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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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Council warned about e-bike issues

By Amanda Munson
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AGAWAM – On Sept. 2, the city council had resident Cecilia Calabrese visit and speak on behalf of neighbors, drivers, parents, and families in the area about the issue with e-bikes and children riding them around the city. Calabrese's reason for visiting the meeting was due to an incident regarding her neighbor and a driver on an e-bike.

Calabrese began by describing the close call.

"My neighbor was driving down the road, luckily in my neighborhood everyone knows to drive nice and slow," Calabrese said. "And disaster was narrowly averted."

E-BIKES | page 8

Fall sports underway



The Agawam High School girls cross country team gets their race underway last Wednesday afternoon at Robinson State Park. Fall sports opened up for most teams all last week with boys and girls soccer, field hockey, golf, girls volleyball, and cross country all having competitions. Football gets underway this week. See sports starting on page 6.

TURLEY PHOTO BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Hampden Sheriff's Department featured in TV series

By Brendan Rooney
 Correspondent

SPRINGFIELD – On Aug. 25, more than 200 guests gathered at the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame to celebrate the red carpet grand premiere of A&E's new hit drama series 'Family Lockup' that chronicles an unfiltered look inside the Hampden County Sheriff's Office (HCSO).

The series is a joint effort produced and brought to reality by Lucky 8 & Monami Productions, which chronicles and documents the efforts to keep families connected during incarceration. It's a ten-episode series that puts Hampden County and Western Massachusetts in the national spotlight, as each episode follows individuals and their loved ones as they navigate the emotional challenges of separation and the hope that family bonds can be a key to successful reentry.

In addition, the premiere



Tom Devine, Sheriff Nick Cocchi, and Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno TURLEY PHOTOS BY BRENDAN ROONEY

event featured a variety of state and local leaders, community partners, staff, and the families who bravely shared their stories, with some notable names, including State Rep Brian Ashe, West Springfield Mayor Will Richelt, Retired Hampden County Sheriff Michael J. Ashe Jr., Springfield Mayor

Domenic Sarno, State Rep Carlos Gonzalez, Springfield Police Superintendent Larry Akers, and Retired Judge Peter Velis, all showed unanimous support towards the guest of honor, current Hampden County Sheriff Nick Cocchi.

Offering insight into why Hampden County was the

point of focus and launching point for the series was Greg Henry, CEO of Lucky 8 Productions, and Executive producer on the show.

"So we started calling around, and then managed to get Rob (Rizzuto) on the phone, and then in turn the

TV | page 10

Town making adjustments to trash, recycling collection during Big E

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM – For the 11 weekdays the Big E will take place during the next three weeks, beginning Friday, Sept. 12, residents are being asked to make sure their trash and recycling bins are outside a little earlier to assist USA Trash & Recycling with beating the possible traffic from the big fair.

Agawam already contends with a lot of traffic on Routes 147, 159, and 75, the main roads that lead to the Big E, but the traffic can really bunch up at certain times of the day.

"Due to the high volume of traffic during The Big E, all residential trash and recycling services will begin at 6 a.m.," said Trash and Recycling Coordinator Tracy DeMaio in a press statement.

"Please have all trash and recycling carts on the tree belt by 6 a.m. of your collection day. Thank you for your cooperation and patience during this time. Should you have any questions, please call the DPW at 413-821-0624."

DeMaio said the strategy is not a new thing with USA, and it was tried under Republic last year and was found to be successful. USA took over the trash and recycling contract in Agawam and other communities, including West Springfield and Ludlow, on July 1. DeMaio said the routes closest to Morgan-Sullivan Bridge were the main focus of starting earlier.

"We began at 6 a.m. last year and it certainly helped with the routes closest to

TRASH | page 8

Have your voice heard; what questions would you like to see the candidates answer?

AGAWAM – While the mayor is not being opposed for election this year, there are 17 candidates for 11 city council positions and seven candidates for six school committee positions. The

Agawam Advertiser News will be sending out questionnaires to all the candidates to get their views on some of the issues affecting the community. But the Advertiser would really love to hear

from you in the community. What would you like to see the Advertiser ask the candidates? What issues are important to you?

If you have any suggestions for questions we should

ask the candidates for this year's election special to be printed in an October edition of the paper, please email the suggested questions to the Advertiser's email, aan@turley.com. With the questions,

please submit why you are asking the question and why you believe it is important for the community to know where the candidates stand on the issue.

Please note that not all

questions will be used in the questionnaires and some may need to be modified for form and clarity.

Please submit your question suggestions to aan@turley.com by Sept. 30.



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AHS Marching Band to perform at Smith House

AGAWAM – Apple season will be here before you know it, and with it the annual Agawam Historical Association Apple Pie Contest, which will take place on Saturday, Oct. 4, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Thomas Smith House, 251 North West Street, Feeding Hills.

All amateur bakers are encouraged to enter and must register on or before Wednesday, Oct. 1 by texting (413) 297-4967 or emailing 1855@agawamhistory.org. Official contest rules can be found on the Agawam Historical Association Facebook page.

Local historian and “Whips of Westfield” author Bruce Cortis will be on hand during the open house to discuss the industry that powered the Westfield economy during the late 18th century. The Agawam High School

Marching Band will make their Smith House debut and perform stand tunes and pieces from their 2025 field show at 12 noon.

Pie judging gets underway at 1:30 p.m., with winners announced as soon as the judges make a decision.

Signed copies of the historical association’s new Images of America title, Around Agawam and Feeding Hills will also be available for purchase. The book features more than 200 historic photos depicting Agawam and Feeding Hills’ rich history. Proceeds from the sales of the book will benefit the Agawam Historical Association. The National Register-listed Thomas Smith House and its preserved 1920s garage will also be open for tours. This event is free and open to the public.

Library hosting exhibits from multiple artists

AGAWAM – The Agawam Public Library is pleased to host works from multiple artists during the month of September. On the main gallery walls, pieces from past winners of Dracut Arts’ Annual Children’s Art Competition, open to all children 6 to 8 years old. Dracut Arts also produces 4 Arts Saturdays a year featuring New England Artists. Previous Arts Saturdays, Artist Interviews and “Why is Art Important?”, as well as the Neighborhood Talks series are available on YouTube at @dracutarts. All programs have ASL and CC whenever possible. Submissions for the 6th Children’s Art Competition are open! All art mediums are accepted; original works only. This year’s theme is “Land” and the deadline is October 4th, 2025 - midnight. There is no entry fee. More information on programs and the competition can be found at dracu-

tarts.com.

Works by Kathy Glista will also be exhibited during September, in the Johnson Memorial Case. Glista is a local fused glass artist who enjoys sharing her glass and how it is made with a wider audience. She learned many of her techniques at Snow Farm in Williamsburg where she now sells her items during their yearly sale in November. She is a member of the Agawam Community Artists and Artisans. You can see some more of her items at glass-creations-by-kathy.com.

Visitors are welcomed during the regular hours of the library. Any questions can be routed to the Information Desk at 413-789-1550 x4. Contact Adult Services Librarian Associate, Erica LeFebvre at (413) 789-1550 x8858 or elefebvre@agawamlibrary.org if you are interested in displaying artwork at the library.

Plenty more happening at APL in September

AGAWAM – Celebrate September at the Agawam Public Library with National Library Card Sign-Up Month. It’s the perfect time to sign up for a library card if you don’t already have one, or encourage a friend to sign up for their own. To make it even better, we’ll be running a month-long bingo game with two grand prizes: a Book Lovers Reading Bag and an Agawam Attractions Bag. Visit the Information Desk to learn more or to get started. The drawing will be held on Oct. 1.

We have many fun and informational programs taking place this month, including our ongoing virtual Career Workshops and Networking Group held in collaboration with Tewksbury Public Library. Are you age 50 (or thereabout) and looking for your next career move but aren’t sure how to begin? Join this vibrant group of networking professionals led by Professional Coach and MBA, Deborah Hope. This month’s topics include: Career Story (How to Answer “Tell Me A Bit About Yourself”) on LinkedIn (Professional Connecting) on Wednesday, Sept. 17 at 9 a.m. Register online to receive the Zoom meeting links.

Get active at the library. Drop in for an hour of gentle Chair Yoga on Wednesday mornings at 9:05 a.m. in the Judith Clini Community Room. Looking for some fresh air, exercise, and a great way to increase your daily step count? Try out our Walking Group this fall led by librarian Kristen Frost. Our first meeting will take place at School Street Park in Agawam at 9 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 6. Registration is required so we know how many walkers to expect. Qigong Instructor Pamela Cincotta is back with another series of relaxing and meditative sessions. Evening Qigong on Thursday, Sept.

11 at 6:30 p.m. will help you soothe your mind, ease emotional stress, and release physical tensions. Welcome in the slower seasons with our Fall Qigong classes, centered around on strengthening the breath, expanding the chest, and fortifying the immune system in preparation for winter. Fall Qigong takes place at 10:30 a.m. in the Judith Clini Community Room on Tuesday, Sept. 16, 23, and 30, and will continue into October and November. Qigong classes are kindly sponsored by the Agawam Center Library Association.

Try your hand at our literary-themed Adult Escape Room. Mystery novelist Penelope Nightingale has passed away and you have the chance to inherit her vast fortune and rare book collection. Solve the puzzles and crack the codes before time runs out, or your inheritance is forfeit! We will have two more time slots available: Tuesday, Sept. 23 at 5:30 and 7 p.m. Please register for only one time slot and date. This is the same escape room that took place in July, so please do not register if you have attended before. Tea & Trivia returns on Tuesday, Sept. 16 at 6:30 p.m. and Wednesday, Sept. 17 at 2:30 p.m. in the Judith Clini 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.

Author Katherine Anderson returns to lead our Writers Group on Thursday, Sept. 18 at 6 p.m. in the Peirce Conference Room. This in-person workshop is open to writers of all levels and genres. There will be opportunities for peer and host feedback, learning the basics of self-publishing, finding opportunities for submission to magazines, lit-

erary journals, and presses, assembling a portfolio, and the basics of a query package for submissions and publications. Please register for this program.

Spooky season is almost upon us, and what better way to get in the spirit than learning all about ghosts? Agawam Paranormal is back by popular demand with Ghostology 101, an introduction to the basics of paranormal investigations. Learn about terminology, equipment, EVP (electronic voice phenomena), spirit photography and video, and ghost hunting skills and suggestions. This event will take place on Thursday, Sept. 18 at 6 p.m. in the Clini Community Room. Register early for this popular program. Sponsored by the Agawam Center Library Association.

Are you green thumb challenged? Are your houseplants looking lackluster and somewhat sad? If so, this is the activity for you! Join the Agawam Public Library’s very own “Plant Whisperer,” librarian Chad Pelley for Houseplant Happiness: Bringing the Outdoors In on Monday, Sept. 22 at 6 p.m. Chad will guide you through the history, essential knowledge and maintenance basics of houseplant care. We will take a walking tour of the library’s extensive plant collection, highlighting the many ways you can use plants as decor. All attendees will also select a plant cutting to pot and take home, and supplies will be available for everyone to make a decorative plant stake for their new houseplant. Join us for this informative, interactive and crafty program.

Recovery Coach Supervisor Tommy is back again for Coffee with a Recovery Coach on Wednesday, Sept. 24 at 2 p.m. in the Peirce Conference Room. He will be available to answer any questions and provide sup-

port. Free coffee, resources, and Narcan will be available.

Adult Services Librarian Cher Collins marks Climate Preparedness Week with a Community Screening and Discussion of a 2018 documentary about understanding and navigating the impacts of climate change. Join us on Friday, Sept. 26 at 10 a.m. in the Judith Clini Community Room to learn more about our changing planet and how we can prepare ourselves for the future.

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 gathering invites open conversations through books, movies, art, poetry, and nature. Whether you’re drawn to the topic by curiosity, personal experience, or a love for the mysteries of life and beyond, there’s a seat at the table for you. Come as you are, and let’s navigate the unknown together—one donut at a time. This event will take place on Monday, Sept. 29 at 6:30 p.m. in the Judith Clini Community Room. This is a partnership between Agawam Public Library, West Springfield Public Library, and Hidden Hollow Holistix. Sponsored by the Agawam Center Library Association.

The library has a great selection of authors for our September Virtual Author Series. Come on a surprisingly hilarious journey with us and author Gabe Henry through the history of the English language on Wednesday, Sept. 17 at 2 p.m. To register to attend any of these author talks, please visit our virtual authors’ events page <https://library.org/agawamlibrary>.

Saturday hours have resumed. Registration for adult programs is now open.

ACC holding free car wash event

AGAWAM – On Sunday, Sept. 13, Agawam Congregational Church is holding a free car wash as a gift to the community. The event will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at the church.

Holyoke VNA Hospice Life Care achieves four-star ratings by CMS

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Visiting Nurse Assoc (VNA) Hospice Life Care is proud to achieve a four-star rating by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in three different areas as noted on the Medicare Care Compare website (www.medicare.gov/care-compare). For home health services, Holyoke VNA achieved four stars in both “Quality of Patient Care” and “Patient Survey Rating.” Hospice Life Care also maintains four stars for “Family Caregiver Survey,” an achievement the agency has consistently reached for several consecutive years.

“We are incredibly proud of our team in attaining these prestigious ratings by CMS,” says Holyoke VNA Hospice Life Care Executive Director, April Bartley, RN, MSN, NE-BC. “A four-star rating means that Holyoke VNA Hospice Life Care performed better than most other agencies in the country in the areas of quality patient care, as well as on surveys completed directly by patients and families themselves.” The “Quality of Patient Care” star ratings are based on seven measures of quality that give a general overview of performance, including:

How often patients got better at walking or moving around

How often patients got better at getting in and out of bed

How often patients got better at bathing

How often patients’ breathing improved

How often the home health team began their patients’ care in a timely manner

How often patients got better at taking their drugs correctly by mouth

How often patients were admitted to the hospital for a potentially preventable condition while receiving home health care

Hibernian Clothing and Food Drive for Providence Ministries 2025

HOLYOKE – The Ancient Order of Hibernians of Hampden/Hampshire Coun-

ties along with the Polish National Credit Union Announce the Annual Clothing and Food Drive for Providence Ministries from September to Dec. 1.

Please drop off gently used clothing, blankets, sleeping bags, and/or non-perishable food items to the Polish National Credit Union 270 Westfield Rd. Holyoke. Make a donation and be entered to win a raffle basket.

Please help those who are experiencing food insecurity and assist Providence Ministries as they continue to transform lives. Stop by the PNCU-your efforts will be greatly appreciated.

Fall Festival coming to St. Paul’s

HOLYOKE – St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, 485 Appleton Street, Holyoke will hold their Fall Festival on Saturday, Sept. 27 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Parish Hall and on the Church grounds.

There will be something for everyone: Gift basket raffles, \$5 fun raising raffle, vendors, plants, bake sale, a cafe, and outdoor activities for families.

Free ample parking is located behind the church and all are welcome. For more information, please call the church office at 413-532-5060.

ACC welcoming new members

AGAWAM – Come join the Agawam Congregational Church Family Playgroup - where we will play, learn and grow together.

Every Tuesday from 10 to

11 a.m. starting on Tuesday, Sept. 16, Agawam Congregational Church at 745 Main St. Agawam. The group is for all children from birth to five-years-old.



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President George Timmons gets ready to cut the ribbon officially opening the new HCC Tech Center on Wednesday, Sept. 3. SUBMITTED PHOTO

HCC celebrates grand opening of new Tech Center

HOLYOKE — Holyoke Community College celebrated the grand opening of its new Tech Center with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Wednesday, Sept. 3.

Located on the second floor of the HCC Campus Center, the HCC Tech Center is a newly refurbished space dedicated to providing students with all the technological support they need to be successful.

"No other community college in the Commonwealth has a facility like this one dedicated to helping students succeed in today's technological world," said Kim Florek, HCC's chief information officer and head of the IT Department.

Funding for the Tech Center came from a \$250,000 "Tech Rise" grant HCC received from the Employment and Training Administration, which is part of the U.S. Dept. of Labor. The money was principally used to buy furniture, computers, and other technology for the center, as well as the hiring of student interns.

"We provide the first level

of support to students and all their personal devices — laptops, cell phones, tablets," said Tech Center manager Walter Pfau. "If it's got a screen and a power button, we'll help them troubleshoot it. But the heart of this space isn't about fixing devices, it's about helping students feel more capable, more technologically independent, and, ultimately, more connected."

Besides Pfau and other IT staff, the Tech Center will be run by a team of student interns who can also offer one-on-one support to their classmates who need assistance with their devices, and computer programs and apps.

"Interns not only provide peer support but also co-develop resources, assist and lead training sessions, and bring fresh ideas to campus-wide technology conversations," said Pfau. "This spirit of innovation and collaboration aligns with HCC's mission to 'educate, inspire, and connect,' empowering students to build digital confidence and community at the same time."

Previously, students,

along with HCC faculty and staff, had to go across campus to the first floor of the Frost Building to the IT Help Desk for all their computer needs. The HCC Tech Center is more centrally located, across from the Student Engagement office, adjoining the HCC Bookstore, and steps away from the cafeteria and food court, where students tend to congregate between classes.

In addition to one-on-one tech support, the Tech Center has computer stations for students to use, a classroom for interactive workshops and meetings, and cubicles where other HCC support staff, such as financial aid counselors, can set up shop during special events, like Registration Express and Accepted Students Days.

"The Tech Center is an extension of the IT Help Desk, but it goes beyond the physical repairs that the Help Desk is set up for," said Scott Conrad, director of IT services. "This will allow us to spend more time on the in-depth problems students might have."

Feline Friends express appreciation

AGAWAM — Feline Friends, which operates a charity that helps care for cats, recently expressed gratitude to the community for their recent support. They stated: We are incredibly grateful for the response to our appeal for help with supplies. We have received packages at the dental office at 532 Springfield St. (at the corner of Cleveland St.) in Feeding Hills and at the Agawam Public Library. Financial donations have arrived by check at P.O. Box 174, Feeding Hills 01030 as well as PayPal: @FelineFriendsRaf-

fle. Venmo: @Feline-Friends. Please include name/contact information with donations if you would like an acknowledgement. Venmo donations do not provide addresses or email information. We are grateful for every single donation. Local pick up is available by calling 786-5019.

We will have a table with raffle baskets at the Feeding Hills Grange Fair on Saturday, October 25 from 9:30 to 2:00. The address is 47 North West Street in Feeding Hills. Thank you to everyone who donated goods or mon-

etary donations over the summer. Your generosity is appreciated by the cats and their humans.

Feline Friends Inc. is a community-based, nonprofit sanctuary that does not discriminate against any cat based on age, gender or disability.

More information about our sanctuary may be found on our website at felinefriendsinc.org or our Facebook page at Feline Friends Cat Sanctuary. Contact us with questions at info@felinefriendsinc.org or by phone at 413-786-5019.

Holyoke refutes CT rep's sewage claims

HOLYOKE — Interim Department of Public Works Director Mary Monahan is refuting the ongoing allegations and general frustration from Connecticut state lawmakers who have claimed the Paper City has released millions of gallons of raw sewage into the Connecticut River via Controlled Sewage Overflow (CSO).

This comes as it was first reported Aug. 29 through a television report that showed Connecticut State Rep. Tami Zawistowski (R-61) alleged that, "Holyoke alone dumps seven million gallons into the river in just one day, which occurred earlier this month and several times previously. When there is heavy rain, it is more than sewage, and other towns have done it too." The state representative then included a majority of the Pioneer Valley bearing similar responsibility as she claimed, It's Chicopee, West Springfield, and Springfield on different days. They all have issues that have come out in the past years," she said.

Monahan responded to the allegations, saying the data put forth isn't being reported accurately.

"I think the legislators in Connecticut downstream from us, misunderstood, what's happening in their water downstream from us, they specifically called out a heavy rain fall date, in their letter, where they are alleging that Holyoke discharged 7 million gallons of untreated waste water into the CT River, as result of the CSO, and that's an inaccurate reading of that reporting," she admitted. Monahan then went on to explain that the 5 million gallons of that originally reported 7 million figure, which has been a point of ire, was actually permitted discharges that received primary treatment at the Paper City's wastewater treatment plant, before it was discharged into the CT river.

The letter mentioned by Monahan is a grievance presented by CT State lawmakers, who reached out to the regional Environmental Protection Agency office, as frustrations boiled over, when Zawistowski pulled the records from Holyoke after receiving a video from fishermen who claimed they saw raw sewage, toilet paper, and other items floating in the river over in Suffield. The State rep then offered a comment citing a

lack of impromptu urgency, "MDC (The Metropolitan District) is like a year away from completing a \$300 million project," Zawistowski said. "It started in 2019. It's time for Massachusetts to step up," according to prior reports.

Monahan noted that Holyoke is looking at the letter as a point of opportunity.

"It allows us to call attention to the work the city of Holyoke has done to date in separating our CSOs, as well as agreeing that there is an additional need for additional funding to help Holyoke's rate and taxpayers pay for this," Monahan said. "So the good news in Holyoke is that we have separated 70% of the CSO targeted removal that is part of our consent decree. Monahan went on to express that the DPW and the Paper City are more than halfway to completing and reaching the target removal of combined CSO discharges. However noted that the costs continue to increase, as remaining projects take priority. The project in focus was introduced earlier this spring by Garcia as a way for the Paper City to have clean water standards by 2037, which is broken down over three phases over the next 12 years and is estimated to cost \$30 million in total. According to prior reports, "Back on May 19 during a press conference when the project was revealed; some funding came from the Commonwealth Clean Water Fund and the Environmental Protection Agency, as Garcia thanked U.S. Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey for earmarking \$2 million in federal funds that will be used in the second phase of work (Phase B)."

"Most notably, a \$10.5 million separation project at River Terrace, which is currently underway, falls under "Phase A", according to Monahan. Phase A is currently being overseen by Ludlow Construction and funded by a 0% interest loan from the state. "Phase B will be starting in about two years, which is in excess of 12 million dollars to complete that separation in that neighborhood. So we are committed to clean water."

Providing additional clarity to Monahan's comment was a social media post via Facebook on Sept. 2 from the Holyoke DPW stating "Phase B Project," which is targeted for completion by June 30, 2026, as

Monahan confessed, with construction complete no later than December 2029." Finally, the third and final phase is set to replace the pipes in the Springdale area of the Paper City, with exact costs still unclear.

Despite the allegations, Monahan said Holyoke DPW is 'proud' of the work being done, before issuing an invitation for a roundtable discussion to work out and solve these problems together as a region, brought forth and presented by Mayor Joshua A. Garcia's administration.

"The plan from the mayor's office is to have our delegation, our state rep and state senator working with the DPW to reach out across the border to the Connecticut delegation, and let's have a conversation, because the inaccuracy isn't their fault, it's due to how the reporting is presented," said Monahan in response to the allegations present. She also noted that every CSO community is mandated to report when a CSO exists, before providing additional clarity that the report was brought forth and passed through all correct and appropriate channels, but stressed that due to the frustrated consensus, a heightened sense of urgency will be implemented going forward, "This helps us bolster each report to where they will reflect and provide accurate data and show what has been separated, and what has been discharged and at that point treated, and what's not," she confessed.

Before reiterating that Holyoke is taking these allegations seriously while looking at all scenarios which could lead to solutions, "we are not, not doing what we were supposed to do, we have stepped up, and are doing what we need to," Monahan said. "We appreciate the concerns downriver; we have the same concerns right here in Holyoke, about what's happening in the CT river, but I think if we work together as a region, and across state boundaries, we can probably come up with some pretty cool solutions in funding to make this happen quicker."

The Sun reached out for additional comment from Holyoke Assistant City Solicitor after being redirected from the Mayor's office for any further questions regarding this unfolding matter, but didn't hear back by press time.

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Opinion

Guest Column



Can I claim my own SS benefit now and get half of my husband's benefit later?

Dear Rusty:

I would like to get an answer concerning taking my Social Security benefit soon and switching to my spouse's benefit when he begins to take his.

I am 64 years, 9 months old and my husband is 65 years, 7 months. My benefit is low due to the fact that I did not work for about 25 years while raising our children. My benefit would be \$573 at age 65. My husband's benefit at age 67 will be \$3,326. My first question is: can I receive half of my husband's benefit once he begins drawing his? Secondly, if I draw my benefit now will that reduce the amount I can draw from his benefit later?

Signed: Uncertain Spouse

Dear Uncertain:

As you may know, the Full Retirement Age for both you and your husband is 67. If either of you claim before your FRA your monthly SS retirement amount will be permanently reduced and, if you are currently working, you will be subject to Social Security's Annual Earnings Test, which limits how much you can earn while collecting early benefits. The earnings limit for early filers is \$23,400 for 2025 (changes yearly and, if that is exceeded, SS will take away some of your benefits (\$1 for every \$2 over the limit). They "take away" by withholding future payments until the penalty is satisfied.

That said, if you claim your personal SS "soon" (e.g., at age 65), you will get about 87% of the amount you would get by waiting until your FRA to claim. You would, indeed, get a "spousal boost" when your husband claims, but you would not get 50% of his age 67 amount. That's because of the way spouse benefits are calculated. When your husband claims, you will get

a "spousal boost" added to your early benefit amount (\$573?). The amount of that spousal boost will be computed as 1/2 of your husband's FRA amount (e.g., \$1663), minus your FRA entitlement (likely about \$661) for a spousal boost of about \$1002. But since you won't have yet reached your FRA when your husband claims, the amount of the spousal boost will also be reduced (to about \$926), which will be added to your age 65 amount of \$573 for a total monthly spousal benefit of about \$1499.

So, the answers to your two questions are:

Because you claimed your Social Security retirement benefit early and won't yet be your Full Retirement Age when your husband claims, you will not get half of your husband's benefit when he claims. You would likely get about 45% of his benefit.

If you take your own SS retirement benefit now, you will get a higher benefit when your husband claims, but the amount you get will be less than half of his FRA entitlement.

The only way you can get the full 50% of your husband's FRA benefit entitlement is to wait until your own full retirement age to claim Social Security.

The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.



Guest Column

Peach pits and preservation

My first experience with growing peaches was back at my parents' house when a peach pit sprouted in their compost pile.

The resulting tree was moved to a spot in the yard and within a few years, my parents became peach preservers. It was fun for them to "work on" the peaches together, and what I mean by this is blanching, peeling and quartering them, then putting the pieces in a container in syrup and freezing them.

Sure, it was a sticky mess of a time but worth it all to have this bounty in the dead of winter.

Fast forward 30 years to the present day and my mini orchard, deemed "the tiny place" when my kids were little. There I have three peach trees, all started from pits. Two trees were from my friend Eva and one I started on my own.

I planted the pits in my garden in the fall maybe 5 years ago. They went through the stratification process over the winter which helped to break dormancy. Gradually they would germinate over the spring and summer months.

Sometimes they need two winters to complete the process and still not all will germinate, I think the last time I had four or five out of a dozen pits pop up. One tree to keep and others to share!

This year's was the best peach harvest I've ever had on these trees. It was probably the combination of the last couple of wet summers encouraging new growth on the tree and then mild



weather this spring during bloom time.

It is always so disappointing to have the tree so beautifully in flower and then a couple nights of very cold weather come through to kill them all. I still didn't have what I would call a bumper harvest for three trees, but we had enough to can 17 quarts (thanks for the canning lesson, dear friend!) and also eat plenty of the fruit fresh off the tree.

Here are a few fun facts about our favorite fuzzy fruit.

Peach trees prefer soil that is near neutral to alkaline. I never think of liming under the trees, but maybe that would be a good idea.

Flower buds are borne only on shoots that grew the previous year. So it is important to prune your trees to encourage new growth.

Peach trees should be pruned to an open center, so that the sun can ripen the fruit. In our part of the country, prune when the tree is blossom or right after it is done flowering. At that point in the growing season you can also see and remove winter damaged branches and stems more easily but be careful not to knock off developing fruit by accident.

I read that spreading compost under the tree right after it has been harvested will start the tree out on the



right foot. I am going to get to that later this week.

Peach trees are not very long lived. You may get 10-20 years out of them. Trees usually top off at around ten feet tall and wide.

There are such a thing as super dwarf trees, grown as specimens in the shrub border or a kitchen garden, but from what I hear, fruit quality isn't the best. I'll stick to the regular size trees, thank you! And planning ahead with replacement trees means sowing some pits in the garden this fall. Even my mom has sown some around the foundation of her house, just as an experiment. I love that she is still experimenting. I would imagine the memories of "working on" the peaches with my dad hold a special place in her heart.

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.

Letter to the Editor

Cruel animal acts at The Big E should stop

Dear Editor:

The Big E should be a celebration of community, not a stage for animal suffering. Yet year after year, animals are still exploited there for entertainment. Fortunately The Big E has no circus animals this year, and thanks to "The Circus Bill", can never again have elephant rides. But many animals this year are still being exploited for entertainment.

At the Commerford & Sons petting zoo, ponies are

tethered tightly to a wheel, circling for 12 hours a day, 17 days in a row. Camels are forced to give ride after ride. Other animals spend their lives in trailers, never seeing daylight or companionship. This same company has racked up over 50 violations of the Animal Welfare Act, and in 2019, two of their elephants, Beulah and Karen, died prematurely. Beulah collapsed and died on day three. Commerford was treating her for a uterine

infection, which led to septicemia, (according to the USDA), yet was still on display at The Big E. Disturbing footage also showed another elephant limping and a camel collapsing in distress in 2018.

Pig racing adds more cruelty. Piglets endure frightening noise, repeated transport, and confinement in tiny cages. Ox and horse pulls force animals in heavy yokes to strain against concrete blocks while being

whipped and struck (even in the face) before crowds that include children.

I have attended The Big E since I was a child and want to see it thrive. But tradition should not come at the expense of compassion. I urge the organizers to end these cruel animal acts and join the many other fairs that have already embraced humane, family-friendly entertainment.

Thank you,
Sheryl Becker

Come meet the candidates

AGAWAM – Curious about who's on the ballot this year? Come meet them in person at Candidate's Night hosted by Agawam Public Library on Thursday, Sept. 25, from 6 to 8 p.m.

Each candidate will have a separate table so community members can visit with everyone individually to ask questions and have informal conversations.

Everyone is welcome, and there's no cost to attend.

Candidate Statement

Peter Smus announces re-election bid for City Councilor

Peter Smus has officially announced his candidacy for re-election to the Agawam City Council. Peter has completed his first two years in office and would like to continue to represent the Agawam residents. Peter said, "I have worked with the Sand for Seniors Program, sponsored by the sheriff's department, to aid the elderly residents by supplying them with sand in the winter months."

Smus went on to say, "I have supported our towns youth programs, and I have been available to the students and parents to listen to their needs." Councilor Smus has proven his capabilities in his first two years as councilor. He is always willing to be available to the Agawam residents to hear their concerns. Some of Councilor Smus' accomplishments are:

Veterans Advocate – Sup-

port the veterans with the relocation of the veterans green. Backer to the Friends of the Veterans. Promotes the Wreaths Across America program.

Education & Youth – Strongly supported and educated fellow Agawam residents about the value of a new high school building.

Tax/Water/Sewer – Without exception always voted to keep property taxes low

and aiding our Agawam residents who might need some help with property tax exemptions.

Councilor Smus co-sponsored a resolution supporting the passage of House bill No 4557, requiring local approval of battery storage facilities to protect the Agawam neighborhoods.

Councilor Smus co-sponsored a noise/contractor ordinance regulating machin-

ery noise in our community to adhere to our small-town values and qualities.

Councilor Smus said, "I would like the opportunity to continue to work with all Agawam residents and my fellow city councilors to improve our city's infrastructure, support new and old businesses, improve our fields and parks, strengthen services for our seniors, veterans, and students."



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Building Hope in Holyoke: Habitat, UMass and Housing Authority Partner to Create Affordable Home for Local Couple

By Brandice J. O'Brien

Marketing and Communications Manager, Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity

WEST SPRINGFIELD – Construction is underway and a Holyoke couple is one step closer to purchasing an affordable home from Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH).

Greater Springfield Habitat is working closely with Holyoke Housing Authority (HHA) and the University of Massachusetts DesignBuild program to make this opportunity possible for Pedro and Damaris. HHA donated the plot of land on Chestnut Street. UMass DesignBuild professors and students designed the modular home, are constructing it, and will oversee its delivery to the

Holyoke site. Upon its arrival, GSHFH, which prepared the site and built the foundation, will complete utility connections, landscaping, and install appliances.

"This is a great collaboration to give the students practical, hands-on experience, and for Habitat to provide a home to a family that might not have qualified for one of our traditionally built homes," said Aimee Giroux, GSHFH executive director. "Family size is one of many factors taken into consideration when building our homes and partnering with the future buyer. There is a need for affordable housing to benefit a variety of family sizes; not everyone needs three or four bedrooms. This project helps us to be able to make that happen."

The design of the 575-square-foot modular home emphasizes energy efficiency via highly-insulated and air-sealed exterior assemblies, triple-glazed windows, all-electric appliances/utilities, and low-embodied carbon building materials, such as wood fiber, hemp, and straw, said Ben Leinfelder, construction manager of this year's DesignBuild project and an alumnus of the program.

"We are chugging along right now and have our second group of students (the other half of the class) on the build site. It's been great to introduce these eight students to our construction site, the tools of the trade, and to show off what their classmates completed in the first six-week session," Ben said.

The decks and porch roof are framed and students are working on installing exterior trim and siding. Next up is drywall and siding.

"The challenge is keeping an eye on everything when I have pairs of students tackling different parts of the house and/or different kinds of tasks," Ben said. "As this is an educational experience, I try to give the students some space to problem solve on their own – even make mistakes (that we then fix) – but ultimately, we want this to be a high-quality house for Pedro and Damaris."

The house will feature design aspects specific to Pedro and Damaris, including a U-kitchen and interior stairs to the basement. The couple expressed a desire to one day finish the basement



Students from the University of Massachusetts DesignBuild program help construct the modular home that will be delivered to the Holyoke build site. SUBMITTED PHOTO

and turn it into a spare bedroom. By having an internal staircase, they have the ability to add more living space to the ground floor. The UMass DesignBuild team also allocated one of the donated windows to the lower level for that specific purpose.

"Every design is a matter of thinking about what would be most valuable within the given constraints," said Naomi Darling, a design studio professor at Mount Holyoke

College and the UMass Architecture Department. "We went back and forth between a bar kitchen and a U-kitchen. We ultimately decided on the U-kitchen because we understand both Pedro and Damaris really like to cook."

The house is expected to be finished in autumn. To learn more about Greater Springfield Habitat's homeownership program, visit habitat.org/holyoke to apply.

Upcoming events at Agawam Senior Center

AGAWAM – Here are some of the upcoming activities and events being held at the Agawam Senior Center.

Manicures with Jane The Six Components of Brain Health

Thursday, Sept. 11 at 1 p.m.

Join Russ Poe on Thursday, Sept. 11 at 1 p.m. for a Brain-savers Seminar.

Our multi-modal, evidence-based programs are dedicated to helping keep brains sharp and resilient through a brain and body healthy lifestyle that enriches lives and improves people's mental and physical fitness and overall well-being.

As the leading brain-fitness program in the world, we help the growing population of older adults enjoy life while reducing their risk of age-related cognitive decline and Alzheimer's disease.

How to Reduce your Spending with Berkshire Bank

Friday, Sept. 12 at 1 p.m.

This presentation may be helpful for those who: Desire more clarity on their short term financial plan, feel mo-

tivated to take action, but aren't quite sure where to start. Changes to our financial lives can often result in stress and mental fatigue, making decisions even more challenging.

We have a natural tendency to avoid choices that feel like we are giving something up. Instead, we may try our best to take each day as it comes without a plan. Setting a budget and developing a spending plan is a great way to relieve uncertainty and stress while also helping you to figure out how to meet both your short-term and long-term financial goals.

I will be passing out budgeting worksheets and a spending tracker. The discussion will be around: Determining your spending, setting your priorities, developing a spending plan, reducing your spending and tips for success. Join Berkshire Bank for this educational seminar, treats will be provided.

Hearing Checks Available

Thursday, Sept. 18

The next New Ears hearing care clinic will take place

on Thursday, Sept. 18. 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.

"The Power of Self-Discipline: Taking Control of Your Life"

Thursday, Sept. 25 at 1 p.m.

Join Guest Speaker, Raymond Rose, for an engaging and practical 45-minute seminar that explores the life-changing benefits of self-discipline. Whether you're looking to improve your health, finances, relationships, or productivity, this event will give you tools and motivation to stay fo-

cused and achieve your goals. Join us on Thursday, Sept. 25 1 p.m. at the Agawam Senior Center's Garden Room at 954 Main Street.

- Learn practical strategies to build better habits and break bad ones
- Discover how self-discipline impacts success in every area of life

- Receive tools to manage time, resist distractions, and stay motivated
- Walk away with a personal action plan you can implement immediately

To reserve your seat, email KLynch@agawam.ma.us or call 413.821.0604.

TD BANK Safe Security Awareness

Monday, Sept. 29 at 1 p.m.

Please join us for an informational session on strategies to avoid scams and financial exploitations. It is important to protect yourself from financial fraud and identity theft. Hear about the latest scams and how to protect yourself. Keep your assets safe. Call 821-0604 to register.

Cooper's accepting supplies for Homework House

AGAWAM – From now through Sept. 14, Cooper's Gifts, Apparel, Home of Agawam, Mass., is accepting classroom supplies donations for Homework House, a nonprofit organization located at 54 North Summer Street Holyoke, MA 01040.

"We invite everyone to help Homework House. Those that donate are entered for the chance to win a \$100 Cooper's gift card," said Kate Gourde, owner of Cooper's Gifts, Apparel, Home.

Homework House strengthens our community by promoting educational success and providing free tutoring and mentoring for children living in economically disadvantaged



Cooper's Gifts is now accepting supply donations to benefit Homework House. Drop off donations between now and Sept. 14. SUBMITTED PHOTO

neighborhoods. Homework House provides a safe and nurturing place for children to grow and learn. Acceptable supplies includes disinfectant wipes, facial tissues, paper towels, copy paper, dry erase markers and erasers. Donations will be collected at Cooper's for a limited time.

More information on the Round Up program and how to nominate a charity may be found on Cooper's website www.coopersgifts.com/round-up/.

Registration open for Run Stanley 5K

WESTFIELD – Come run, stroll and roll. Stanley Park will be hosting the 13th Annual Run Stanley which has grown into a fun yearly tradition for the whole family, whether they like to run, walk, roll, or bark. Join us for this all-inclusive event on Sunday, Oct. 5 at 10 a.m. at Stanley Park. This event includes the 5K trail run/walk, a 5K K9 trail run/walk, the Munchkin Run hosted by Dunkin' Donuts, and The Stroll & Roll. The Stroll & Roll is a wheel friendly 1-mile non-competitive walkthrough Stanley Park's accessible pathways.

There is also the Stanley Cup School Spirit trophy for the school with the most participation in Run Stanley. Form a team and get friends and family involved. When you register, be sure to enter your school name.

Run Stanley 2025 continues our fundraising efforts to benefit the care of the Frank Stanley Beverage Wildlife Sanctuary. Please join the community of runners, walkers, hikers, dog owners, and nature lovers of all ages who care about Stanley Park for a fun event that will help to improve the safety and accessibility of its wildlife trails.

Registration is now open. You can register by going to <https://runsignup.com/Race/MA/Westfield/RunStanley>

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| 4. Engine additive | 31. Blue | 2. Show up | 31. Schenectady County Airport |
| 7. Macaws | 32. One of the Fab Four | 3. Capital of Taiwan | 32. Calm down |
| 8. Listens to | 39. Formula 1 team | 4. Ocean | 33. Partner to cheese |
| 10. Self-righteously moralistic person | 41. Dash | 5. Givers and _____ | 34. Cola brand |
| 12. Made of wood | 42. Lifting device | 6. Gets ready | 35. Stepped on |
| 13. Chinese lute | 43. Basics | 8. Ad _____ | 36. Japanese city |
| 14. Beginning military rank | 44. Keyboard key | 9. Fit of irritation | 37. Type of coating |
| 16. Indicates near | 45. Old Irish alphabet | 11. Criminal organization | 38. A citizen of Yemen |
| 17. Ties the score | 46. Shaking of the Earth's surface | 14. Exclamation that denotes disgust | 39. Popular breakfast item corned beef _____ |
| 19. Chum | 48. Covered stadium | 15. American state | 40. On a line at right angles to a ship's length |
| 20. Long ago | 49. Sword handles | 18. Sensor hub | 44. First responders |
| 21. Localities | 50. Longing or yearning | 19. Before | 47. Short-term memory |
| 25. Midway between northeast and east | 51. Creators' social network | 20. The boundary of a surface | |
| 26. Make fun of | 52. Boxing's GOAT | 22. Witnesses | |
| 27. Tennis great Arthur | | 23. Singular | |
| | | 24. Type of meal | |
| | | 27. Music awards show | |



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SPORTS

Early goals lift Agawam

AGAWAM – Last Thursday afternoon, Agawam girls soccer got first half goals from Victoria Papova and Kylie Warner on their way to a 2-0 shutout of visiting Chicopee Comprehensive. The combi-

nation of Talia Oliveira and Kayleen Sullivan made four saves for the shutout. Comp's Julianna LaFond made eight saves in the defeat. Chicopee Comp is 1-1 to start the season. Agawam is 1-0.



Kylie Warner tries to get around a Comp defender.



Madalynn Fluery traps the ball before heading toward the goal.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Gabriella Ramos makes a throw-in.



Bella Santaniello crosses the ball toward the Chicopee Comp goal.

Brownies fall to Falcons, rebound with pair of wins

AGAWAM – It was a busy opening week for Agawam High School girls volleyball, but the Brownies were up for the challenge after a tough opening loss. After losing to Minnechaug 3-1 last Tuesday,

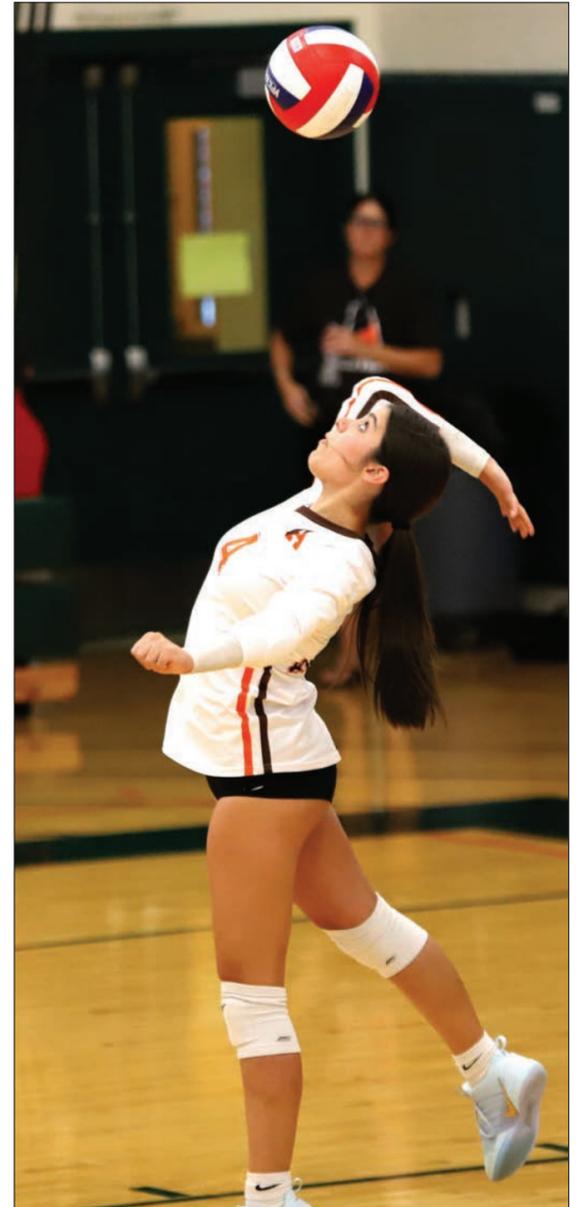
the Brownies scored wins on consecutive days defeating Westfield 3-1 on Sept. 4 followed by a 3-0 win over West Springfield on Sept. 5. With a 2-1 record, Agawam faces Longmeadow on Sept. 12.



Sophia Laprise goes for the backwards hit.



Hannah Jock sends the serve away. TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Above, Mia Atkins goes for the hit. Left, Lailah Thee sends a hit toward the net.

Sports



The boys cross country race takes off.

Brownies win two in quad meet

AGAWAM – Last Wednesday afternoon at Robinson State Park, Agawam scored

wins over Chicopee Comprehensive and Chicopee High while falling to Northampton

in boys cross country action. The girls defeated both Chicopee Comp and Chicopee

High. Stats from the race were not available by press time.



Violet Pryce was the top female finisher for the Brownies.
TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Andrew Bagley finishes first for the Brownies.



Carter Woodrum was a third-place finisher for Agawam.



Jack Sullivan finished second the Brownies.

Ty Leclerc, Todd Patnode split a pair of Modified main event wins

WINCHESTER, N.H. - Teen Ty Leclerc is for real and so too is a slightly older guy named Todd Patnode. The potent pair split a pair of 35-lap Modified main events Saturday night at Monadnock Speedway, with each backing up his dash to victory lane with a strong third-place performance in the second feature event.

Other winners Saturday on the high banks of the Great Race Place included Super Street hot shoe Zach Zilinski, who won for the second time this summer and Gordon Farnum, Farnum, who jumped into the Swanzy Oil ride mid-season, won for the third week in a row and fourth time this summer.

While points aren't kept in the youth Young Guns division, 2025 will be remembered as the year of Hunter Duquette. The Bay State teen

scored his track-high seventh win Saturday. And in the Six Shooters, defending track king Michael Yeaton moved to the top of the leader board with his second win of the summer.

Leclerc started up front alongside Andrew Brousseau as the Allstates Material Group 604 Modifieds went to war in the night's first of two 35-lap features. The Taunton, Mass. star, who'd scored his first career win just three weeks earlier, jumped all over the opening lead and never looked back.

Top gun Tyler Leary raced most of the way in Leclerc's shadow but could never find a path around the flying teen.

Patnode was quickly up to Leary's bumper but could advance no farther, settling for the bronze medal finish and setting his sights on a bigger

prize in the nightcap.

With the top eight then inverted to start round number two, top points man Brian Robie, who entered Saturday night's twins with four wins already this summer, took charge on lap two. Patnode, though, firing from row three, led by a foot as the two former champs hit the stripe on lap four and then held strong to beat Robie to the checkers by a single length. Leclerc, blasting off from row four, was strong in third.

While Robie was winless on the night, he and his potent Bar Harbor Bank and Trust ride still holds a commanding 64-point lead in the race to the 2025 604 Modified championship, with only two remaining races this season.

Michael Lashua, stronger and better every week, led the first eight laps of the Twin

State Truck Services Super Street feature. Zach Zilinski, though, wasn't about to let him get away, low-lining into the lead in turn two and then holding off a blockbuster cast to score his second win of the season.

Zilinski had to first hold off Erik Smith, and then JD Stockwell, as the presence of five-time winner Dylan Zullo moved closer and closer from his row four starting spot. Zullo rocketed into second on lap 16 but, on this night, had to settle for second, taking the checkers glued to Zilinski's bumper as he continued his march toward a first-time title. Stockwell finished his strong night's work in third, with two other previous 2025 winners, Chris Riendeau and Smith rounding out the top five.

Reigning Brattleboro Tow-

ing and Recovery Pure Stock champ Andrea St. Amour started up front in Saturday night's 25-lap feature and immediately took charge. While she had a swarm of top contenders at her heels, the biggest thing to keep her from cruising into victory lane was coming like a heat-seeking missile from way back in row five.

Gobbling up positions from any lane he chose, Farnum took fourth on lap six, third on lap nine, and sailed past points leader Kyle Kenny two laps later. St. Amour was next. Taking the lead low along the front chute as lap 13 went into the books. He sped off into the sunset to win for the third week in a row. St. Amour and Carlos Grenier, staged a terrific battle for the second spot, with St. Amour prevailing to earn the run-

nerup hardware. Jimmy Zellman was fourth on the night, and fifth went to Addison Brooks.

Hunter Duquette made easy work of powering to win number seven in the Doug's Auto Body Young Guns Saturday. Leading all the way in the caution-free 15-lapper, he romped to victory after earlier winning his heat. Ella Grabowski impressed in second, and Maya Bell was third.

Michael Yeaton and Travis Hollins were tied atop the Six Shooter leader board entering Saturday's third outing of the season. Not anymore. Like he'd done a few weeks ago at Claremont, Yeaton, the reigning king of the Six Shooters on the high banks, blasted off to win by a country mile Saturday. Hollins was second, and first-timer Jeff Staiti came home third.

Springfield T-Birds support charity ride

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds announced today their continued support of the annual Ride to Remember, contributing a donation of \$2,500, hundreds of team hats for participants, and a specially designed custom Thunderbirds jersey honoring Aaron Pelletier, Connecticut State Police Trooper First Class, whose memory will be honored at this year's event. The Ride to Remember took place on Sept. 6, bringing together riders from across the region to honor and remember fallen police officers and firefighters.

"The Thunderbirds are truly honored to once again join together in sup-

port of Springfield's Ride to Remember in 2025," said Springfield Thunderbirds President Nathan Costa. "This event speaks to the values that mean so much to us as an organization – honoring service, remembering sacrifice, and standing with our Western Mass community. It's a privilege to stand alongside the families, participants, and first responders who give this tradition its heart and meaning."

Now in its 14th year, the Ride to Remember unites hundreds of cyclists as they ride from Springfield to Hartford.

Proceeds from the event support the families of fall-

en officers and firefighters and ensure their legacy is carried forward.

The Thunderbirds' contribution is part of the team's longstanding commitment to community impact. Alongside their donation and custom jersey, the Thunderbirds will continue to engage in initiatives that support local organizations and causes that strengthen Western Massachusetts.

Community members are encouraged to come out tomorrow to cheer on the riders and learn more about the Ride to Remember here, and to follow the Thunderbirds' community initiatives at www.SpringfieldThunderbirds.com.

Open roster spots remain in Quabbin Fall League

SOUTH HADLEY – After successful recruiting, the Quabbin Valley Baseball League has reached a decision to expand this year's fall league to six teams.

With the expansion, there are still some open roster spots for players who are age 28 and older. The league was set to get underway with its Sunday schedule beginning on Sunday, Sept. 7.

But games were postponed due to rain. The season will now begin on Sunday, Sept. 14.

All players in the league will get to experience an eight-game slate with the cost in the range of \$45 to \$60 depending on the num-

ber of players on the team. The cost reflects paying for insurance, umpires, baseballs, and fields.

Primary fields being used this fall include Mittenague in West Springfield and Beachgrounds Park in South Hadley, with a third field being finalized this week.

Players potentially interested in participating in the league this year, don't wait to sign-up.

Go to www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org and click on the registration page. If you have more questions, you can contact the league's co-coordinators at gscibel12@yahoo.com or ikhandfield@gmail.com

The Quabbin Valley Baseball League is an over-28 baseball league playing games during the spring and summer in Western Massachusetts.

The league recently expanded to offer an over-28 fall league to allow players in the age range to face like competition during the fall months.

There were four teams last year, and the league is expanding due to higher interest in its second year.

The tradition of fall league is to play with wood bats only. The league has nine-inning games and participants are guaranteed time in the field for at least four innings.

TRASH ■ from page 1

the Agawam/W.Springfield Bridge,” DeMaio said. “It helped the drivers complete routes more efficiently, not having to wait in traffic that has historically been heavy along Main, Suffield, Springfield, Meadow, School Street and River Road.”

She said the usual ask is for bins to be out by the road by 6:30 a.m.

“So we are just asking for a bit earlier than usual,” DeMaio said.

The Big E will be in taking place on Sept. 12, then weekdays affected will be Sept. 15-19 and then Sept. 22-26.

Normal collection times will resume on Monday, Sept. 29.

Thursdays and Fridays as well as the weekends are the biggest times where traffic backups can be felt by residents nearby the Big E. Agawam Day is also a big draw, and that takes place on Wednesday, Sept. 24.

Last year, the Big E recorded multiple days of record attendance and the current weather forecast, as of press time, is showing ideal temperatures in the 70’s and little rain over the next week.

Coming Along



The new grass is coming in Shea Park. Efforts to completely re-seed the 90-foot baseball diamond at the park began last month. Grass is now growing nicely on the field, which is used primarily by Agawam High School’s junior varsity baseball team, then by multiple youth and adult recreational leagues. The fields were shut down for use at the beginning of August through the rest of the fall to allow the new grass to grow in.

Friends of the MA Veterans Memorial Cemetery to meet

AGAWAM – The Friends of the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Agawam announce their upcoming meeting. The public is welcome to attend.

The meeting will take place Wednesday, Sept. 17 at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for the 6 p.m. meeting. For easy access, enter the lower level through the back entrance.

The organization is now accepting nominations for the 7-member, 2026 Board of Directors. All nominations must be submitted by the date of the meeting or in person during the meeting. Self-nominations are welcome. If you are self-nominating, you may provide a short bio with your submission. To submit nominations prior to the meeting, use the Contact Us section in the footer of the website at: <https://www.agawamfriends.org/>.

Please contact the organization with any questions via <https://www.agawamfriends.org/> or email agawamfriends@gmail.com.

E-BIKES ■ from page 1

ed by a child that was riding an e-bike came down and whipped around a blind corner on the wrong side of the road. It was within a heartbeat a direct collision of the car and this person. Luckily they were both able to swerve and avoid disaster.”

Her statement to the city council was meant to implore parents and families due to the back-to-school season and the expected increase of e-bike ridership in the city.

“Please make sure your children know to obey the rules of the road starting on staying on the right side of the road,” she said. “Drivers,

keep your eyes open and slow down. This is something that is fairly new in our town, I don’t remember ever seeing the number of electric bikes, especially in my section in Feeding Hills as I have over the summer. Sometimes kids get a little fun with their friends and show off and they have to be careful out there. I am really here as a thank you to this council for recognizing this is an issue.”

Based on the Agawam City Facebook page, a previous post reviewed the rules and regulations of e-bikes and what parents should know before they head out for a ride.

“Do you know the Massachusetts laws? Let’s keep

your kids safe and on the right side of the rules! E-bikes are electric bicycles with motors to help you go faster. Massachusetts recognizes two types, class 1: Motor works only when pedaling, max 20 mph and class 2: A throttle to engage the motor, max 20 mph. Both must have working pedals. The key rules for e-bikes are that drivers follow regular bike rules, but never ride on sidewalks or bike paths. If there are no pedals or it’s faster than 20 mph, it’s not an e-bike, it’s a moped or motorcycle requiring a driver’s license (16 years plus), vehicle registration, and a DOT-approved helmet for all ages.”

The post continued stat-

ing that the Agawam Police are seeing a rise in e-bikes and electric dirt bikes that don’t follow the law. If they lack pedals, go too fast, or aren’t registered, riders could face fines, have their vehicle impounded, or get in trouble for unlicensed riding. The post ended by saying, “Let’s keep Agawam kids safe and having fun!”

Agawam has been a leading community in establishing more bike lanes throughout the community. During several of the recent road projects, dedicated bike lanes have been installed. The town has pursued several “Complete Streets” grants in order to add more bike lanes.

Meet the candidates on Sept. 25

AGAWAM – Curious about who’s on the ballot this year? Come meet them in person at Candidate’s Night hosted by Agawam Public Library on Thursday, Sept. 25, from 6 to 8 p.m.

This special community event is your chance to connect directly with candidates for public office, hear about their priorities, and ask the questions that matter most to you. It’s an open, friendly forum designed to help neighbors learn together and feel confident heading into the upcoming election.

“Libraries bring people

together, and Candidate’s Night is a wonderful way to do just that,” said Library Director, Nancy Siegel. “We’re excited to welcome the community for an evening of conversation and civic engagement.”

Each candidate will have a separate table so community members can visit with everyone individually to ask questions and have informal conversations.

Everyone is welcome, and there’s no cost to attend. No registration is required—just stop by, bring your questions, and be part of the conversation.

Public Notices

AGAWAM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St., Agawam, MA. on **Monday, September 22, 2025 at 6:30pm.** for all parties interested in the request of Verizon Wireless and Diamond Communications, LLC, who is seeking a Variance from the Town of Agawam’s Zoning Ordinances, Ch.180, Section 97(K) to allow for the construction of a telecommunications tower with less than the required minimum distance from regularly occupied buildings and from any property line and/or street line at the premises identified as 580 Main Street.

Doreen A. Prouty, Chairperson Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals 09/04, 09/11/2025

AGAWAM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS LEGAL ADVERTISEMENT LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St., Agawam, MA. on

Monday, September 22, 2025 at 7PM for all parties interested in the request of Verizon Wireless and Diamond Communications, LLC, which is seeking a Special Permit in accordance with the Town of Agawam’s Zoning Ordinances, Chapter 180, Sections 90-103 (Article XIV) to allow for the installation of a wireless communication facility at the premises identified as 580 Main Street.

Doreen A. Prouty, Chairperson Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals 09/04, 09/11/2025

**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.
HD25P1833EA
Estate of:
Teresa Fioroni
Date of Death: 03/30/2008
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 **Donald V Fioroni 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: **Donald V Fioroni 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 09/24/2025. 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: September 03, 2025
Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate 09/11/2025

**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.
HD25P1844EA**

**Estate of:
Raphael X Medina
Date of Death: 02/09/2024
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION**

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Daisy Cruz of Agawam, 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: **Daisy Cruz of Agawam, 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 10/02/2025. 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: September 04, 2025
Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate 09/11/2025

Agawam Advertiser News
OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

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

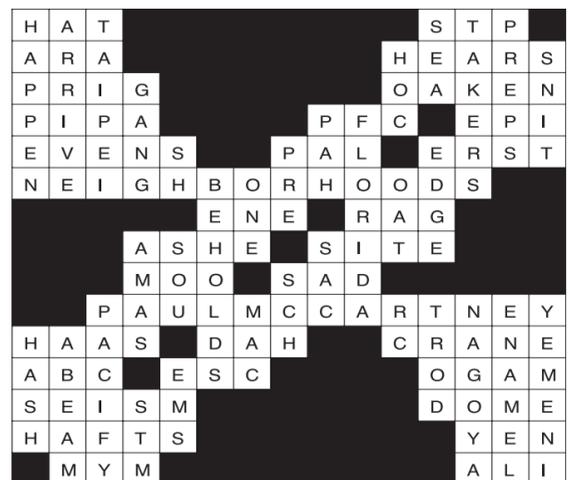
Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts’ public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Mondays at noon, Fridays noon for Monday holidays.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com



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We have a TON of items, including new and used clothing, shoes, coats, home decor, kitchen supplies (dishes, serving platters, etc.), chandeliers, laptops, and dog supplies (clothing, collars, etc.), board games, wood, tents and camping gear, and many, many, many other things. FREE chicken coops and misc supplies!!! Clothing: XS-XXL Female Shoes: 7.5-8.5

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FOR RENT

All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.
This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development " HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

BHN looking to raise awareness for mental health

SPRINGFIELD – Behavioral Health Network, Inc. (BHN) is working to raise awareness of the availability of timely access to mental health and substance use support at its BHN WellBeing Community Behavioral Health Centers (CBHCs) and Behavioral Health Urgent Care (BHUC) centers, with the offering of extended weekday and weekend hours across multiple locations in Agawam, Holyoke, Ware, Springfield and Westfield.

BHN WellBeing Com-

munity Behavioral Health Centers in Springfield (395 and 417 Liberty Street) and Westfield (77 Mill Street), along with its Behavioral Health Urgent Care Centers in Agawam, Ware, and two locations in Holyoke, provide in-person and telehealth services with evening hours during the week. Saturday hours are available at most locations on a rotating basis, and the Springfield and Westfield CBHCs are also open on Sundays—helping to meet the needs of individ-

uals and families across the region.

The centers are designed to support individuals experiencing changes in thoughts, feelings, or behaviors that may be causing distress and require timely attention. Whether someone is navigating a mental health challenge or a substance use concern, BHN provides a welcoming space for evaluation and support. No referral is needed, and many symptoms that may not feel “urgent” still qualify for care.

Services include same or next-day evaluations, psychopharmacology and addiction medication appointments within 72 hours, and follow-up appointments within 14 calendar days. Individuals experiencing emergency symptoms with immediate risk of harm to themselves or others should call the state crisis line at 988 or BHN emergency services at (413) 301-WELL (9355).

Routine and urgent care hours and locations are as follows:

- BHN WellBeing Centers (395 and 417 Liberty Street, Springfield and 77 Mill Street, Westfield): Monday - Friday, 8am - 8pm; and Saturday and Sunday, 9am - 5pm.

- Agawam Counseling Center (30 Southwick Street, Feeding Hills): Monday - Friday, 8am - 8pm, Saturday (2nd and 4th each month), 9am - 1pm

- City Clinic (230 Maple Street, Holyoke): Monday - Friday, 8am - 6pm, Saturday (1st & 3rd each month), 8am - 12:00 pm

- Mt. Tom Center (40 Bobola Road, Holyoke): Monday - Friday, 8am - 8pm, Saturday (2nd & 4th each month), 9am-1pm

- Valley Human Services (96 South Street, Ware): Monday - Friday, 8am - 8pm, Saturday (1st & 2nd each month), 9am-1pm

BHN also offers 24/7, 365 days per year crisis support at (413) 301-WELL (9355). For more information about BHN's urgent care and crisis services, go to bhninc.org/wellbeing.

Quabbin Days: Celebrating the Beauty and Heritage of the Quabbin Region

BELCHERTOWN – This fall, the Friends of the Quabbin invite residents and visitors alike to discover the beauty, history, and importance of the Quabbin Reservoir during Quabbin Days (www.quabbindays.org), a celebration of the region's role as both a critical drinking water supply and one of New England's most scenic outdoor destinations. Quabbin Days will be held the holiday weekend of Oct. 10 to 13.

Taking place in the Quabbin Region (www.quabbindays.org/quabbinregion), which is made up of the dozen towns in the Quabbin Watershed, Quabbin Days is a community-driven initiative designed to raise awareness

about the Quabbin as the primary water source for 2.7 million Massachusetts residents, and a breathtaking landscape that offers world-class hiking, fishing, birdwatching, and photography opportunities.

“Most people don't realize that one of the most pristine and carefully protected water supplies in the country is also an incredible place to explore,” said Ed Comeau of the Friends of the Quabbin. “Quabbin Days is about encouraging people to connect with this resource as a place of remarkable natural beauty and cultural history by exploring the Quabbin Trail (www.quabbindays.org/quabbintrail) that connects these towns.”

Held during the peak of fall foliage season, October 10 to 13, Quabbin Days encourages towns, businesses, and organizations within the Quabbin Region to host events, walks, tours, and open houses that spotlight what this area has to offer. Participation is informal and flexible: anyone can contribute an event, and visitors can plan their own adventures through www.QuabbinDays.org, which offers a calendar and interactive map.

The Quabbin Reservoir, created in the 1930s, is one of the largest man-made public water supplies in the United States.

To learn more, plan your visit, or submit an event, visit www.QuabbinDays.org.

BBB: Help for shopping for school tech

Though its role in the classroom will continue to evolve, technology is now a critical component of education. If you're shopping for technology for the upcoming school year, BBB has tips to help.

Market research firm Deloitte details how educational shifts influence consumer shopping habits. In 2025, Deloitte reports that tech products will make up 26% of the share of total spending on back-to-school shopping.

With this in mind, scammers may target shoppers with phony deals, enticing ads, and attractive but fake websites. Savvy online shopping is necessary to ensure you don't fall prey to a scam.

BBB offers these tips for buying tech products:

- Shop with familiar retailers. Laptops, tablets, and oth-

er tech accessories can be a significant investment. Shop with businesses you know and trust to ensure you get a quality product and good customer service. Search BBB.org to find BBB Accredited Businesses.

- Watch out for impostors. Impostor scams are increasingly common when it comes to online shopping. Fraudsters may use the name, logo, and other characteristics of well-known brands to create lookalike websites and fake social media ads.

- Approach significantly low prices with caution. Low prices and short-term sales could signal you've encountered a scam. If the price seems too good to be true, it probably is.

- Some companies rarely offer sales. Do more research if a company that rarely dis-

counts products offers a huge sale. The products may be used or refurbished, or the website could be fake.

- Know what you're shopping for. Set a budget, identify what capabilities will benefit your student, and compare your options. Then, shop around for a reliable seller.

- Ensure you know who the seller is. Some big box retailers allow third-party sellers to list items on their sites, and those items can be hard to distinguish from the rest. Read all the fine print to ensure you're comfortable with the seller.

- Finish your shopping early. Supply shortages are possible, especially as many consumers begin shopping for the same products. Do your shopping now to avoid paying higher prices or falling victim to a scam.



Above: Many people gathered at the Red Carpet event for Family Lockup. Right: Sheriff Nick Cocchi does an introduction to the screening.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY BRENDAN ROONEY



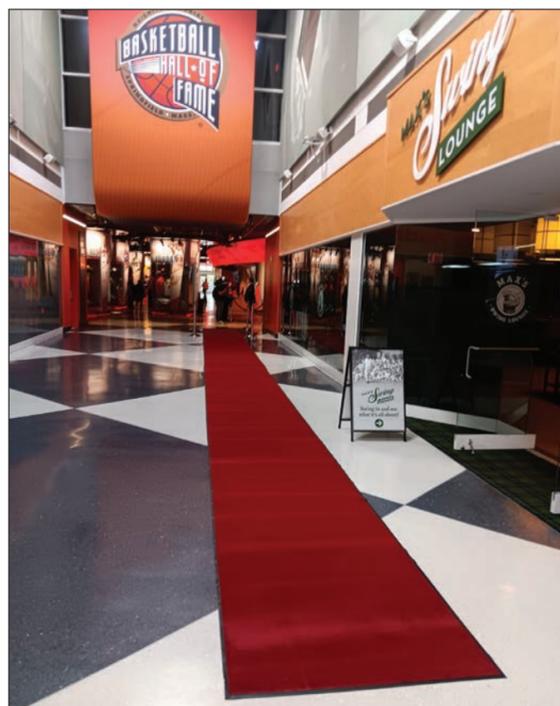
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Hampden County Sheriff's Office. I then discovered that the HCSO, for decades, has been focused on these larger questions and trends of looking at detention as, yes, our fundamental role is to make sure folks can come and safely face trial," Henry revealed. Before adding, "While we have them here, what can we do?"

Henry then noted that he felt something different and unique about the Hampden County Jail that gave birth to the overall thought. "We sort of put the idea as what it would be for a TV show, but it was really built over the course of multiple conversations with Rob (Rizzuto) and Sheriff Cocchi over what that might look like," he said. "Because I think at the end of the day, as a storyteller, I'm trying to parse out all these different pieces of the system because for me, the story of detention and incarceration is the story of us, and as a whole, the story of America," said Henry. "So, to greenlight this process was quite easy because everyone involved agreed to make this a reality."

Before the official screening, Cocchi took a moment of reflection centered around the impact on Hampden County, now elevated to a pedestal of national and critical acclaim.

"I can tell you this is a very special night for the Hampden County Sheriff's Office, but also I think not just for our staff but the citizens of Hampden County as well,"



Cocchi confessed. "It costs a lot of money to incarcerate an individual these days, and we want the public to know that we are trying to be as respectful and honest to those taxpayers' dollars as possible." He then provided a small sample of what the series is about.

"This series shows that we won't give up on anybody, it shows that if you're doing time in a county jail facility, one day you will return to the community from which you came, which is our neighborhoods and backyards," Cocchi said. "So we want folks to understand we are doing everything we can on the side of

public safety to return someone back to the community that is more productive, law-abiding, and less likely to be destructive and vandalizing our home. So it's this family reunification piece that is anchored by statistics showing that when family support is involved upon release back into the community, recidivism rates drop tremendously." He mentioned that the families in this case are the victims living in the shadow of the offender, who is their loved one, currently incarcerated, which leaves a strained sense of peace, due to the frequency of criminal infractions transpiring.



Left: The entrance to the red carpet event for Family Lockup. Above: A poster of Family Lockup Series

"It wears on you, and quite frankly, family members will tell us the best night of sleep they got was when their loved one went to jail, and let it be known they love them still, but they couldn't deal with the everyday chaos of what was happening to the family's structural climate," Cocchi admitted. "We also understand not everyone is going to succeed, as part of going back to the community after incarceration, but our job is to raise these people and give them a little bit of hope," he said. "So this whole series is about reenergizing the offender as they are about to go back into the community, while letting them know we are with you. Because we are going to walk with you, stand by you, and understand we want you to be the person you deserve to be."

He then confessed that the outside presence from

the production unit and partners at A&E helped capture the 'essence' of the Hampden County Sheriff's Office, which he revealed was a concern when the project was being discussed.

"When you allow people to come in unscripted, they can video what they want, report on what they see, and in the end, you run a risk of whatever they catch is what's presented," Cocchi noted. "But if I were honest in the conversations during pre-filming, we admitted we weren't worried about that transparency, we are proud of what we do, and the story they (Lucky 8 and Monami Productions) told over these ten episodes only further complements the men and women from the Hampden County Sheriff's Office, as their compassion, professionalism, and respect are on full display, and reflect the hardwork for the entirety of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts," said Cocchi.

As the night carried on, a sense of pride filled the room as Mayor Sarno unveiled his thoughts about what this means to the identity of Hampden County, along with the work being reinforced by Sheriff Cocchi.

"This just highlights how many lives that are not only able to be saved, but also families that are now able to be reunited, because sometimes you have to give that tough love, for a second chance, and Sheriff Cocchi will give you a way to move forward, as not only a way to provide

for your family and yourself, but also get back into the community," Sarno said. "Former HCS Mike (Ashe) was the godfather who started all of this 40 years ago, and now Sheriff Cocchi has put his own vision and mark on this program, and I can't say enough about our friendship and the work being done for the citizens of Hampden County; it's remarkable."

Offering similar sentiments to leadership put forth by Cocchi was Ashe, who felt it was a huge honor to be viewed nationally.

The last person to reflect on the overall filming process and the impact of Hampden County taking center stage was Patrick Devine, Assistant Deputy Superintendent at Hampden County Sheriff's Office.

"I think in terms of this, it shows the good we work to do, while breaking down the stigma of what correctional officers are, and I feel A&E depicted us in a good light and put a spotlight on our community," Devine said.

The last part of the night was a private screening that allowed attendees to witness the 2nd episode of the series, which saw Cocchi offer an ode of respect and gratitude to Sheriff Ashe, along with all those who came before solidifying that this series is dedicated to the foundation and hard work put by everyone who had a role to play throughout the creation of the Hampden County Sheriff's Office, before receiving a unanimous standing ovation.