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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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Jeromie Whalen shares the story of his late brother, Christopher, who died by suicide in February.

TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

'Out of the Darkness' Community Walk draws hundreds of participants

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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AGAWAM – Hundreds gathered at School Street Park on Oct. 25 for the 2025 Out of the Darkness Community Walk in support of raising awareness for suicide prevention.

The annual event featured a Honor Bead Ceremony

with community members sharing their stories and wearing a color sharing their connection to the cause whether the loss of a child or spouse to a personal struggle or attempt, remarks from American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Massachusetts Chapter Event Co-Chairs Karen Carreira and Lyndsey Nunes, State Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Spring-

field) and State Sen. John Velis (D-Westfield), community resource tents including free hugs and information on the 988 hotline, raffle prizes, music overseen by a DJ at Siagel Productions, hope seeds given out by youth volunteers during the walk itself and more.

As each honor bead was presented, participants also lifted their own to show their

personal connection to the cause.

In 2024,

Fundraising from this walk has helped support mental health first aid training in schools including in Ludlow, South Hadley, Chicopee, Monson, Palmer and Ware, local colleges includ-

WALK | page 10

Voters to decide on legislative boards

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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yiema, Peter McNair, and Christine Rickmon.

AGAWAM – This Tuesday, polls will be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. at the town's eight voting precincts where the next city council and school committee will be decided.

The ballot this year will feature 16 candidates for the Agawam City Council, including all 11 of the current councilors running for re-election this year. The list includes Council President Rosemary Sandlin and Vice President Anthony Russo. Last election's leading vote-getter Ed Borgatti, a first-time councilor, will run for a second term as well.

The rest of the sitting councilors are: George Bitzas, Thomas Hendrickson, Dino Mercadante, Robert Rossi, Gerald Smith, Peter Smus, Anthony Suffriti, and Maria Valego.

Borgatti, Smus, and Valego were elected for the first time to the city council in 2023.

Those three seats became open with the retirement of longtime councilor Paul Cavallo and the departures of Christopher Johnson and Cecilia Calabrese, who both ran for mayor.

Johnson's former opponent, Calabrese, will be among six challenging the incumbents for one of the 11 seats on the city council. Calabrese is the only former councilor running for a seat.

Other challengers are Richard Borsari, Uduak En-

All six sitting school committee members are also running for re-election. The seventh seat on the committee is occupied by the mayor. The mayor serves as the automatic chair of the school committee.

AJ Christopher, Shelley Borgatti-Reed, Dawn DeMatteo, Catherine McDougal, Michael Perry, and Wendy Rua all had their papers certified by the deadline.

Their only challenger for one of the six seats on the committee is Heather Zielenski.

No primaries were needed for this year's election.

The general election will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 4 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. with polling locations at the town's schools. Each school hosts a particular ward with the exception of Clark School, which hosts two wards, six and eight.

The mayor is only race that is uncontested. Johnson won the mayor's seat by a wide margin over Calabrese two years ago, and is now running for his second term since returning to the top office. Johnson was the town's first mayor in 1990 and held the seat for 10 years. He also had seven terms as a city council, six of them as the council president.

Johnson is the only unopposed candidate in the election this year. No one besides

VOTERS | page 14

ZBA question does not make it to ballot

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM – One item that will not be on next week's election ballot will be a ballot question asking residents if they want to expand the current membership of the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Mayor Christopher Johnson's office confirmed this week that the ballot question did not make it through the legislation in enough time for it to be included on the 2025

municipal election ballot.

"Despite the best efforts of our state legislators, we couldn't get the ballot question approved in time for the November election," Johnson said. "Our legislators did their best, but there simply was not enough time."

Zoning Board of Appeals has been in the limelight from time-to-time when residents or businesses have come forward seeking special permits variances that are often against typical zon-

ing bylaws. Decisions of the ZBA then become controversial depending on which way they go.

Councilors George Bitzas, Anthony Russo, and Anthony Suffriti proposed the expansion of the board, which passed through the council earlier this year.

The proposal suggests there would be five members on the ZBA and they would be elected each January to three-year terms. The re-election of the five members

would be staggered.

The proposal does not say whether alternates would continue to be selected.

Massachusetts General Laws allow for ZBAs to consist of three or five members. In the case of the Town of Agawam, the city council is responsible for bringing forward candidates and voting on them.

The current members of the ZBA are Chair Doreen

ZBA | page 14

Council agrees to loan for golf carts at municipal course

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM – After being satisfied with several concerns being addressed, the Agawam City Council unanimously approved a request to purchase new golf carts for the Agawam Municipal Golf Course.

Councilor Anthony Suffriti said the Finance Committee asked several questions of Mayor Christopher Johnson, and made a 5-0 recommendation.

Johnson spoke to the entire council, explaining his reasoning for the purchase

and the loan from the town's capital stabilization fund.

"As I explained to the Finance Committee," Johnson said. "The golf courses' fleet is nearing the end of its lease. About 10% of the carts are out of service at a given time due to needed repairs. A new, modern fleet of golf carts will help the revenue at the course."

Johnson said while other courses may find ways to keep their carts longer, they are not seeing the kind of use Agawam Municipal Golf Course is getting from its fleet.

"The carts will come with

a five-year service plan which will help handle the major repairs," Johnson said.

He acknowledged previously opposing the use of taxpayer funds to buy carts at the course proposed by a previous mayor.

"I have always strode to have the golf course be able to pay its own bills," said Johnson.

Of having the town loan the course some funds temporarily is economics, the mayor said. He said other borrowings that would be needed to purchase the carts would have cost the town and the golf course more. The

town being the loaner of the funds made the most sense, he said.

He also said, funds from the stabilization fund will be needed for other capital needs.

"We are trying to give the golf course some flexibility," Johnson said. "It's very possible the loan will be paid sooner than two fiscal years."

Johnson, who is running unopposed and should be mayor the next two years, also went out on a limb to allay concerns about yet more taxpayer funds being used

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Great Grab



Gavin Cruz makes a great catch for a first down. Agawam was in action against Chicopee Comprehensive last night in a key conference game. See more photos on page 8

TURLEY PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



A lot happening in November at Agawam Public Library

There is something for everyone this November at the Agawam Public Library! Our annual Bizarre Bazaar returns this month and is a great chance to stock up on decorations just in time for the holidays. Donate your gently used holiday decor and holiday themed items to the library between Saturday, Nov. 1 and Saturday, Nov. 8. Items can be related to ANY major holiday and can include all kinds of decor (wreaths, wall hangings, signs, statues, flags, ornaments, gift wrap, etc.). We will organize all of the donations for our Bizarre Bazaar, which runs Friday, Nov. 21 from 1 to 3 p.m. and Saturday, Nov. 22 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. or the public to browse and "shop". Bags will be provided.

The virtual Career Workshops and Networking Group continues this month for two informational sessions. Join this vibrant group of networking professionals led by Professional Coach and MBA, Deborah Hope. Debi specializes in assisting mature job seekers and providing career and networking resources. The online group will meet on Wednesday, Nov. 5 to discuss Networking and Nov. 19 to discuss Interviewing Strategies. Both presentations are from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., but there is an opportunity for informal networking at 9 a.m. Meetings will continue through December. Registrants can sign-up online to receive the

Zoom meeting links. These workshops are supported by the Agawam Center Library Association.

On Monday, Nov. 3 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room, the library welcomes the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office for a presentation on Landlord-Tenant Rights, an information session intended for both landlords and renters. This presentation covers the rights and responsibilities for both tenants and landlords, specifically: what landlords are responsible for versus what tenants are responsible for, types of tenancy agreements and what makes their lease terms different, minimum housing conditions, subletting, evictions, and who enforces each topic. If you are looking for guidance on these topics, you won't want to miss this event! Please register to attend.

Looking for ways to improve wellness before the holidays arrive? The library has a few options to keep your body and mind in shape. Join yoga instructor Heidi Taberman for an hour of gentle Chair Yoga on Wednesday mornings at 9:05 a.m. in the Clini Community Room. Qigong will be offered three times this month. Exercises will focus on strengthening the breath, expanding the chest, and fortifying the immune system in preparation for winter. Chairs are available for modified movements and a yoga mat is suggested for those practicing in

bare feet or socks. Join us for a morning fall qigong session on Tuesday, Nov. 4 and Tuesday, Nov. 18 at 10:30 a.m. in the Clini Community Room. Evening qigong will be held on Thursday, Nov. 20 at 6:30 p.m. These programs are sponsored by the Agawam Center Library Association. The APL Walking Group will meet on Saturday Nov. 8 at 9 a.m. at Still Brook Park (100 Pine St. in Feeding Hills). Meet librarian Kristen Frost at the pavilion to get your blood pumping and start the day off right! Registration is required so we know how many walkers to expect. Please note that this group will meet monthly through December and will meet at different locations in Agawam/Feeding Hills.

Our monthly Game Night is perfect for folks looking to kick back and have some fun! Join us on Wednesday, Nov. 5 at 6:30 p.m. for an evening of tabletop card and board games like Settlers of Catan, Ticket to Ride, Munchkin, and more. Have a favorite game you'd like to share? Bring it along. This is a drop-in event for adults ages 18 and older, and light refreshments will be served. If you're looking for some friendly competition, then our Tea & Trivia events will be right up your street. Come by yourself or with a team and take part in a couple of rounds of Jeopardy and pub-style trivia; prizes will be awarded to the winning teams. Our evening session is Tuesday, Nov. 18 at

6:30 p.m. and our afternoon session is Wednesday, Nov. 19 at 2:30 p.m. We will use the same questions for both sessions, so register for the time you prefer and join us for some fun!

Spooky season may be over, but it's never too late to delve into the mystical and reflective world of divination. Our event Discover Guidance and Training with Oracle Cards, originally set to take place in October, has been rescheduled for Monday, Nov. 10 at 6 p.m. Instructor Julia Nadolny will introduce the wisdom of oracle cards, explain how they can be used as a supportive practice, offer readings to participants as well as guide participants how to give each other and themselves readings. Whether you are curious about card readings, seeking insight into your own journey, or simply looking for a relaxing and enlightening evening, this program is open to all. Come with an open heart and leave with fresh perspectives and a renewed sense of connection. Please register online for this event.

Are you a writer looking to connect with other writers? Then stop by on Thursday, Nov. 20 at 6 p.m. for our monthly Writers Group, hosted by award-winning author Katherine Anderson. 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 op-

portunities for submission to magazines, literary journals, and presses, assembling a portfolio, and the basics of a query package for submissions and publications. Registration is required.

Our Library Tech Classes this month will help users get started with our digital library app Libby. We'll show you the essentials on how to find and borrow new eBooks and eAudiobooks, along with some helpful hints and tips. Feel free to bring your smart devices and/or your e-Readers with you to the class. This month's classes will take place on Wednesday, Nov. 19 at 6:30 p.m. and Tuesday, Nov. 24 at 10 a.m. Please register to attend.

The holidays have begun, which means our annual Festival of Trees will be here before you know it. Get ahead of the game – and get your creative juices flowing – at our Adult Craft Night on Monday, Nov. 24 at 6 p.m. Rather than just having folks decorate an artificial tree, we challenge you to build one from scratch. Come check out the variety of items we will have on hand for creating your own uniquely designed tree, or feel free to bring materials you have at home that you want to use. When you finish your creation, leave it here at the library to be part of our Festival of Trees celebration in the month of December. What kind of tree will you design? Registration is required for this craft night.

The library has a great

selection of authors for our November Virtual Author Series! On Wednesday, Nov. 5, author Joseph Lee will discuss his stirring memoir, *Nothing More of This Land: Community, Power, and the Search for Indigenous Identity*, an exploration of Indigenous identity in proximity to land that serves as an iconic vacationing spot for the wealthy—the "island paradise" Martha's Vineyard. Novelist Amanda Peters will discuss her instant bestselling novel *The Berry Pickers* on Thursday, Nov. 13 at 7 p.m. Influenced by Peters' own Mi'kmaq heritage, *The Berry Pickers* is a riveting exploration of family, grief, and the bonds we share. Get yourself primed for the holiday season and join us on Tuesday, Nov. 18 at 2 p.m. for an online conversation with Charles Duhigg. Author of the bestselling book *Supercommunicators: How to Unlock the Secret Language of Connection*, Duhigg will unveil the secret to communicating and connecting with anyone at work, home, and in life. To register to attend any of these author talks, please visit our virtual authors' events page: library.org/agawamlibrary.

We will be closed on Tuesday, Nov. 11 in observance of Veterans Day. Please note that the library will close at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 26 and remain closed for Thanksgiving. We will be open normal hours Friday and Saturday.

ACC welcoming new members to playgroup

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 Congrega-

tional Church at 745 Main St. Agawam. The group is for all children from birth to five-years-old.

Don't let 'vampire power' suck the fun out of spooky season

Ghosts, skeletons, and goblins will soon freely walk neighborhood streets asking for sweet treats, and Eversource is alerting customers they may have already inadvertently invited vampires into their homes and businesses. Vampire power, also known as phantom load, ghost energy or standby power, is electricity that is consumed by some appliances and electronics even when they're turned off. If not kept in check, it can account for up to 10 percent of a household's energy use and cost as much as \$100 a year, according to the Department of Energy.

One simple way to eliminate the energy drain is by

unplugging devices like gaming consoles, laptops, toasters and coffee makers when not in use. Even without a device attached, a plugged-in charger is constantly using electricity, so once a device is charged, unplugging it prevents additional energy usage. While it can be inconvenient to constantly plug and unplug certain devices, using a power strip with an on/off switch can help keep it simple because a quick flip of the switch prevents standby power for any device on the strip.

"We all have electronics in our homes that are using electricity without us even realizing it, and the more electronics or appliances you

have in standby mode, the more it can add up on your energy bill," said Eversource Energy Efficiency Director Kate Peters. "Taking the time to unplug devices or turn off power strips, especially when you're going away on vacation, is just one simple way to lower energy use a little bit. But stopping phantom power from haunting your electric bill isn't the only way to control usage; we have a variety of energy efficiency programs and solutions available that we hope customers will take advantage of."

For more information on the energy efficiency programs available that can lower usage and impact bills, visit Eversource.com.

AG's office to hold landlord-tenant rights workshop

AGAWAM – On Monday, Nov. 3 at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Room at Agawam Public Library, the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office will hold a Landlord-Tenant Rights Presentation. This informative presentation meant to be

helpful to both landlords and renters. This training covers the rights and responsibilities for both tenants and landlords, specifically: what landlords are responsible for versus what tenants are responsible for, types of tenancy agreements and what

makes their lease terms different, minimum housing conditions, subletting, evictions, and who enforces each topic. If you are looking for guidance on these topics, you won't want to miss this workshop.

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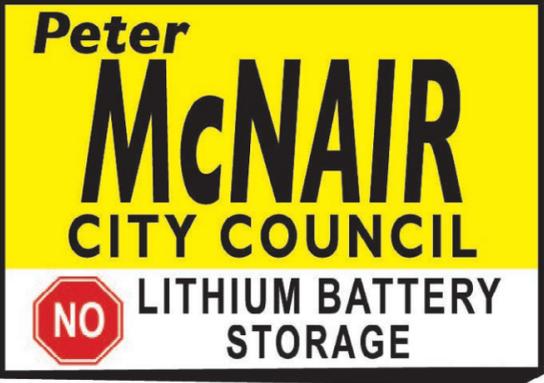


Ed BORGATTI
City Council
An Independent Voice for Agawam
PAID FOR BY THE COMMITTEE TO ELECT ED BORGATTI
VOTE NOVEMBER 4TH

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Vote for Peter McNair for City Council Tuesday, November 4th



- ✓ **Lower Property Taxes**
Peter understands working families, seniors and small business are struggling, and cannot afford to keep paying higher property taxes.
- ✓ **Support Small Business**
- ✓ **Grow the Economy and Jobs**
Peter believes the economy works best when people keep more of their hard earned money to spend and invest.

PAID FOR BY THE COMMITTEE TO ELECT PETER MCNAIR

Upcoming events at Agawam Senior Center

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

Parkinson's Seminar
Tuesday, Nov. 4 at 10:30 a.m. in Seminar Hall

Powerback Rehab to You Mobile Outpatient Therapy is excited to introduce Julia Valine, Occupational Therapist and LSVT Big/Big for Life Certified, to your community. LSVT Big programming is evidence-based therapy for Parkinson's Disease and related neuro degenerative conditions, to help restore normal movement and function. Come listen to Julia talk about her approach and how she incorporates mind-body principles to maximize your independence and quality of life, as well as educate you on the benefits of your part B insurance and how you can get involved with Powerback Rehab to You today, in the comfort of your own home.

We cannot wait to meet you all on Nov. 4, in the Seminar Hall. Call 821-0604 to register.

Complimentary Memory Screenings
Wednesday, Nov. 5 from 1 to 3 p.m.

Representatives from The Atrium at Cardinal Drive will be at The Agawam Senior Center to provide complimentary memory screenings. Memory screenings make sense for anyone concerned about memory loss or experiencing warning signs of dementia; whose family and friends have noticed changes in them; or who believe they are at risk due to a family history of Alzheimer's disease or a related illness. Screenings also are appropriate for anyone who does not have a concern right now, but who wants to see how their memory is now and for future comparisons. Refreshments will be provided. Please call

413-821-9911 to reserve your 15-minute time slot.

Monthly Ballroom Dance
Wednesday, Nov. 5 from 2 to 4 p.m.

Join Richie Mitnick for an afternoon of great tunes, dancing and snacks. Our monthly ballroom dance takes place in the Veteran's Hall of the Senior Center from 2 to 4 p.m. We look forward to you joining us.

Free Veteran's Lunch
Monday, Nov. 10

The Agawam Senior Center would like to extend an invitation to our Veterans to please join us on Monday, Nov. 10 a complimentary lunch at the Senior Center.

Call the Senior Center at 821-0604 by Thursday, Nov. 6 to place your reservation.

This is a great opportunity for us to honor our veterans and say thank you for all you have done.

Lunch will be:

Ziti with a Homemade Meat Sauce, Caesar Salad and a Baked Good.

Powerback Rehab Seminar
Monday, Nov. 10 at 1:30 p.m.

If you have fallen within the last year or have a fear of falling, come join Powerback Rehab to You for a presentation on preventing falls. You will learn about the multiple causes of falls, discuss the consequences of the fear of falling, and learn what you can do to prevent falls in your daily life. Even if you have not fallen, it is never too early for prevention. Call 821-0604 to register. Seminar in the Garden Room.

Performance: My Life with Bill
Wednesday, Nov. 12 at 1 p.m. in the Auditorium

Many people think of Alzheimer's as a heartrending death sentence. Nick Kachulis found the disease enabled his dad to have special mo-

ments with him, to leave special gifts for his son before he passed away.

"My dad was ... from the World War II generation, which typically meant he didn't express those intimate feelings very much," Kachulis said. "When he moved in with us, one of the blessings of dementia was the filter was off. I heard 'I love you' from my father more times in the last four years than I probably had in the last 60." The poignant memories, the pleasures and hard challenges of living with a parent suffering from Alzheimer's — and the final loss of his dad — pushed Kachulis, a musician and writer, to stage a public celebration of Bill, his father. The hour-long performance of songs and stories inspired a community outpouring of support. This program was funded by a Grant from Massachusetts Cultural Council. Call 821-0604 to reserve your seat.

Jewelry Making with Sandy
Monday, Nov. 17 at 1 p.m.

Sandy brings the new pieces for you to create one-of-a-kind jewelry and you bring the creativity.

Cost is \$3 plus cost of supplies. Call Kristina to register 726-2836.

Trivia with Cindy
Tuesday, Nov. 18 at 5:30 p.m. in the Dining Room

Join Cindy for a thrilling evening of Trivia and Laughs come as a single or bring a team

Coffee Hour with Mayor Johnson

Wednesday, Nov. 19 from 10 to 11 a.m. in the Coffee Shop

Want to know the latest and greatest in Agawam? Have a question or concern for Mayor Johnson? Join him Wednesday, Nov. 19 at 10 a.m. in the FRIENDS Coffee Shop.

Agawam to mark Veterans Day with multiple local events

AGAWAM – The Agawam Veterans' Council will be honoring all veterans at their Veterans Day Ceremony on Tuesday, Nov. 11. This year's ceremony will be held at the

new Veteran's Memorial Plaza at School Street Park at 10:45 a.m. In the case of rain, the ceremony will shift to Agawam Junior High School. The Veterans' Council will

also be laying a wreath at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge (Strathmore Bridge) at 7 a.m. All are welcome to attend.

Wreaths Across America holding event at Veterans Cemetery

AGAWAM – On Saturday, Dec. 13 at 10 a.m., the Friends of the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Agawam will join Wreaths Across America in our annual mission to Remember, Honor, and Teach.

Together, we will lay Remembrance wreaths on the graves of our nation's heroes at the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery, located at 1390 Main Street, Agawam, MA.

Parking and Shuttle Information:

Parking will be available at Six Flags New England, with shuttles running to the cemetery beginning at 8 a.m. Please plan to arrive early to allow for shuttle transport and seating before the ceremony begins.

The Friends of the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Agawam is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to honoring those who have served,

comforting their families, and enhancing the beauty and dignity of this eternal resting place.

By sponsoring a wreath through the Friends, you help ensure that every veteran resting at the cemetery is remembered with a wreath of honor and gratitude.

For more information or to sponsor a wreath, please visit our website at agawam-friends.org or email us at wreathfriends@gmail.com.

Annual wreath bazaar set for Nov. 22

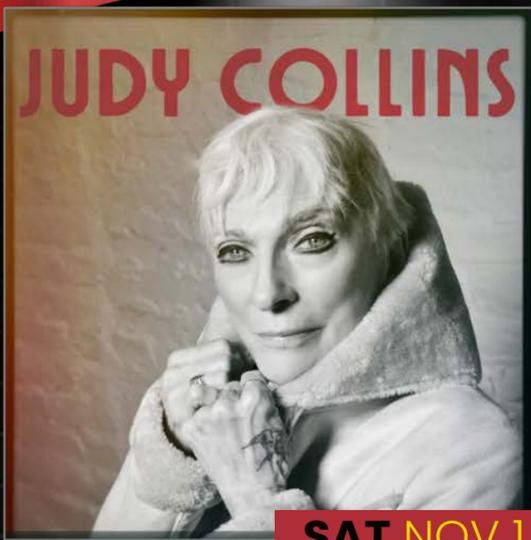
AGAWAM – The Agawam Congregational Church will once again host its Holly Wreath Bazaar this Christmas season, taking place on Saturday, Nov. 22 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Browse a

variety of goods from our talented crafters and stop by our country store and bakery for fresh vegetables, pies, bars, cookies, and candy. Try your luck at our raffle table—plus, one

lucky visitor will win a door prize. Before you head out, treat yourself to lunch at our hot lunch café. We look forward to welcoming you on Nov. 22.

LIVE IN SPRINGFIELD

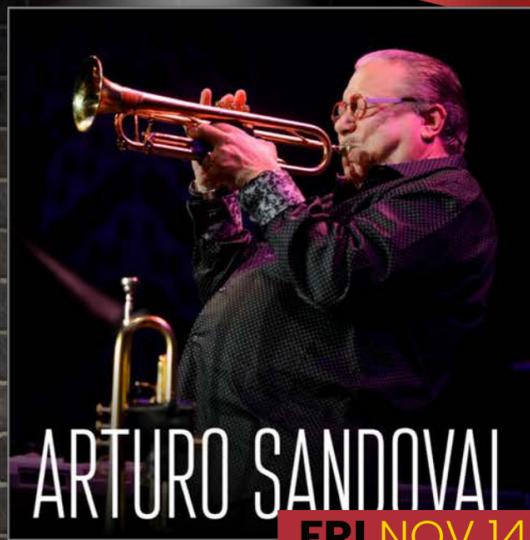
NOVEMBER & DECEMBER EVENTS



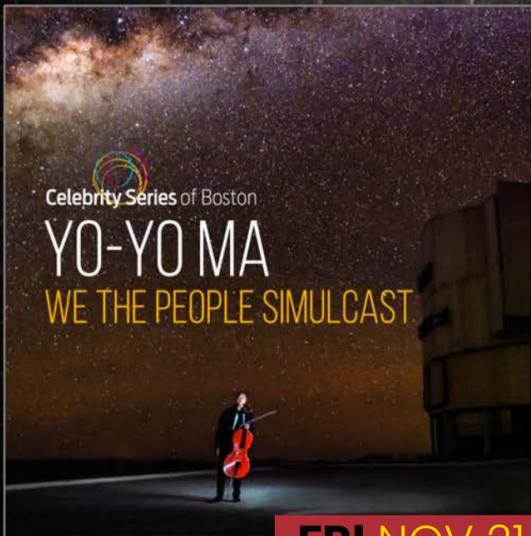
SAT NOV 1



SAT NOV 8



FRI NOV 14



FRI NOV 21



FRI NOV 28



THU DEC 11



GET TICKETS AT THE BRAND NEW
HopeCenterForTheArts.org



Opinion

Guest Column



Do I need to sign up for an Online Social Security Account?

Dear Rusty:

I recently heard the tail end of a radio program, which was discussing "signing up for my Social Security account."

I am now 76 years old and have been receiving my SSA monthly amount directly into a credit union account for years. Since the time when I applied to begin receiving Social Security, I have had no need to contact SSA again since everything is working fine. I do not like having to use the Internet. It seems the government is just giving me busy work and requiring me to remember usernames, passwords, etc. just when I am trying desperately to simplify my life. Can you shed any light on the need to sign up for an online SSA account by answering this:

1) What is the background regarding this "call" by the SSA to create an online account?

2) Why is the SSA wanting us to have "accounts"? Mysteriously, no one I have asked is able to give me a reason why we should have "accounts" on-line.

3) What happens if I do not sign-up for an "account"?

4) Is there a window of time during which we must "sign up"?

Thanking you in advance for any light you can shed on this issue.

Signed: Concerned Senior

Dear Concerned:

While creating an online Social Security account is recommended by the Social Security Administration, doing so is more of a convenience than a necessity.

It is mainly a way to confirm your identity to Social Security in advance, in case you need to contact them in the future to make changes to your SS account. If you don't plan to make any changes, then it is not mandatory for you to create an online "my Social Security" account. Nothing will change for you - you will continue to get your monthly benefits as you have been doing all these years.

Regarding your specific questions:

1. What is the background?

Social Security has, for many years, been encouraging people to do business with them "online." This is, essentially, a way to improve the efficiency of a) getting your needs handled more quickly, and b) improving SSA's internal efficiency so as to handle more transactions with fewer staff.

2. Why does SSA want you to have an online account?

SS fraud has become an issue, with nefarious individuals constantly trying to get at a person's Social Security (and other) government benefits. As part of its process for online access, SSA has evolved to a quite secure online identification process, which includes modern security techniques. These include things like "Two-Factor Identification" and use of certain specific identification measures through two main programs for access to government systems (known as LOGIN.gov and ID.me). These create a single pre-verified way to access multiple government systems (such as SSA, IRS, VA, etc.). It means that only one ID and password are required to access numerous government systems and ensures that those who access the account are the correct person. It is primarily a way to protect your benefits from others and prevent fraud.

3. What happens if I do not sign-up for an "account"? Nothing will happen, unless you have a need to change something with Social Security. For example, if you for some reason wanted to change the financial account to which your SS benefits are deposited. With a secure LOGIN.gov account you could make that change quickly using your online account. Without a secure online account, you would, instead, need to make an appointment to visit your local Social Security office to make the change and provide proof of who you are. Again, this is to reduce fraud.

4. Is there a window of time during which we must "sign up"?

As indicated above, there is no time in which you must "sign up." If you do not sign up for online access, and don't need to change anything with respect to your SS benefits, then you do not need to create an online account.

So, while creating an online SSA account is highly recommended, it is not mandatory for those who have no need to interact directly with the Social Security Administration.

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.



Pumpkins of lore and legend

I miss the days of carving pumpkins with the kids. Last year was the first year time got away from us and we just didn't get around to doing it.

I guess the rituals aren't quite as important as they used to be when the girls were younger. Alas, time marches on.

I still got a kick out of decorating the porch with pumpkins, big and small, orange and white. Not a Jack-o'-Lantern to be seen, just a pretty autumnal scene.

It is safe to say that we New Englanders have a fond affection for the pumpkin. And by the look of the neighborhood, we enjoy this fruit (yes, fruit) more on our doorsteps these days than we do in our kitchens.

This wasn't always the case; in fact, the pumpkin was a staple in the diets of Native Americans long before the pilgrims set foot on Plymouth Rock.

The pumpkin is thought to have originated in Mexico. Seeds found there of a distant Cucurbit relative were dated all the way back to 7000 to 5500 B.C. In our more recent past, Native Americans taught colonists how to plant pumpkins; soon they became indispensable in their diets.

The hard outer skin of the pumpkin allowed it to be stored for a long period of time, sustaining the community throughout the winter months. It was also versatile, used in stews, bread baking, and even in desserts.



by Roberta McQuaid



contain a healthy dose of potassium and fiber, are low in sodium and are fat free. Incidentally, pumpkin seeds when consumed regularly have shown to keep the prostate healthy.

They also contain a healthy dose of magnesium.

Did you ever wonder where the tradition of carving Jack-o'-Lanterns originated? It is thanks in part to an Irish folk tale of Stingy Jack, an unsavory figure who unwelcome in Heaven, outsmarted the devil and was left to roam the earth with only a burning coal to light his way. According to the legend, Jack put the coal in a carved out turnip (which he was fond of stealing!) and has been roaming ever since.

"Jack of the Lantern" has become simply "Jack-o'-Lantern." In Scotland and Ireland people made their own Jack-o'-Lanterns out of turnips or potatoes. In England, large beets were used. The tradition came with the immigrants to America; here they found the pumpkin perfect for carving. And so it has continued! Maybe I will have to carve one myself, just for old time's sake.

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

Researchers have long been touting the benefits of beta carotene to ward off infection and some types of cancer. It may also slow the aging process. Besides that, pumpkins



"BEEES! RUUUUUN!"

It was midafternoon on the fourth day of our backpacking trip through New York State on the Appalachian Trail. A 93-mile hike from the New Jersey border to the Connecticut border in early October.

The first three days had confirmed what others had warned us-the trail through New York would not be easy. Especially this year, when most of the 'reliable' streams were bone dry due to the drought. Many days, we were forced to detour off the trail and hike into towns to procure water. With temps in the 80's, dehydration was an ever-present worry. In addition, the added weight of up to 6.6 pounds of water on our backs made the technical scrambles up steep rock ledges even MORE precarious.

On day 4, we were hustling, intent on hiking as many miles as possible so that we could reach a reliable water source-a water spigot at a pump house-before pitching our tent for the

On day 4, we were hustling, intent on hiking as many miles as possible so that we could reach a reliable water source-a water spigot at a pump house-before pitching our tent for the

HIKING | page 5



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Agawam Advertiser News welcomes letters to the editor

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

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

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper

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

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



HIKING ■ from page 4

night. We were 12 miles into our day when the unimaginable happened.

Tom was about 75 feet ahead of me, when he suddenly paused and turned back to make sure that I was still behind him. When he saw me a short distance away, he continued on.

Fifteen seconds later, I reached the spot where he had momentarily stopped, and I felt a red-hot sensation on my right arm, followed by another on my left arm. Before I even looked down, I knew that I had just been stung by Yellow Jackets... the most despicable spawn of satan that has ever inhabited this planet.

Tom must have unknowingly stepped on a ground nest, and they were coming out for vengeance as I walked past.

I screamed in agony as a swarm of them descended upon me-stinging my ankles, thighs, and arms. It felt as

though someone was shooting red-hot flaming arrows directly into my skin. A sound that was unrecognizable even to my own ears came out from somewhere deep inside of me. A guttural sound. Like a deep moan intermingled with a high-pitched wail. It bordered on primal. Tom turned at the sound-later telling me that he thought the sound was coming from a wounded animal.

I screamed to Tom to "RUUUN!" at a decibel that could be heard from miles away, since Tom is deathly allergic Yellow Jacket venom. With adrenaline coursing through my body, I raced along the rock-strewn path like an Olympic medalist, waving my arms to ward off the monsters that were attacking me.

When it seemed as though I was no longer being chased, I finally stopped and bent down to swipe off a dozen Yellow Jackets that were still clinging to my merino wool socks. The pain in my ankles

was excruciating, and I began screaming and crying all at once.

I unclipped my pack and dropped it to the ground so that I could pull out my first aid kit. Within seconds, more yellow jackets were upon me. "They smell the pheromones!" Tom yelled. With no thought of his own safety, he flailed his arms to ward them off and screamed, "RUN Julie!"

Leaving my pack behind, I ran like the speed of light until the wasps finally gave up their chase.

A few minutes later, Tom came barreling up the trail with my enormous backpack in hand. His concerned face was filled with desperation when he saw me. I had been stung over 2 dozen times. Tears were rolling down my face. My arms and thighs were already swelling from the venom, and my ankles were so swollen, they were unrecognizable.

Tom insisted I use his EpiPen, since I had a severe

reaction to Yellow Jacket venom in the past. I refused. "We still have 4 more days out here. If YOU get stung, it's life or death. If my throat starts to close, you can inject me. If not, we're saving the EpiPen in case you get stung."

Fortunately, we were only a mile and a half from the water spigot at the next road crossing. Once we got there, I took off my shoes and socks and ran cold water on the stings in a vain attempt to reduce the pain and swelling. I even went so far as to text my kids to ask them to google whether or not urine could reduce the pain and swelling of Yellow Jackets venom. (Desperate times call for desperate measures!) Alas, they responded that it was just a fallacy. Tylenol was my only option.

Needless to say, I spent a pretty sleepless night in our tent that night due to the pain. The intense itching would begin the following morning. Oh, the joys!

Our 7-day hike through New York State was definitely the single most challenging backpacking trip we have ever taken. But each trial made us even more grateful for the blessings we encountered along the way. The sunrises and sunsets. The conversations with fellow hikers around a camp-

fire. The enormous trees. The rare flowing stream. Even the bear encounter while we were brushing our teeth at a primitive tent-site on our second night on trail seemed like a gift.

But that's a story for another day. Let the adventures continue!

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PAID FOR BY THE COMMITTEE TO ELECT PETER SMUS

Rogers to speak on new book

AGAWAM – All Catholic Women are invited to join the Catholic Women's Club of Agawam at their annual Communion Breakfast on Sunday Nov. 9. It will begin with members attending the Sunday 10:30 a.m. Mass at St. John the Evangelist Church, 833 Main St., Agawam, MA, at which the Mass Intention will be for the deceased members of the club.

The breakfast will follow immediately after the Mass in the church parish center behind the church. Speaker for the event will be Michael Rogers, PhD., currently the Regional Director of Mission Integration for Trinity Health of New England. He will speak about his book, *Many Ways With Mary*, which was published in 2025.

The breakfast will be ca-

tered by Tansey Catering and will include Pastries, French Toast, Scrambled Eggs, Bacon, Home Fried Potatoes, Orange Juice, Coffee and Tea. Price for the breakfast is \$16. Checks, made out to C.W.C., or cash can be placed in the basket at weekend Masses, left at the parish office or mailed to Paula Raiche, 181 Leonard Street, Agawam,

MA 01001. Payments must be received by Nov. 3 and there will be no refunds. It will be an open seating event with tables of 8-10 people.

Members are reminded to gather in the reserved front pews for the Mass.

Any questions or more information contact Katie at (413) 348-9698.



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CLUES ACROSS

1. El __, Texas town
5. Rocker's tool
8. A lot
12. Traveling by ground
14. Spelling competition
15. Two-toed sloth
16. Small perfumed bag
18. "Much __ about nothing"
19. Tough-skinned mollusk
20. Removes from record
21. It warms the planet
22. Leafy green
23. Quality of arriving favorably
26. Living thing
30. "Six of Crows" author Bardugo
31. Got around a rule
32. Resin from burned substance
33. Iraq seaport

34. Religious leaders
39. Fugitives are on it
42. Samson's influencer
44. Italian city
46. A quality of lacking interest
47. Predatory tropical fishes
49. Nobel physician
- Isodor
50. Luck
51. Stationary part of a motor or generator
56. Orthopedic professional group (abbr.)
57. One point south of due east
58. It follows 79
59. Paper currency
60. Anger
61. Spanish seaport
62. Sleep in a rough place

CLUES DOWN

1. Bullfighting maneuver
2. From a distance
3. Soul and calypso song
4. Expressions of delight
5. Lower in esteem
6. Inner region of an organ
7. Flowers
8. A bog
9. Remove a fastening
10. Membranes
11. Enormous
13. One who abstains from drink
17. Malayan wild ox
24. Type of student
25. Rejecting all moral principles
26. Sino-Soviet block
27. Egyptian unit of weight
28. Wrong

29. Make a mistake
35. Indicates location
36. Boxing's "GOAT"
37. Where wrestlers compete
38. Timid
40. Disney town
41. Suggesting the horror of death and decay
42. Male parent
43. Remove for good
44. Simple shoes
45. Flowers
47. Hindi courtesy title for a man
48. Not pleased
49. "Atlas Shrugged" author
52. CIA officer and writer
53. Hoodlum
54. __ Von Bismarck, Iron Chancellor
55. Woolen rugs

CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE 12

Alumni from HCC reflect on history of school

By **Brendan Rooney**
Correspondent

HOLYOKE — On Monday, Oct. 20, Holyoke Community College (HCC) held its first-ever “Fall Back Together: Graduates of the Last Decade” event from inside the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, and the consensus among the attendees was that it turned out to be a resounding success.

Providing insight centered around the purpose of the event and how things came together was HCC Executive Director of Development, Julie Phillips, who admitted the idea was one of a simple partnership between Assistant Director for HCC Alumni Relations, Natalia Castagno, and a representa-

tive from the HCC Culinary Arts Institute, who passed along that the building was available for use, and then it only continued to grow from that point forward.

“We thought, let’s get the graduates of the last decade, and see what they have been up to, and offer a bit of check-in process, while understanding what impact our alumni have been making in Western Mass and beyond,” Phillips said. “I want to add, even though we’ve never done this before, we are thrilled with the turnout, and the response from the alums was received quite quickly, which led to us reaching capacity at a rapid pace, and we had to shut down the event to accommodate those who already confirmed to join us.”

It should be noted, the social gathering saw more than 60 alumni representatives, with a variety of classes represented, ranging from the classes of 2015 to the most recent of 2025, who all shared the same mindset of having the chance to stop by and reconnect with old friends while reflecting on their tenure at the institution, and offering stories and insight about what they have done since departing HCC, a hope that Phillips mentioned prior. She also revealed that the gathering also featured a second core reason, which was to allow the culinary program a chance at being in a situation to garner real-life workplace experience, and her comments ring true as the event was catered by a few members of the college’s culinary program, who served a plethora of appetizers and various beverages.

As mentioned prior by Phillips as being one of the main architects on getting the event off the ground, Castagno also took a moment to reflect on the overall success of all parties involved.

“It’s such a great event, and been a pleasure to hear the variety and depth of stories of what the various alumni have accomplished since departing HCC,” Castagno said.

Also to note, the event provided the chance for the alumni to partake in professional photo ops, which drew a massive crowd throughout the evening, along with oth-



Alums catch up during a roundtable discussion.

er eye-catching opportunities present, such as a photo booth and a roundtable discussion, all of which were included to provide a sense of community, something that Castagno discussed as well.

“The main theme tonight, from what I’ve gathered, has been centered around the element of community,” Castagno said. “I think the sense of trust is built upon the relationship among the students and the various professors they had, to knowing college is a point of transition for some, and establishing friendships is vital, as part of the networking experience, while understanding the importance of connections and I feel it’s also nice for the alums to see how the programs they once were part of have evolved and will continue to grow over time.”



Many look into the various programs offered and updated.



HCC Radio WCCH 103.5 keep the fun going at the event.

Local dentist seeks leftover Halloween candy

AGAWAM – For more than 20 years, Dr. Michael Calabrese of Feeding Hills has been accepting donations of unwanted Halloween candy from Agawam residents that gets sent to military men and women serving overseas.

This year’s candy collec-

tion will kick-off on Saturday, Nov. 1 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon at his dental office at 850 Springfield Street, Suite 2, Feeding Hills.

The Event Chair is his Dental Hygienist, Cecilia Calabrese, and our Coordinator for school children collection is Agawam Mom,

Lisa Wild.

Aldo Mancini of the Marine Corps League handles logistics of getting the candy distributed to the troops.

As a special incentive, anyone bringing in candy donations on Nov. 1 between 10 a.m. to 12 noon will be entered into a drawing for din-

ner and a movie: \$100 gift certificate to Kaptain Jimmy’s Restaurant and movie passes to Agawam Cinema

If you are unable to get to the office on Nov. 1 we will continue to accept donations during regular office hours (Tuesday – Friday) ending Nov. 7.

Fitness First holding Grand Open House

AGAWAM – Fitness First Health Club, a cornerstone of the Agawam community for four decades, is thrilled to announce a major milestone: its 40th Anniversary. To celebrate four decades of commitment to health, fitness, and wellness, the club invites the entire community to a Grand Open House event.

The celebration will take place on Saturday, Nov. 1 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., at the Fitness First Health Club facility. This event is free and open to the public—a gesture of thanks to the community that has supported the club since 1985.

“Reaching 40 years is a testament to the loyalty of our members and the dedication of our staff,” said Paula Welker, Co-Owner and General Manager. “We’ve seen generations of families improve their health here. This open house isn’t just a celebration of our health and fitness center; it’s a celebration of the community we’ve built together.”

The Grand Open House will feature a packed schedule of activities for all ages:

- Local Vendors & Partners: Explore tables from local businesses focused on health, nutrition, and well-being.

- Special Class Demos: Participate in or observe a variety of the club’s most popular fitness classes such as Group Power, Zumba, Yoga and Aqua Fitness.

- Exclusive Offers & Prizes: Guests will have access to anniversary-exclusive membership offers and a chance to win significant prizes through raffles.

- Family Pool & Pizza Party (1 to 3 p.m.): A special, supervised event for families featuring swimming, games, and complimentary pizza and refreshments.

- Complimentary Refreshments, Chair Massage and In Body Assessments

Fitness First Health Club’s 40th Anniversary Open House promises to be a fun, engaging event celebrating not just the gym’s history, but a future focused on making fitness accessible and enjoyable for everyone.

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Library announces activities for kids and teens

AGAWAM – Here are the programs for kids & teens that will be offered at the Agawam Library this November. Some programs require registration. To register, go to our website agawamlibrary.org or call us at 413-789-1550 ext. 3.

Art and Stories - For ages 3 - 5

Tuesday, Nov. 25 - Drop-in.

Join us for a short story time followed by an art project. We will explore simple art concepts and experiment with materials. Please wear clothing that can get messy!

Baby Story Time - For birth - 18 mo.

Thursday, Nov. 13 - Drop-in.

Join us as we learn a little American Sign Language, read stories, sing, & play together.

Bracelet Making - For grades 5-6

Thursday, Nov. 20 at 6 p.m. - Registration is required

Come design and make your own beaded bracelets! To register, go to our website agawamlibrary.org

Family Take and Make Crafts - For all ages

First Day of the Week & again on Thursdays - While supplies last - Drop-in and pick up.

A new Take and Make craft will be available the first day of each week and again on Thursdays. Nov. 3 and 6: Paper Pumpkin Buddy Nov. 10 and 13: Foam Bear Ornament Nov. 17 and 20 Colorful Chicken Craft Nov. 24 and 26: Raccoon Hand Puppet

Family Trivia - For all ages

Wednesday, Nov. 19 at 6 p.m. - Registration is required
Bring the family in for a pub-style trivia night! The winning team will receive a snack filled gift basket! To register, go to our website agawamlibrary.org

Volunteer-run Free Family Photo Shoot - For all ages

Saturday, Nov. 8 from 10 a.m. to 12 noon - Drop-in.

Have a volunteer take a picture of your family in front of a winter backdrop. The photos will then be emailed to you. The photos could

make great holiday cards.

Grow, Play, and Learn - This program is provided by Pathways for Parents.

Wednesdays and Fridays Ages 0-2 at 9:30 a.m. Ages 3-5 at 10:30 a.m. - Drop-in.

No class Friday, Nov. 28. Stories, songs and skill building, led by an Early Childhood Developmental trained staff member, guiding caregivers in strengthening interactions with their child.

Music with Mr. Liam - All Ages

Saturday, Nov. 15 at 9:30 a.m. - Registration is required

Join us for an energetic show filled with drums, the ukulele, puppets, and comedy as Mr. Liam (Liam Hurley) plays old favorites & silly parodies! This program is provided by Pathways for Parents. To register, go to our website agawamlibrary.org

Pre-K Pals - For ages 3 - 5

Mondays in November at 11 a.m. - Registration is required.

We will provide activities to support your child to learn by playing. This program is

provided by Pathways for Parents.

Open Lego Building - For grades 1-4

Tuesday, Nov. 18 at 4:30 p.m. - Registration is required

Show off your Lego building skills. Use Legos to build something awesome. Creations will be put on display in the Children's Room. To register, go to our website agawamlibrary.org

Special Saturday Craft: Clothespin Dinosaur Craft - For All Ages

Saturday, Nov. 29 All Day - While supplies last - Drop-in & pick up.

Chomp, chomp! Kids will have a blast assembling these dino-mite crafts and then pressing the clothespin pieces together to open and close each dinosaur's mouth.

Stroller Strides with Fit4Mom - For parents and their child ages 1 month - 10 years old

Tuesday, Nov. 4 at 9:30 a.m. - Registration is required

This program is brought to us by Fit4Mom. Stroller Strides is a 60-minute

total-body workout with strength, cardio, and core training, all while engaging the little ones in a stroller.

To register, go to our website agawamlibrary.org

Teen Advisory Board - For grades 7-12

Wednesday, Nov. 12 from 6 to 7 p.m.

Make plans for teen library programs and the Teen Space, and eat pizza! Members of the Teen Advisory Board can earn community service hours for their participation. If you'd like to join, contact Evan at edelano@agawamlibrary.org or 413-789-1550 extension 3.

Teen After-School Drop-in - For grades 9-12

Tuesdays, Nov. 18 and 25 from 2 to 3 p.m.

Stop by the library after school and visit the Activity Room. Play our Nintendo Switch, try out the button maker, eat snacks, or just hang out! No registration necessary.

Teen Fall Pride Meetup - For grades 7-12

Saturday, Nov. 22 from

3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Celebrate LGBTQ+ Pride all year round. Mark your calendars for our Fall Pride Meetup. Hang out, do a craft, eat snacks, and play a Pride-themed trivia game. Registration on our website is optional. All are welcome, whether or not you've registered!

Teen Take and Make Craft - For grades 7-12

Available starting Saturday, Nov. 1

Stop by the Teen Space to pick up a Take and Make Craft kit! They'll be available until we run out of supplies. No registration necessary.

Teen Trivia Thursday - For grades 7-12

Thursdays, Nov. 6, 13, and 20 from 2 to 3:30 p.m.

Visit the Teen Space and answer a trivia question to get a small prize.

Toddler Time - For 19 mo. - 36 mo.

Mondays, Nov. 10 and 24 at 9:30 a.m. - Drop-in.

Join us as we read stories, sing, and play together.

Sign dedicated to longtime coach



Earlier this week, Mayor Christopher Johnson introduced a sign above the scoreboard at the Agawam High School varsity baseball field. The field was dedicated to Gerald Smith, the coach of the team for more than 25 years. Smith is pictured here with his family at the dedication ceremony held at Johnson.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Taste, Vote, and Celebrate at Food Fest West 2025

AGAWAM — The West of the River Chamber of Commerce is excited to announce the return of Food Fest West, a community-favorite culinary celebration, on Thursday, Nov. 13 from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at Crestview Country Club in Agawam, MA.

This highly anticipated event showcases the region's finest eateries, offering guests the opportunity to sample a wide variety of delicious dishes and vote for their favorite restaurant of

the night. From savory bites to sweet treats, attendees will experience the very best of Western Massachusetts' local cuisine — all under one roof.

In addition to the mouth-watering food, guests will enjoy a fun-filled evening featuring a silent auction, raffles, photo booth, and cash bar. It's the perfect way to connect with friends, colleagues, and community members while supporting local businesses and restaurants.

"Food Fest West is one of our most exciting community events of the year," said Robin Wozniak, Executive Director of the West of the River Chamber of Commerce. "It's a great opportunity to bring people together, celebrate our local dining scene, and have a great time doing it."

Tickets are available now through the West of the River Chamber of Commerce. Don't miss your chance to eat, mingle, and vote for the best cuisine in Western Mass.

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SPORTS

FOOTBALL

Colts outlast Brownies



CHICOPEE – Last Friday night was a battle of conference unbeaten as Agawam faced off with Chicopee Comprehensive. Both teams had no shortage of offense, but it was the Colts that had more in a 46-32 win. Agawam fell to 4-3 on the season, though their other two losses were in

independent games. Agawam lost its first Suburban South conference game. Comp is having a phenomenal season and is a perfect 7-0.

This week Agawam will host Wahconah on Friday, Oct. 31 while Comp faced Amherst on the road on Thursday, Oct. 30.



Above: Jonathan Norman goes for the tackle. Left: Elijah Ramos attempts to score on a two-point conversion. Below: Jesse-Paul Hackman and Ryan Sexton combine for a tackle.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Above: Ryan Litz carries the ball for the Brownies. Below: Cole Ingham fights through traffic on a carry.



T-Birds fall at home to Wolf Pack

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (1-5-0-0) could not hold off a hungry Hartford Wolf Pack (2-4-0-0) squad in a 6-3 defeat on Saturday at the Mass-Mutual Center in the second battle of the Braman Pest Control I-91 Rivalry Series.

From the onset of the game, the Wolf Pack, a night after getting shut out on home ice, peppered pucks on Georgi Romanov, with the T-Birds goalie standing tall to stop the first 13 tries that came his way.

The netminder's strong opening minutes allowed Springfield to get to the lead at 13:36 when Corey Schueneman squeezed a wrister through traffic and past Dylan Garand to make it a 1-0 game.

A Wolf Pack power play quickly tipped the game on its head, though, as Brett Berard cashed in Hartford's first man-up goal in 15 tries at 16:15 to tie the game, 1-1. Blake Hillman followed 2:15

later with a back-post tap-in after a beautiful move by Bryce McConnell-Barker set up the chance. Hartford carried the 2-1 lead into the intermission after outshooting Springfield 17-4 in the opening period.

Unfortunately for Romanov and the T-Birds, things did not improve as the second period began, as Brendan Brisson crashed the net front and cashed in his own rebound at the 44-second mark of the period to extend the lead to 3-1. Carey Terrance's second goal in two games against Springfield made it 4-1 at 2:09, and Gabe Perreault deflected a Justin Dowling shot home at 2:26, and in the blink of an eye, the Hartford lead grew to 5-1.

After a goaltending switch and a timeout, Springfield replied with Leo Loof potting his first career AHL goal at 3:39 to make it 5-2. Dalibor Dvorsky and Juraj Pekarcik each assisted on Loof's goal,

their second assists of the night.

The T-Birds could not pull any closer, though, as McConnell-Barker found the net after a fortuitous bounce on an odd-man rush ended up on his tape at point-blank range. His second goal in two games against Springfield pushed the score to 6-2, but would prove to be the only goal Hartford put behind Vadim Zherenko on 13 shots.

Dvorsky added his third point of the night with his second power play goal in as many nights at 14:55 of the third to make it 6-3, rounding out the game's scoring. Despite only stopping 12 shots on the night, Garand picked up his second win over the T-Birds in four nights.

The T-Birds continue their three-game homestand next Friday with a Halloween night matchup against the Hershey Bears. Puck drop is set for 7:05 p.m. inside the Thunderdome.

Railers get first win in overtime

NORFOLK, VA – The Worcester Railers HC (1-3-0-0) beat the Norfolk Admirals (2-1-1-0) in their second matchup of the weekend on Saturday, October 25th with a final score of 3-2 in front of a crowd of 7,645 at the Norfolk Scope Arena. The Railer are back on the ice at the DCU Center on Friday, October 31st against the Reading Royals at 7:05 p.m.

The Admirals scored the first goal of the game at 0:56 into the second with an unassisted shot from Brady Fleurent (1-0-1). Worcester retaliated with a goal from Cole Donhauser (1-0-1) at 12:59, assisted by captain Anthony Repaci (0-1-1) to even the score. Norfolk closed the second period with a final goal from Justin Young (1-0-1) at 18:17 to give Norfolk a lead heading into the third. Ryan Miotto (1-0-1) evened the score 2-2 for Worcester with a goal at 2:20 into the third, assisted

by Riley Piercey (0-1-1). A final goal to break the tie in overtime came from Matt DeMelis (1-0-1), assisted by Michael Ferrandino (0-1-1) to win the game for Worcester.

Both teams came out swinging for their second matchup in Norfolk. Lincoln Hatten got into an early brawl with Admirals' Brayden Nicholetts, each earning five minutes in the penalty box for fighting just three minutes into the first. Teammate Justin Young served Nicholetts' penalty as he headed into the tunnel for a checkup from Norfolk medical staff. Worcester went on their first power play of the game at 4:52, Norfolk's Marko Reifemberger took a turn in the box for holding a stick. No score for Worcester on the power play, but the Railers managed to gather up a bit of offensive zone time and apply some pressure on Worth-

ington and the Norfolk net. No score from either side for the first. The Admirals went on their first power play of the game in the second half of the period, a slashing call on Max Dorrington at 11:26. Worcester managed to execute another successful penalty kill, their first of two of the period. The Railers went into the tunnel with a 0-0 score to close out the first. Worcester outshot Norfolk by one with a shot count of 10-9 for the first period. Both teams had two power play opportunities for the period.

The Admirals didn't wait long to score to start the second as Brady Fleurent (3rd) sank the first goal of the game for Norfolk at 0:56 unassisted. Fleurent stole the puck from a Railers forward and potted the shot past Henrik Tikkanen

GIRLS SOCCER

Brownies shut out in quarterfinals

AGAWAM – Last Thursday afternoon, Agawam High School girls soccer qualified for the Western Mass. Class A quarterfinals, facing

Longmeadow on the road and losing 5-0. Agawam fell to 3-11-3 on the season with the shutout and had one additional game against West-

field scheduled for earlier this week. Even with a win, it's a longshot for Agawam to make the top 32 for the state tournament this year.



Laura Parolo tries to pass the ball ahead of an oncoming opponent.



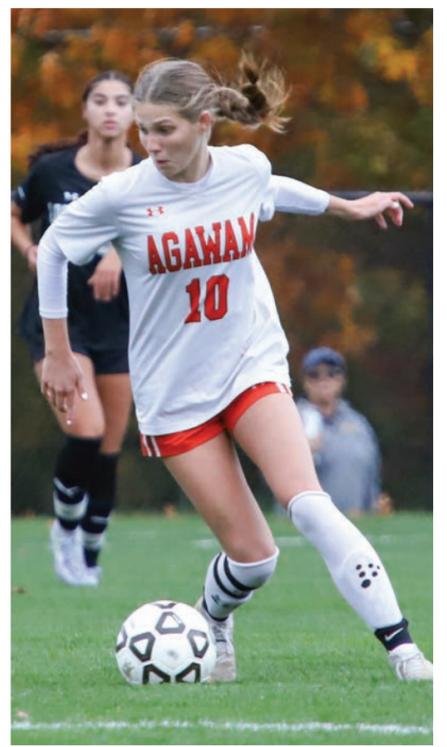
Above: Samantha Eisenbeiser goes after the ball on defense.

Left: Gabriella Ramos makes her way up the field.

Right: Maya Gingeruha tries to settle a bouncing ball.

Far right: Kylie Warner takes possession and heads up the field.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



FIELD HOCKEY

Govoni scores lone goal in regular season finale



AGAWAM – Last Monday night, Agawam High School field hockey celebrated its final regular season game by defeating Greenfield 1-0. Olivia Govoni scored in the first half to lift the Brownies

to the win. Agawam's defense played a phenomenal game and Stella Christopher scored a four-save shutout for Agawam's 10th win of the season. Agawam faced Longmeadow in the Western

Mass. Tournament later in the week and awaits its seeding in the state tournament. Highlights from the Western Mass. tournament game will be in next week's edition.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Clockwise from above: Alexina Lentes fights to keep possession; Lily Charest gets to the loose ball first; Samantha Matland sends the ball up the middle; Sydney Frasier attempts to chase down the ball; Olivia Govoni navigates through the middle of the field.





The angel statue walkers stop at to pay their respects during the walk.
TURLEY PHOTOS BY KRISTIN RIVERS



State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow) and youth volunteers pose for a group photo with this year's Out of the Darkness Community Walk t-shirt.



American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Massachusetts Chapter Event Co-Chairs Karen Carreira and Lyndsey Nunes open the ceremony.

WALK ■ from page 1

ing Elms College and the University of Massachusetts – Amherst—who did a Talk Saves Live event and a Campus Walk—presenting and sponsoring a portion of the Western Mass Veterans Conference and other programming in schools and communities throughout Western Massachusetts.

The top five fundraising teams were Team Nathan, Rusty's Free in the Wind, Randi's Rainbow, Team Edwards/First Churches and

Whalen 3:16, while the top five individual fundraisers were Carol Beal, Karen Carreira, Michael Carreira, Kristin Rivers and Denise Lemenager.

The walk was sponsored by Easthampton Savings Bank (bankESB), Elm Electrical, Westfield Gas & Electric, Pioneer Behavioral Health, Color for Resilience, the Massachusetts Behavioral Health Helpline and Westek Architectural.

To learn more, visit afsp.org/chapter/Massachusetts.



Stanley the Squirrel, the mascot for the Westfield Starfires, also stopped by for a visit.



A shot of attendees during the walk ceremony.



State Sen. John Velis (D-Westfield) emphasizes the importance of asking for help and that you're not alone.



American Foundation for Suicide Prevention Massachusetts Chapter Event Co-Chair Lyndsey Nunes reads about the purple bead during the Honor Bead Ceremony, which represents the loss of a relative or a friend. Sharon Tokarz was on stage for this bead.



State Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield) provides remarks on supporting those struggling with mental health and suicidal thoughts.

Quabbin Days kicked off at Visitor Center

By Ryan Drago
Staff Writer
rdrago@turley.com

BELCHERTOWN – The inaugural Quabbin Days kicked off on Oct. 10 at the Quabbin Visitor Center.

Quabbin Days is a celebration of the beauty and heritage of the Quabbin Region and the towns that surround it. This newly incorporated celebration consists of four days across various towns that are connected to the Quabbin Reservoir.

This kick-off helped promote the Quabbin region and what it has to offer.

“It’s just an amazing place right in our backyard,” said Clayton Sydla, president of the Quabbin Fisherman’s Association.

Sydla says this kickoff is about the opportunities the Quabbin offers, including being a wonderful place to fish. The weather was perfect for the occasion as various state legislators attended the kick-off to honor the Quabbin and its past.

Project Coordinator Ed Comeau spoke first and he said he hoped everyone in attendance appreciated the sheer beauty of where they live as Quabbin is their neighbor. The towns surrounding the Quabbin hope to promote tourism, hiking, and various opportunities for visitors all over the world to enjoy.

“I hope Quabbin Days becomes an annual tradition,” Comeau said.

The first to speak during the kickoff was state Sen. Jake Oliveira, who is a big advocate of the Quabbin Reservoir. Oliveira mentioned that many residents who live

in the eastern part of Massachusetts don’t realize that their drinking water comes from the Quabbin.

Many western Massachusetts towns are also served water by the Quabbin Reservoir.

Providing the Quabbin Reservoir involved a lot of sacrifice, including the disincorporation of four Massachusetts towns, Enfield, Dana, Prescott and Greenwich. The project also provided a lot of jobs in the 1930s and 1940s and Oliveira shared that his grandfather was employed during this project that created the reservoir.

Oliveira had a lot of memories from going to the Quabbin and sees it as a very special place. Oliveira ended by presenting a citation from the Senate and was given to Comeau and the Friend of the Quabbin in recognition of this four-day celebration to honor the Quabbin.

State Rep. Aaron Saunders came up to speak and said “we have a complicated relationship with the Quabbin.” Having the Quabbin provides recreational opportunities, tourism and natural beauty of the region.

Saunders wanted to acknowledge the surrounding towns and local boards who do a lot to keep this resource going.

Senator Jo Comerford spoke next and feels it is “our job to recognize and honor that service” of what it took to bring Quabbin Reservoir to this region. Comerford hopes Quabbin Days will continue for years to come and offers opportunity for many residents of eastern and western Massachusetts.



Sen. Jo Comerford, Office of State Sen. Peter Durant Communications Director Kim Mongeau, Quabbin Fisherman’s Association President Clayton Sydla, state Rep. Todd Smola, Ed Comeau of Friends of Quabbin, state Sen. Jake Oliveira, state Rep. Aaron Saunders, and state Rep. Susannah Whipps. This was during the kickoff of Quabbin Days at the Quabbin Visitor Center.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY RYAN DRAGO

Next to speak was state Rep. Todd Smola, who is quite the fisherman, who says it is a spectacular experience to explore this body of water on the actual water. Four towns were moved off the map to provide this water resource that serves over 2.5 million people.

“We’re proud of this resource,” Smola said. “Make sure the voice of the Quabbin is heard.”

Representative Susannah M. Whipps came up to speak next and mentioned how many residents of the Commonwealth depend on this water source. Whipps finds it important to pay attention and be stewards of this re-

gion. Sydla spoke and expressed appreciation for all the representatives and senators who watch over the Quabbin and make sure it is still supported. With Quabbin Days officially kicked off, Sydla hopes to see more people explore Quabbin in the near future. Sydla enjoys going out on the water and is a well-accomplished fisherman with 11 gold pins.

Former State Trooper and Selectman for the Town of Ware, John Carroll came out during the kickoff. Carroll said it was nice to recognize the sacrifices people of the four lost towns made to benefit the Commonwealth.

Carroll always appreciated the beauty of the Quabbin and describes it as an amazing place. Carroll enjoys walking the dam daily and views spectacular sunsets.

Many guests stuck around to explore the visitor center, which featured displays and history of the Quabbin, as well as a documentary presentation on how the Quabbin was built back in the 1930s.

Comeau is on the executive board of the Friends of the Quabbin and hopes after this first celebration of Quabbin Days, the Quabbin will build on this momentum. The inspiration of Quabbin Days came from the passion

of enjoying the Quabbin and the economic drive for tourism.

Quabbin Days has encouraged towns, local businesses, and community groups in the Quabbin region to host events that highlight the region’s heritage and natural beauty.

Comeau views this first year as a big success and the Friends of Quabbin will continue to improve on it. Comeau is also a nature photographer and has been involved in photography for many years and says he enjoys it so much.

For more information on Quabbin Days, visit quabbindays.org.



State Sen. Jake Oliveira shared stories about going to the Quabbin Reservoir over the years and its importance to the Commonwealth.



State Rep. Aaron Saunders spoke during the kickoff of Quabbin Days.



Sen. Jo Comerford spoke on the importance of recognizing the service and sacrifice it took to construct the Quabbin Reservoir.



State Rep. Todd Smola is shown during his talk about celebrating the natural beauty that is the Quabbin Reservoir.



Rep. Susannah Whipps attended and spoke during Quabbin Days kickoff celebration.



Clayton Sydla is the President of the Quabbin Fisherman’s Association, who spoke highly on the opportunities Quabbin offers.



Above: History and photos of the disincorporated towns, Dana and Prescott, that were once settled on the land of the Quabbin. Left and Right: The Visitor Center was open for guests to explore the history of the Quabbin, including the documentary about how it was constructed in the 1930s.



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MiraVista teams up with farm for fun event

WILBRAHAM – Rice’s Fruit Farm—famous for its apple cider, sugar-and-spice donuts, and homemade ice cream—is adding something new to its menu: heartfelt appreciation for nurses.

On Thursday, Oct. 30 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Rice’s Fruit Farm is teaming up with MiraVista Behavioral Health Center to celebrate the nurses who care for our community every day. All nurses are invited to stop by, enjoy a complimentary cup of cider and a donut, and take a moment to relax, recharge, and feel appreciated.

This collaboration with MiraVista is a simple but meaningful way to say “thank you” to healthcare professionals for their com-

passion, dedication, and commitment to healing.

“Nurses are there for all of us on our best days and our hardest ones,” said Anthony Maloni, owner of Rice’s Fruit Farm. “If a warm cider and a fresh donut can bring a smile or a moment of calm to someone who spends their days caring for others, then that’s the least we can do. We’re honored to partner with MiraVista to say, from our whole team: thank you, nurses.”

Cost: Free for nurses; one cider and one donut per nurse, while supplies last

According to Kimberley Lee, Chief of Creative Strategy and Development for MiraVista, nurses anchor our healthcare system with skill, heart, and resilience. By welcoming the nursing

community, Rice’s Fruit Farm is helping create a simple moment of respite—one that recognizes the essential, often unseen work nurses do across hospitals, clinics, schools, long-term care facilities, behavioral health programs, and more.

MiraVista Behavioral Health Center is proud to join in this expression of gratitude and to uplift caregivers who are central to the well-being of individuals and families across Western Massachusetts.

Stop in. Take a seat. Have a sip. Because kindness—like cider—is best shared warm.

Community partners and residents are encouraged to share this invitation with nurses in their networks and on social media.

STCC invites the public to explore careers in health care on Nov. 13

SPRINGFIELD – Springfield Technical Community College will host an Allied Health Careers Exploration Night on Thursday, Nov. 13, 2025, from 4:30 to 7 p.m. in the School of Health & Patient Simulation (Building 20) on the STCC campus. The event is free and open to the public.

Anyone considering a career in health care is encouraged to attend and learn about the many in-demand allied health programs available at STCC. Visitors will have the chance to:

- Learn about STCC’s healthcare degrees and certificate programs.
- Tour the college’s state-of-the-art patient simulation labs.

• Connect with faculty, current students and health-care professionals.

• Explore career paths in fields such as nursing, dental hygiene, respiratory care, medical coding and more.

“This event is a wonderful opportunity for anyone thinking about a health care career to see firsthand what STCC has to offer,” said Christopher Scott, Dean of the School of Health and Patient Simulation. “Attendees will be able to meet instructors, experience our simulation spaces and discover programs that can lead to rewarding, high-demand jobs.”

The night will feature tours of STCC’s SIMS Medical Center, a nationally recognized patient simulation

facility, and tours of departments. The SIMS Medical Center is one of only a handful of simulation centers in New England accredited by the Society for Simulation in Healthcare, a distinction that underscores its commitment to excellence in healthcare education and training.

Advanced registration at stcc.io/alliedhealthcareer is encouraged. While no registration is required, visitors are asked to check in with organizers in the first-floor lobby of Building 20, on the Pearl Street side of the campus.

For more information, contact the School of Health & Patient Simulation. Email SHPS@stcc.edu or call (413) 755-SHPS (7477)

College: Plymouth State spoils WSU’s homecoming

WESTFIELD – Plymouth State QB Braden Lynn ran for two touchdowns and threw for one to offset a three touchdown-pass performance from Westfield’s Miles Foerster, as the Panthers outlasted the Owls, 42-35 to spoil Westfield’s homecoming on Saturday at Alumni Field.

Plymouth State improves to 6-1 overall and 5-1 in the MASCAC. Westfield is now 2-5 and 2-4 in the conference.

Westfield led 28-21 after a 10-yard TD run from Curtis Dion with 7:54 left in the third quarter.

Plymouth marched 65 yards on eight plays on the ensuing drive, capping the series with an 8-yard off tackle TD run from Reece Davis to tie the game at 28-all after Seamus Ross’ extra point.

The Panthers caught a break on the next series, as the Owls fumbled and TJ Taveras recovered the ball at the Westfield 21-yard line, setting up a short field. Four plays later Lynn scrambled six yards on a bootleg to the left for the TD and a 35-28

Panthers lead.

Westfield was forced to punt after a third-down sack, and Plymouth again put together a long drive this time 82 yards in 10 plays, this one capped by a 9-yard TD scramble from Lynn for a 42-28 lead with 7:48 left in the game

Westfield wasn’t done, and after a 24-yard Brandon Paquette kickoff return set the Owls drive up at their own 40-yard line. Two plays later Foerster rolled left, then threw all the way back across the field to Aidan Patterson, who caught the ball at the 34-yard line and scampered through traffic, all the way from the right side of the field back to the left, where Foerster, hustling on the play, threw the final block for Patterson to skip into the endzone untouched for a 66-yard completion and trimmed the lead to 42-35 after Andrew Currier’s extra point with 6:03 left in the game.

But Plymouth was able to grind out the final six minutes of the game with a methodical 11-play, 62-yard drive with 10 straight run-

ning plays before the final kneel down.

Foerster finished 8-11 passing for 163 yards with three TD’s. Patterson ran for 58 yards, and caught two passes for 71 yards. Westfield’s Casey Tang caught four passes for 77 yards including a pair of touchdown catches.

Andrew Lovell and Josh Marino led the Owls defense with 13 tackles each, and Marino added an interception with a 10 yard return.

For Plymouth, Lynn completed 10 of 16 throws for 144 yards with one touchdown and one interception. The Panthers rushed for 238 yards as a team, led by 129 yards from Reece David and 87 from Gregory Walker. Mitchell Cripps caught two passes for 84 yards. Taveras and Hunter Burke each made nine stops for the Panthers.

Westfield will be back in action at home next Saturday, hosting Mass Maritime at noon, which will also be the Owls senior day game before they close the year with two straight games on the road.

RAILERS ■ from page 8

to make it 1-0. Worcester worked for a stretch of the second to even the score. Cole Donhauser (2nd) finally broke through Alex Worthington with a goal at 12:59, as he sent a backhanded shot off the stick of Admirals’ Bredhan Engum and over the shoulder of Worthington. The Admirals’ Justin Young (1st) snuck a shot under the pads of Tikkanen from the left circle to give Norfolk a

one-goal lead to finish the second (1-2). Worcester outshot Norfolk 15-10 in the frame. Neither team had any power plays or penalties for the second period.

A quick setup pass from Riley Piercey at just under two and a half minutes into the third allowed Ryan Mitotto (1st) to even the game 2-2, adding another goal to Worcester’s tally. The rest of the third showed end-to-end action from both teams, but the score stayed locked 2-2 as the Railers headed into their

first overtime of the season. The game-winning goal for Worcester came from Matt DeMelis (1st), set up with a pass from Michael Ferrandino, who nabbed the first win for Worcester at 4:34 into overtime. Worcester and Norfolk tied for shots 8-8 in the third. Worcester outshot Norfolk 6-1 in overtime. Worcester had one power play and Norfolk had one penalty in the third, a call against German Yavash for cross-checking.

ZBA ■ from page 1

Prouty, who has been on the board for many years. She is joined by Vice Chair Richard Maggi, and Clerk Gary Geiger. Additionally, the alternate members of the board are Vincenzo Ronghi and Aldo Mancini, Jr.

On a case-by-base basis, the Board of Appeals has the power to hear and decide on

petitions for:

- o Appeals from the decisions of the Inspector of Buildings
- o Special Permits as allowed under the Zoning By-law
- o Variances from the requirements of the Zoning Bylaw
- o Comprehensive Permits under Chapter 40B of Massachusetts General Laws

Johnson said he believes once passed by the legislature in the coming months, it would be eligible for the ballot in 2026.

“I believe the legislation will allow the question to go on the ballot at the next election which will be next year’s state election,” Johnson said. “This will not require any additional city council action.”

VOTERS ■ from page 1

Johnson pulled papers to run for mayor.

Barring a write-in campaign, Johnson will easily win re-election.

Early and mail-in voting were also available to resi-

dents for this year’s election. Mail-in ballots were distributed by the clerk’s office and early voting was held for a week from Oct. 22 to Oct. 29 at the Agawam Senior Center.

At the polls, voters are allowed to vote for up to 11

city councilors and up to six school committee members. A voter is not required to fill 11 or 6 names, respectively. The top 11 vote-getters will receive seats on the city council and the top six vote-getters will win school committee seats in that race.

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