiron's runner-up result was his best-ever finish at Hudson, the track where he last finished a GSPSS race outside the top ten back in 2020.

MacDonald brought car owner Dale Drew's No. 50 home in third, with Beaulieu close on his heels in fourth. Robie finished fifth, giving the young hard charger three top-five runs to open the season.

Casagrande was sixth after an early exit one week ago at Speedway 95, while Belsito slipped all the way to seventh in the home stretch. Frankie Eldredge had his best GSPSS performance yet with an eighth-place finish, while McDougal and Josh St. Clair rounded out the top ten.

Polewarczyk's ninth GSPSS win elevates the 36-year-old to second on the series' all-time win list behind D.J. Shaw. His home-track mastery has played a big part; only once in five GSPSS appearances at Hudson has Polewarczyk not parked in the winner's circle.

The GSPSS teams have a week off to celebrate Independence Day before returning to action on Friday, July 11 at Claremont Motorsports Park, kicking off a four-week midsummer trek through New Hampshire.

Blue Sox edged by Danbury Westerners

HOLYOKE - On First Responders' Day at MacKenzie Stadium last Sunday, where members of the Holyoke Fire and Police Departments were honored, the Valley Blue Sox narrowly fell to the visiting Danbury Westerners 8-7.

The Westerners quickly jumped in front, as centerfielder Garrett Larsen launched a home run over the left field wall during the game's first at-bat.

The early offense set the tone for a game that showcased nine lead changes and ties.

Sunday's back-and-forth battle came to a head when Danbury extended their lead on a Grayson Sparr RBI double in the eighth inning. That run proved to be the difference, as Danbury edged out an 8-7 win.

"We're going to continue to stay on the offensive attack," said Blue Sox manager Endy Morales.

"We're staying right there. I think mentality, we just got to continue to put good swings on balls. We played better defense today, so as long as we continue to stay forward and move forward, I think we'll be fine."

Valley tallied 11 hits in the loss. Nick Spaventa picked up three hits and two RBI in five appearances. Sebastian Mexico had a two hit performance, add-

ing two RBI. Michael Elko added the other multi-hit outing for Valley, while Rees Kozar and Wyatt Hunt earned RBIs.

Danbury's Aidan Paradine went three for three with an RBI. Left fielder Michael Iannazzo produced two RBI from two hits, and Gavin Donohue collected two runs, a hit and an RBI from four plate appearances. Sparr and Larsen had two hits apiece.

Kenan Elarton started for Danbury and Andrew Koshy earned the win in relief. Harper McLendon was given the loss. Teo Spadaccini got credit for the save.

Valley falls to a record of 11-13. Danbury improves to a 9-13 record on the season.

After an off day tomorrow, the Blue Sox enter a stretch in which they will play six games over the course of five days.

"It's going to take everybody," said Morales. "This is why we have the wonderful resources of Adam Feit and the [training] facility, and taking advantage of the off days. We have all these resources so that we can withhold a stretch like that. It's going to take every single guy, not just to look ahead, but to attack the game that's right in front of us. I think we'll be just fine if we do that."

Quabbin Valley set to host second over-28 fall league

Following up on the resounding success of its inaugural campaign, the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, an over-28 adult baseball league will hold its second Fall League this September and October.

Seeking to create a similar competition environment to its spring/summer league, Quabbin Valley, with contributions from the Valley Wheel Over-28 Baseball League, created a four-team fall league last year featuring the Braves, Dodgers, Cardi-

nals, and Twins.

Those same four teams are set to return and each team tends to have openings on them. Additionally, the league is open to welcoming more teams in to the league if it finds enough interest.

While the fall league schedule is still under construction, it will mostly feature Sunday morning games played with wood-bat only, which is customary for fall baseball. There could be some Saturday games added to the schedule depend-

ing on the completion of the spring/summer season as well as to makeup rain-outs, potentially. Games are nine-innings long and there is a small playoff and championship held at the end of the season. Last year's fall season was eight games and that is the goal for this year. Free and low-cost fields are used as well as just one umpire in an effort to keep the costs lower for players. The cost to play will likely range from \$40 to \$60 for the eight-game schedule. Players from

outside the Quabbin League may also pay a small fee for insurance as well.

An interest/registration form, will be forthcoming soon, but until then, to express interest in the league, you can email the coordinators of the league at either GScibelli22@yahoo.com or ikhandfield@gmail.com.

Scheduled and team placement for unaffiliated players will be finalized in mid-to-late August. Please join in the fun this fall.

Sports

PIONEERS ■ from page 6

match against the New England FC on Monday night before closing out the regular season by hosting the boys from Vermont on Friday night.

The Vermont Green won the first meeting of this season between the two squads, 2-0, which took place in front of 2,500 enthusiastic soccer fans at Virtue Field located on the University of Vermont campus on June 17.

When Vermont made the three-hour trip south on Rte. 91 to Lusitano Stadium a year ago, they clinched a playoff berth with a 3-1 win over the Pioneers in the regular season finale. It was the Pioneers, who had already locked up a

playoff berth, only home loss of the 2024 campaign.

Entering last Wednesday's match, Albany (2-9-1) had never defeated the Pioneers since they joined USL League Two in 2022.

The Pioneers, who defeated the Rush, 6-0, on May 19, put the second meeting out of reach by scoring four goals in the first half.

"Building a large first half lead allowed us to relax a little bit in the second half," Molinari said. "We played very well tonight."

The Rush have gone 0-7-1 since celebrating back-to-back victories against Black Rock and Boston City FC at the end of May. Any hopes they might've had about up-

setting the Pioneers didn't last very long.

The home team took a 1-0 lead following a corner kick goal in the ninth minute.

Defender Gustavo Barbosa booted the ball into the box from the right corner. Then Boadi sent a pass to forward Jose Bustamante who tapped the ball into the net past Albany goalie James Joyce.

A little more than ten minutes later, Matt Cence, who's also a midfielder, delivered a crossing pass from the right wing into the box. Boadi finished off the play by scoring his first goal of the season.

"I've been on a goal drought for a long time," Boadi said. "I've been working very hard, and it feels very

nice to finally score a couple of goals, especially in front of the home crowd. You can't ask for anything better than that."

Cence and Boadi hooked up again in the 24th minute. This time, Boadi blasted a shot into the upper right corner of the net.

While Cence and Boadi are teammates during the summer, they'll be opposing each other at the beginning of September.

Boadi, who's one of the Pioneers veteran players, is also a member of the men's soccer team at Bryant University, while Cence plays at UMass-Amherst.

Aidan Kelly, who's the Pioneers captain and defender, is

also a member of the Minutemen men's soccer team

The two college soccer teams are scheduled to meet each other in a non-conference match in Amherst on September 6.

"It's always a lot of fun playing your summer teammates during the college soccer season," said Boadi, who would like to play for a professional soccer team after graduating from college next year. "I'm hoping that we can win our game against UMass. We talk about it all the time and I'm really looking forward to that match."

Cence is a first-year member of the Western Mass. squad.

"I'm thankful for coach

Molinari allowing me to join the team this year," Cence said. "It has been a great experience and the guys on the team are awesome."

Cence also assisted on the Pioneers' fourth goal, which was scored by midfielder Robbie Lyons in the 34th minute.

The Pioneers had several more scoring chances during the second half.

Bustamante netted his second goal of the match during the 82nd minute. Defender Alejandro Carrillo was credited with the assist.

Goalie Alan Horrocks only had to make a couple of save in recording the Pioneers sixth shutout of the season.

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, 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 non-profit 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.

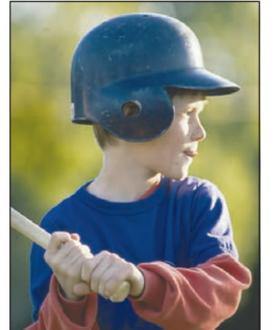
Registration open for 3v3 soccer jamboree

BELCHERTOWN – The Third Annual Julia's 3v3 Soccer Jamboree is scheduled to be held at the State Street Fields in Belchertown on August 16th, 2025. The annual event is held in memory of 13-year-old Julia Haynes who passed away in March of 2023 following a battle with brain cancer. All of the funds the Jamboree raises benefit the Julia Haynes Scholarship Fund, which is a 501(c)(3) founded by four of Julia's classmates.

The first two events hosted more than 60 teams, each year, in grades 3 through high school for the all-day event bracket which also featured food trucks,

raffle and dunk tank.

Registration is open until July 20 and is \$100 per team for up to four players and includes an event t shirt. There is also a new bracket for class of 2022 - 2025 participants. There will again be food trucks, a DJ and some fun activities for attendees including a raffle. Those interested in registering a team, becoming a volunteer, sponsor or donating to the raffle can get more details on the @julias3v3jamboree Instagram or Julia's 3v3 Soccer Jamboree Facebook pages or through Runsignup: <https://runsignup.com/Race/MA/Belchertown/Julias3v3SoccerJamboree>



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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.

Public Notices

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No.
HD25P1382EA
Estate of:
Judith D Jakubiec
Date of Death: 02/13/2025
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION
 To all interested persons:
 A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Carla J Hoctor of Westfield, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.
 The Petitioner requests that: **Carla J Hoctor of Westfield, MA** be appointed as Personal

Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
 You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 07/29/2025**. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS

UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.
 WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.
 Date: July 01, 2025
Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate
 07/10/2025

TOWN OF AGAWAM LEGAL NOTICE PUBLIC HEARING
 The Agawam City Council

Administrative Sub-Committee will conduct a Public Hearing on **MONDAY, August 4, 2025 at 6:30PM**, at the Agawam Senior Center Hall Seminar Hall, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA, on an Eversource petition for permission to install a joint owned pole on or near 349 Rowley Street, Agawam, MA could and include installation of a new pole(s), manholes, wires, cables and fixtures, including the necessary sustaining and protect fixtures along and across the property. This petition is available by contacting the City Council Office, 36 Main Street, Agawam, MA or by emailing bbard@agawam.ma.us.

Robert E. Rossi, Chair
 Administrative Sub-Committee
 07/10, 07/17/2025

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Division

50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No.
HD25P1338EA
Estate of:
William Harold Walker
Date of Death: 06/02/2025
INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE
 To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner
Brenda L Couture of Feeding Hills, MA
 Petitioner **Michael L Couture of Burleson, TX**.
Brenda L Couture of Feeding Hills, MA
Michael L Couture of Burleson, TX
 has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.
 The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uni-

form Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.
 07/10/2025

Agawam Advertiser News
OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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Tykes Tuesday back in the summer

HOLYOKE – Summer is just around the corner and that means Tykes Tuesday is back for free family fun at Holyoke Mall Tuesday mornings from July 8 through Aug. 19.

Tykes Tuesday, sponsored by The Care Center, features seven weeks of free family activities and exclusive discounts on Tuesdays starting at 11 a.m. on the lower level in Macy's Court. The kids' program is free, open to the public, and is best suited for children ages 12 and under. This year's activities include live animal ambassadors, a magic show, free trampoline

park admission, and more.

Tykes Tuesday Schedule:

July 8: Wildlife on Wheels with Forest Park Zoo

July 15: Adventures at Altitude Trampoline Park (Limited Availability, Registration Full)

July 22: Celebrate Christmas in July with Mrs. Claus, Face Painting and More

July 29: Magic Show with Ed Popielarczyk

August 5: Meet and Greet with the Holyoke Fire Department and Belchertown PD Dog

August 12: Superhero Training Academy with Face Painting and Balloon Art

August 19: Funtastic Forces with Mad Science

Families are encouraged to pre-register at www.holyokemall.com/tykes-tuesday-2025/. Plus, families who come to all 7 weeks of Tykes Tuesday will be entered to win a Grand Raffle Prize of a Back-to-School gift pack. Those interested can get a loyalty punch card at the Holyoke Mall registration table on July 8.

Pickleball tournament July 20 to benefit Greater Springfield Habitat

WESTFIELD – Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) is excited to announce a Pickleball Tournament open to players of all skill levels on Sunday, July 20, at The Picklr 415 E. Main St (The Westfield Shops Retail A-1).

From 12 to 4 p.m., seasoned players and rookies alike, will play a "King of the Court" three-person style play. Tickets are \$40 each, which includes prizes, snacks and refreshments, swag bags, and ridiculous amounts of fun. All are welcome to participate or spectate. To purchase tickets, visit

habitatspringfield.org

"We are excited to be hosting this event. The staff at The Picklr has been educating us on all things pickleball and helping us to ensure a fun and lively event while raising awareness and supporting our construction programs," said Aimee Giroux, GSHFH executive director.

Greater Springfield Habitat is also looking for sponsors for the event. Sponsorships range from \$500 to \$1,500. For more information, see attached flyer.

GSHFH is dedicated to strengthening communi-

ties by empowering low-income families to change their lives and the lives of future generations through homeownership and home preservation opportunities. Since 1987, Greater Springfield Habitat has built or repaired 129 homes in Hampden County.

For more information, contact Olga Calligos, Homeowner Programs coordinator, at calligos@habitatspringfield.org or (413) 739-5503 x1003.

Holyoke Rows announces free youth kayaking program

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Rows is pleased to announce another great lineup of free summer programming to help our community get out and explore on the Connecticut River. From free all ages kayaking days to a free learn to row week for Holyoke, Chicopee and Springfield middle and high school students, there are endless options to

enjoy the outdoors from our boathouse at Holyoke Rows, 25 Jones Ferry Rd, in Holyoke.

Holyoke Rows is pleased to announce Free Summer Nights for Youth and Families that will take place Mondays/Wednesdays July 7 to Aug. 20 5:30 to 8 p.m. Children, youth, and families are invited to come down to the

boathouse for free kayaking, fishing, and more. No registration needed, all equipment & instruction provided. Enjoy the outdoors from our boathouse at Holyoke Rows, 25 Jones Ferry Rd, in Holyoke. This program is offered as part of the Massachusetts DCR Summer Nights grant program.

High School of Commerce holding 50th class reunion

SPRINGFIELD – The High School of Commerce Class of 75 is holding their 50th class reunion.

It will take place at the

Storrowton Tavern, West Springfield, MA, on Saturday August 30, 2025 at 6 p.m.

Contact Janet at jan0826@comcast.net to learn more.

ENERGY ■ from page 1

In all, 24 energy managers will be hired with the help of the grant funding. The press release states that school buildings will be a focus in the many other communities, not just Agawam.

"Residents and businesses throughout Massachusetts will benefit from increased energy efficiency that these 63 municipalities will experience through this impactful program," said Tilak Subrahmanian, vice

president of Energy Efficiency and Electric Mobility at Eversource. "We are committed to working with participating communities over the next three years to complete projects that immediately lead to energy savings and improved sustainability of community fixtures like schools, fire departments, and other public spaces.

For more information about Mass Save programs, go to www.masssave.com/community.

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

Veterans Cemetery friends group holding golf tournament

AGAWAM – The Friends of the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Agawam and the Friends of the Agawam Veterans Council proudly announce their First Annual Golf Tournament in support of Wreaths Across America, a national effort to honor and remember our fallen veterans during the holiday season.

This exciting event promises a day of camaraderie, remembrance, and community support. Golfers, sponsors, and community members are invited to participate and help lay

wreaths at the graves of veterans resting at the Agawam Veterans Memorial Cemetery this December.

Event Details: 18 Holes of Golf with a cart, lunch, dinner and a raffle entry.

Location: Agawam Municipal Golf Course

Date: Aug. 31

Time: 12 noon

Registration Options:

- Individual Golfer: \$125
- Team of Four: \$450
- Dinner Only: \$30
- Tee Sponsor: \$100 (Company or "In Memory of" dedication)
- Other Sponsorship Opportunities Available

Payments Accepted:

- Check (payable to FMVM CA, PO Box 03, Feeding Hills, MA 01030)
- Venmo
- Credit Card (by phone)

To Register or Sponsor:

Contact Marline Clarendon at 413-221-9548 or email wreathfriends@gmail.com.

Registration forms are available upon request.

Join us in honoring those who served with a round of golf, good food, and great company—all for a noble cause.



USA Trash and Recycling was back out this week on normal schedule, removing trash throughout the community.

TRASH ■ from page 1

the town."

USA was ready to roll and Johnson said they were good enough to start one day early, beginning their trash and recycling pickup services on Monday, June 30. Their contract was originally scheduled to start on July 1, the start of the new fiscal year.

"They were wonderful and put extra manpower and trucks out there," Johnson said. "Residents who were behind were asked to put their trash and recycling bins out on Monday and they had trucks out there doing extra pickups."

By Wednesday, July 2,

Johnson said all trash and recycling that was behind was caught up.

The mayor repeated he had nothing but good experiences with Republic during their time with the town and it was simply a perfect storm of issue that cause the service to falter during the past month. He did say there were penalties in the contract between the town and Republic for issues like this and the town will pursue those options.

With a lot of residents making their displeasure with the situation known on social media, Johnson wanted to dispel some of the rumors and misinformation that had been placed online.

In terms of awarding the contract to USA for the first time, Johnson said negotiations took place with five different companies that expressed interest in providing Agawam with trash and recycling services. Republic was among them.

"It came down to USA submitting the best option for the town," Johnson said.

One of the biggest issues raised is the major change related to bulk item pickups. Under the new contract, residents do not have to wait for a designated quarterly date to ask for bulk pick-ups, but there is a small charge for every item being picked up.

TRACK ■ from page 1

of them was for them to buy into what I am putting out and the rest will speak for itself. My most memorable moment outside of watching the boys prepare and run great races would be them handing me the baton they used after a race and them saying, 'This is for you, coach.' For me, that showed the growth in their character. That showed proof that they bought into everything that I was putting out and in their growth throughout the season."

Nicole Gebo, a parent of one relay team member Julien Gebo, shared her experience giving the team the support they needed to go to Nationals.

"Some of the most memorable moments for me as a parent was watching the boys create an unforgettable bond filled with excitement and laughter," she said. "And just being able to see them do what they love on a national's level. When I found out that they broke the school record and qualified for nationals I was so proud of the hard work they put in to achieve that goal and knew that I had to do whatever it took to get them to North Carolina; which included renting a SUV and driving them 12 hours. As a parent, I was so nervous as I sat there in the stands waiting for them to compete. When the race began, I felt like I couldn't breathe until it was over. To see

them place second in their heat and 15 overall out of 79 was a feeling like no other. I couldn't be prouder of each of these boys, the hard work they put into practice every day truly shined as they ran the track. The smiles on their faces when they placed 15th was worth all the effort of getting them down to North Carolina."

Julien Gebo was excited for the opportunity to take part in the Nationals.

"I was so excited to go to Nationals," he said. "It was a great experience that I'll never forget. I feel like I ran my best and was happy with how we did. My favorite part was when I walked out onto the track and saw all the excitement of the crowd."

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