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AGAWAM

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Johnson looks forward to move back to mayor's office

The mayor-elect looks forward to speaking with town leaders as transition nears

By Quinn Suomala
 Staff Writer



Christopher Johnson

AGAWAM – Christopher Johnson was elected as the next mayor of Agawam at the general election on Tuesday, Nov. 7.

Johnson was the first mayor of Agawam and served in the position for 10 years. Now he hopes to continue to use his experience there, and his experience as city council president, to keep Agawam moving forward.

Johnson hopes to push Agawam forward and continue the work of current Mayor William Sapelli.

Johnson has worked closely with Sapelli throughout his job as city council president. Therefore, he already has some inside knowledge of how everything in the office is working.

He hopes to use the next few months before he takes office to gain a better understanding of the day-to-day intricacies of the office.

“Having served as council president for years I am familiar with a lot of what is going on, but I don’t have the intimate knowledge of the day-to-day operations, so as I become more informed of those operations, that is going to shape what happens on day one, week one, month one,” Johnson said.

He will also take this time to begin scaling back his law practice so that he is able to dedicate the majority of his time and energy to his work as mayor.

Johnson plans to speak with Sapelli to fully flesh out a transition plan in the upcoming week.

“I’m currently working with Mayor Sapelli, we’ve had some preliminary discussions,” he said. “Bill and I have had several con-

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Ballot question to move preliminary election fails

By Quinn Suomala
 Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The ballot question for the Nov. 7 election concerning the timing of the Agawam preliminary election did not pass.

The question only received 2,465 in its favor, causing it to fail with 2,939 votes against it.

If this question had passed it would have changed the town charter in regards to the timing of Agawam’s municipal preliminary elections.

Currently, the preliminary municipal elections are held four weeks prior to the municipal general elections. The ballot question asked voters if they wanted to change the timing to eight weeks prior to the municipal general election.

Shifting the timing would have made accommodating early voting more feasible. The town opted out of early voting last year. The current timing does not allow enough time for the city clerk to count early voting and mail-in ballots and create the general election ballot.

“It’s essentially just to make the life of the city clerk much easier and be able to accommodate early voting and mail-in voting better when there is more time for the ballots to actually arrive,” Future Mayor Christopher Johnson said. “With four weeks and it taking two to two and a half weeks for the ballots to get printed after a preliminary election, it doesn’t leave a big window for both ear-

BALLOT | page 10

Library hosts turkey-themed scavenger hunt

By Quinn Suomala
 Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Children and their families got a chance to explore around Agawam Public Library during the Turkey Themed Scavenger Hunt the week of Nov. 13.

The library has been putting on scavenger hunts for over 15 years, much to the delight of the Agawam community.

“They’re very popular and people can do them anytime the library is open,” Children’s Librarian Pamela Weingart said.

These hunts are put on for the first two full weeks of the month and have varying themes depending on the time of year.

This hunt was turkey themed, in honor of the Thanksgiving holiday.

“The answer to the riddle and the picture on the clue-card are all turkey themed,” Weingart said.

Each hunt takes about 20 minutes and anyone is welcome to participate. During these hunts participants will explore different sections of the library as they try to find the clues to answer a larger riddle.

For this scavenger hunt, the riddle was “what is the most musical part of a turkey” and to solve it participants had to find signs around the room.

“The kids go around the Children’s Room and try to find little clues to a riddle or this week they’re also challenged to do little

math problems too,” Weingart said. “Each sign has a letter and a number and you put the letter on the line above the number and once you find all the parts it will spell out the answer.”

On top of the riddle, there was also a “Feather Math” hunt. Signs were posted around the Children’s Room with math problems on them for kids to solve. Kids would find and solve the problems and fill out the answers on a worksheet.

Once the kids found and solved all the problems, they would turn in the completed worksheet to be entered into the raffle for a prize.

Weingart enjoys seeing all the kids working to solve the clues and having a chance to go into

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Children were able to solve turkey themed math problems in order to earn a chance to win a prize.



Signs were posted around the Children’s Room at the library for children to find and solve for the two different turkey themed scavenger hunts.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA



Once participants had completed the scavenger hunts they could turn in their worksheet with the answers to be entered into a raffle to win a \$5 gift card to Barnes and Nobles.



Feline Friends Inc. announces winter fundraisers

AGAWAM – Feline Friends Inc. Cat Sanctuary of Feeding Hills, MA will be holding food/supply drives at Smithland Pet & Garden Center on Saturday, Dec. 2, Jan. 6 and Feb. 3 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Volunteers will be accepting food, litter & monetary donations for our kitties. Opened bags/boxes will also be accepted. Gift cards from various pet stores or Costco would be much appreciated.

Giving Tuesday is on Nov. 28 this year. We appreciate any donations at Paypal-info@felinefriendsinc.org; Venmo - @Feline-Friends and by check - Feline Friends Inc., P.O. Box 174, Feeding Hills, MA 01030.

Our Dec. 2 event will feature a raffle for a Winter themed basket as well as surprises. In January 2024, we will be selling raffle

tickets for our February Calendar Raffle. More information to come.

Smithland, a valued sponsor, is stocked with Friskies Pate or Shreds canned food (single flavored cases preferred), some Fancy Feast varieties and unscented, clumping cat litter. All donations are gratefully accepted. Our donation bin is located near the cash registers.

Other Wish List items: Disinfecting wipes, paper towels, puppy pee pads, dry cat or dog food for strays and colonies.

Special thanks to our monthly donors and everyone who donated in November either at our events, bins, through the mail or Paypal/Venmo: Joanne L, Joan W, Sue B and Kristina L, Crystal M, Kay A, Glen G, George P, and Heidi M.

We are thankful to all of our community members for their support throughout the year. Just a reminder that we have collection bins at the Agawam Public Library & the Agawam Senior Center as well as at Smithland in Agawam. Please add your contact information if you would like an acknowledgement.

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.



Roca and DoorDash partner to offer resources and support

By Dalton Zbierski
dzbierski@turley.com

HOLYOKE – Roca, Inc., a Massachusetts-based nonprofit organization dedicated to disrupting incarceration, poverty and racism by promoting hope and driving change, has partnered with DoorDash to provide support for residents in need across the state.

Through its Community Credits Program, established in 2021, DoorDash has committed to donating Roca \$3,000 in gift cards to support its programming and community engagement. This represents Roca's first corporate funding partnership.

Roca works to achieve its mission by engaging young adults, police and the systems at the center of urban violence in relationships to address trauma and make an impact. Roca has five sites in Massachusetts, including Holyoke, Springfield, Boston, Chelsea and Lynn; it also has a location in Baltimore, MD.

The Holyoke site is located at 384

High St.

Roca currently serves 103 young women in Western Massachusetts and 126 young men in Holyoke alone, said Chris Judd, Roca's vice president of individual and corporate giving.

"Having these community credits is a gamechanger," Judd said. "I think it's important I emphasize that our young people, not only being at the highest risk, are also very transient population. A lot of times, a lot of young mothers are in shelters, or, for young men, they're couch surfing and not always in a great living situation."

Roca can use the community credits to encourage young people to visit the facilities and attend programming. To make a difference, Judd said it is important to first get people through the doors.

"Sometimes, having these tokens will give them some incentive as well," Judd said. "We can say, 'Hey, your next meal is on us,' instead of them having to worry if their baby has (enough to eat)."

DoorDash launched its Community

Credits Program to help empower local organizations such as Roca and work with those in need. DoorDash Public Engagement Manager Darrel Davis said his team met with Roca earlier this year to learn more about the organization's mission and the communities it serves and left impressed.

"Just hearing from Roca, we were able to understand that these gift cards can definitely help them make a greater impact on the folks they interact with directly," Davis said. "From our perspective, this was really about how we could come together to support a really great community organization that's doing amazing work across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."

Davis said community is at the heart of everything that is done at DoorDash, which has been able to partner with more than 200 local, state and national organizations to help enhance programs.

Davis said recipients have informed DoorDash that the gift cards help promote youth development, entrepreneur-

ship, workforce development programs and even vaccinations. He said that year after year, DoorDash has seen the program continue to grow in terms of the number of partners it unites with and supports, as well as understanding the needs of communities.

"We're trying to fine tune different ways to keep our Community Credits Program top of mind for organizations, but we're really proud to be supporting organizations across the commonwealth, including Roca, because it just means so much to the participants of their programs," Davis said.

Judd said that if she was being honest, she wishes DoorDash could offer more credits, but expressed great appreciation for the donation Roca will receive. She knows it will be significant.

"We'll be able to give young men and women these credits and say, 'Here you go. Set yourself up,'" she said. "For a nonprofit that is working with a population that is hard to engage, this is a valuable partnership."

Photography submissions still needed at library for show

AGAWAM – The Friends of the Agawam Public Library is looking for entries to their 4th Open Judged Virtual Photography Show, to be on display after March 15, 2024. The show provides a platform to recognize and encourage photographers and benefits the Agawam Public Library. Twenty-one awards totaling \$1,540 will be determined by judging done on March 1, 2024. Dave Roback and Tim Donelan, both well recognized photographers, will be the judges.

The show is divided into four categories of photography: creative, nature, photojournalism and pictorial. The entry fee is \$25 per entry. Deadline for submis-

sions is Feb. 15, 2024. If we have not received sufficient entries, the show will be cancelled and all fees returned.

All images must be original, made by the photographer, captured by film or digitally, and cannot be previous entries in our show.

The Prospectus and Entry Form can be accessed by going to www.agawam-library.org, and scrolling down to the Friends of the Library widget. From there you will be able to click on a link to the show's information.

For further information please contact Bob Kadis at r.kadis@comcast.net or at 413-789-4814.

Pinocchio movie showing at Congregational Church Dec. 2

AGAWAM – Pinocchio is coming to Agawam Congregational Church on the evening of Saturday, Dec. 2.

At 6:15 p.m. the original, animated movie made in 1940 will be shown for free in the church hall complete with a full-sized movie screen, popcorn, and water.

"It will look, feel, and smell like everyone is in a real movie theater with popcorn popping, and children smiling, laughing

and enjoying being with one another," said Roberta Page, Agawam Congregational Church coordinator of the event.

Children must be accompanied by an adult. Reservations are to be made by Thursday, Nov. 30 at noon by contacting the church office at 413-786-7111 or office@agawamcong.com. The church, located at 745 Main St., is handicapped accessible with a large parking lot.

Santa Claus schedules visit to carousel this weekend

HOLYOKE – Santa, the jolly ol' elf himself, will travel down from the North Pole after Thanksgiving to visit with all good little boys and girls at the Holyoke Merry-Go-Round.

Old Saint Nick will be at Holyoke's historic carousel from 1-3 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 27.

Saved by an extensive fundraising



campaign after the closure of Mountain Park in Holyoke, the antique carousel was reassembled at Heritage State Park for all to enjoy. It is comprised of 48 magnificent horses hand carved by artists at the Philadelphia Toboggan Company. It also features 56 original scenic panels, 864 brightly colored lights and 98 beveled mirrors.

Located at Holyoke Heritage State Park on 221 Appleton St. in Holyoke, the Merry-Go-Round is open Saturday and Sunday from noon to 4 p.m.

Tickets are \$3.50 per ride or 4 for \$10.

The Holyoke Merry-Go-Round is currently offering a holiday deal on gift cards. Visit holyokemerrygoround.org to take advantage of the special deal.

For more information on Holyoke's historic carousel, and to book a private party, visit holyokemerrygoround.org or call 413-538-9838.

Westfield Athenaeum to host annual wine taste fundraiser

WESTFIELD – The annual wine taste fundraiser to support the renovation campaign for the Westfield Athenaeum has been set for Friday, Dec. 1. Scheduled for 6 to 8:30 p.m.,

'A Storybook Holiday' has become the unofficial kickoff for the holiday season. It will be held in the majestic Great Hall of the Athenaeum at 6 Elm Street, which will be outfitted in stunning holiday décor.

We are pleased that Super Phipps Liquors has agreed to be our lead sponsor once again, and will offer a varied sampling of selected wines for the event. Super Phipps, a locally owned company in business since 1973, carries an exceptional array of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, including an extensive selection of imported and domestic beer, hundreds of different wines and a wide variety of liquors and mixers to meet every taste and budget.

Hot and cold hors d'oeuvres will be served with the assistance of the Westfield Technical Academy Culinary Arts

program. Live music will be offered by Pete Grimaldi's Third Millennium Trio and our popular fresh holiday floral arrangement raffle will be held.

Tickets are \$50 each and are available now, at the main circulation desk or online through Paypal at westath.org. Online tickets will be held at the door.

This is the major fundraising event organized by the all-volunteer Board of Trustees of the Athenaeum. Monies raised through this fundraiser will support the restoration and upgrade of the main room of the Adult Library, the Great Hall, which is the third phase of the total building renovation project begun in 2016.

The Athenaeum, a private, non-profit organization in continuous service to the residents of Westfield and surrounding communities for over 150 years, is grateful to receive much of its funding through city and state grants.

Private donations, restricted endowments and fundraising efforts are needed to close the budget gap.

DST: Professor Johnson wants to set the right standard

By Richard Murphy
Correspondent

The changeover from Daylight Savings Time is done, sort of. As this is being written, one still sees the odd clock at the wrong hour, but we are back to Standard Time.

Except our bodies and minds are not yet perfectly aligned to it due to something called circadian rhythm. Circadian rhythm regulates daily body cycles.

The changeover to standard time from daylight savings time and vice versa will put our circadian rhythm out of sync.

Over a short time, most of us will adjust to whatever our clocks say. That does not mean it is a great idea.

Daylight Saving Time was and is a wrong idea and an example of one of humanity's worst afflictions, overthinking.

It has some bad aspects according to Karin Johnson.

Johnson is a professor of neurology at the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School-Baystate and medical director of the Baystate Health Regional Sleep Pro-

gram.

She is co-chair of the Coalition for Permanent Standard Time, and also vice-president of the non-profit, nonpartisan Save Standard Time. Johnson is creator and host of its educational video series The Science of Clock Change.

In an Oct. 25 news article Johnson made the point that not just the changeover, but Daylight Savings Time itself is more than just a few restless nights:

"Every year more scientific data is uncovering the hidden harms of Daylight Saving Time. Most people think it is just the clock change that is harmful (it is), but they do not realize the greater harms of living with delayed clocks throughout Daylight Saving Time, which increase the risk of cancer, heart disease, diabetes, depression, suicide, fatal motor vehicle crashes, and decreased workplace productivity and academic achievement. These impacts are



disproportionately felt by teenagers, night owls, and workers and parents who have to wake up by 8 a.m. (worse for those with earlier start times), more often minorities and those with lower socio-economic status."

Proposals for taking up Daylight Savings Time go back well over a hundred years. Mostly they were associated with an economic benefit, Germany and Austria took it on for a military advantage during World War I.

It certainly caught on here and is almost universally observed.

Will that change now that it is known that health can be impacted by the practice?

Johnson seems to hope so from her article. She mentions a bill submitted by State Rep. Angelo Puppolo of Springfield and State Senator Patrick O'Connor of Weymouth.

The bill, submitted by Puppolo, and

O'Connor, would allow Massachusetts to adopt permanent Standard Time.

It seems a worthy idea, but even if it passes, unless bordering states take it up, it will have to wait for implementation according to the professor, "Wary of economic and transportation impacts due to misalignment with border states, many time bills, including the Massachusetts bill, link implementation to similar bills in other states."

Still, it's a start, and should you wish to see it pass, contacting your rep or senator may be in order.

Going in a completely opposite direction, however, are Florida Republican Senator Marco Rubio and Massachusetts Democratic Senator Ed Markey.

Rubio and Markey support the Sunshine Protection Act that proposes permanent daylight savings time.

One is tempted to say the two are trying to give bipartisanship a bad name, but of course, they claim all kinds of improvements as well. The Rubio bill's benefits would be mostly economic.

Evidence seems more on Johnson's side.

Senator advocates to make daylight savings permanent

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senator Edward J. Markey (D-Massachusetts) released a statement recently on making daylight saving time permanent and ending the antiquated practice of changing the clocks twice a year.

Markey, along with Senator Marco Rubio (R-Florida), is an original sponsor of the Sunshine Protection Act, which unanimously passed the Senate in March 2022 but was never brought up for a vote in the House.

"When we 'fall back' and lose the extra hour of daylight saving time on Sunday, we are sacrificing energy savings, crime reduction and economic benefits for darkness," Markey said. "Over the years, I've fought and won to extend daylight saving time-adding two months' worth of sun to the American people's calendar, which saves the same amount of electricity as used by over 100,000 households for an entire year. It's past time for Congress to take

up the Sunshine Protection Act and make daylight saving time permanent to keep the sun shining."

Studies show that making DST permanent would have positive impacts on public health, the economy, and climate change. Representative Vern Buchanan (Florida-16) introduced companion legislation in the House.

As part of the Energy Policy Act in 2005, then-Representatives Markey and Fred Up-

ton (Michigan-06) amended the Uniform Time Act of 1966, extending the duration of DST in the spring by changing its start date from the first Sunday in April to the second Sunday in March, and in the fall by changing its end date from the last Sunday in October to the first Sunday in November.

In 1985, then-Representative Markey also partnered with Representative Carlos Moorhead (California-27) to extend DST by three weeks.

Yuletree Jubilee starts Nov. 20

WEST SPRINGFIELD – Starting Friday, Nov. 20, the Red Thread Network for the arts will host the Seventh Annual Yuletree Jubilee in the West Springfield Public Library Community Room, 200 Park Ave. Admission is free.

Twenty two trees, decorated and donated by local businesses, organizations and individuals, will be displayed and raffled off for 10 days to the delight of

visitors. The hours are Thursday, Friday, Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. The drawing will take place on Sunday, Dec. 3 at 2 p.m.

For more information contact Jane at janetrompe@comcast.net or log on to the web page www.redthreadnetworkforthearts.org or visit our Facebook page Yuletree Jubilee.

Positions open on Board of Appeals

AGAWAM – Please be advised that there are two openings on the Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals effective January 2024. One opening is for a regular position and the other for the alternate po-

sition. Interested parties should contact Barbara Bard in the City Council Office at 726-9716 or send in a letter of interest to bbard@agawam.ma.us as soon as possible.

NAMI Western Massachusetts joins world in celebrating Giving Tuesday

AGAWAM – GivingTuesday is a global generosity movement, unleashing the power of people and organizations to transform their communities and their world. GivingTuesday will kick off the generosity season this year by inspiring people to give back on Nov. 28, and throughout the year.

This year GivingTuesday is more important to your Western Mass community than ever before as there's been an ever-increasing demand for NAMI-WM's services. Therefore, we are asking the community to support us on this special

day of global generosity.

Fundraising for small non-profits is difficult, so we joined GivingTuesday to add additional fundraising to our cause and to be part of this important global movement.

Those who are interested in donating to NAMI Western Massachusetts' GivingTuesday initiative can visit www.namiwm.org.

NAMI-WM provides advocacy, education, support and public awareness so that all those affected by mental health conditions can build better lives.

Holiday wreath sale this weekend

BELCHERTOWN – The Belchertown 4-H and Boy Scout Troop 507 Annual Wreath Sale will be held on the Belchertown Common, Thanksgiving weekend Saturday, Nov. 25 and Sunday, Nov. 26

from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The price of wreaths starts at \$20.

Deluxe wreaths, which include ornaments, are pre-order only and supplies are limited, please text 413-210-0990.

Holiday open house at Wistariahurst

HOLYOKE – Embrace the magic of the holiday season at Wistariahurst's Holiday Open House and Festive Market on Dec. 2 and 3 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. During this captivating weekend, the museum will be decorated with the season's splendor and festive cheer. The event features a festive market with local vendors to jump-start holiday shopping. The local vendors will offer an array of products such as art, delicious treats, jewelry, and many other amazing items that will be perfect for your holiday gift exchanges this year. Throughout the event, people of all ages will be able to enjoy holiday story time, an exciting festive model train, sample tasty treats, and groove to your favorite holiday tunes.

"Our Holiday Open House is the event I look forward to most throughout the year," Megan Seiler, museum director said "It's so delightful to see everyone filled with excitement for the holidays, and to celebrate that with them inside our museum is amazing."

Wistariahurst Museum's Holiday Open House and Festival Market truly offers something for everyone. The event is a time for celebration and a time to make cherished memories, admission to this event absolutely free and open to the public.

Please visit <https://wistariahurst.org/events/holiday-open-house-festive-market/> to learn more about this event.



Wistariahurst Museum decks the halls.



Local vendors offer various items for sale.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Opinion

Guest Column



Can I voluntarily suspend my Social Security payments?

Dear Rusty

My wife retired in 2015 and is receiving Social Security. I am past my full retirement age and I still work. I recently filed for Social Security benefits and received my first payment earlier this month and my benefits are around three times my wife's. I now find that, due to other income, I am having some regrets about filing for Social Security, as the taxes will be complicated. So, my questions are:

If I do a "Voluntary Suspension", can my wife still apply to get up to 50% of my benefits, or do I have to be "actively" receiving Social Security benefits? In other words, does the "Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015" prevent this?

If I do a "Voluntary Suspension", how soon could I "restart" my benefits?

Signed: Having Second Thoughts

Dear Second Thoughts

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015 closed a loophole which previously allowed someone to file for their Social Security retirement benefit in order for their marital partner to claim a spousal benefit, after which the primary beneficiary could suspend their own benefit and allow it to grow to maximum at age 70. That "file and suspend" option went away in April of 2016; thus, your wife cannot claim her spousal benefit while your Social Security retirement benefits are suspended you must be "actively" receiving benefits for your wife to get benefits on your record.

Nevertheless, because you've already reached your full retirement age, you can voluntarily suspend your benefit payments at any time to allow it to continue growing by simply calling Social Security at your local office or at the national number 1-800-772-1213 and asking them to do so. Your wife will not receive her spousal benefits for any months your benefits are suspended, but she would continue to get her own SS retirement amount, only the spousal portion of her monthly amount would be suspended.

You will be able to restart your benefits at any time by calling Social Security again and asking that your benefits be resumed. You can suspend and restart your benefits as needed (no restriction on how many times), but they will only start/resume the suspension effective with the month following the month you call. And, as you likely already know, for each month your benefits are suspended you will earn Delayed Retirement Credits resulting in a higher payment amount later.

Just for clarity, voluntary suspension of benefits is only available to those who have reached full retirement age but is

SECURITY | page 5



Guest Column

Reforms sorely needed at the Sex Offender Registry Board

State Auditor's monthly update

By Diana DiZoglio

Massachusetts State Auditor

Serving as Massachusetts State Auditor doesn't just mean reviewing finances. A big part of my role, as I often speak about with folks across the state, is reviewing the performance and efficacy of the Commonwealth's agencies and entities. A great example of the responsibility to look beyond number crunching is our office's recently released audit of the Sex Offender Registry Board.

People are familiar with the concept that Mas-

sachusetts registers convicted sex offenders, maintaining a database of where such people live and work in an effort to maintain public safety. This system of public safety is maintained by SORB, a seven-member board appointed by the Governor and staffed by more than 70 individuals.

Our recent audit looked at SORB's operations from July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021. Covering that two-year period, my team honed in on whether SORB classified sex offenders at least 10 days before they were released from custody, thus ensuring they were assigned an appropriate level.

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Random Acts of Kindness

Yadilette Rivera-Colon

By Barb Turcotte

Special to the Agawam Advertiser News

There are people who are just natural leaders and who were truly born to make a difference in other's lives. And that is the introduction to Yadilette (Yady) Rivera-Colon, referred to me by another natural leader, Pat Drewniak who was featured in a previous Agawam Advertiser Random Acts of Kindness story. When first meeting Yady, you could just feel the excitement she had and her eyes sparkled with an unexplainable energy as she introduced herself to me.

I'm very happy to tell you that as of July 1, Rivera-Colon's new title has gone from Assistant Professor of Biology-Undergraduate Science Program Research Coordinator at Bay Path University to Associate Professor! Congratulations! She rightfully is very proud of her accomplishment as within her family tree she revealed she is the first one to attend college.

Rivera-Colon moved here from Puerto Rico in 2008 and began her education at UMass. She now is the proud mom of a daughter and Rivera-Colon's sister, who is a retired teacher helps care for her daughter. What a wonderful role model by example Rivera-Colon is for her daughter.

Rivera-Colon has done so many things and is always on the search for more ways to help young

people, it's truly remarkable. Not being a stranger to helping with scholarships, she began volunteering on the Event Board then became a member of the actual Board of the Latino Scholarship Fund of Western Massachusetts. She then went on to serve as the Vice President and Co-President but has since resigned when appointed another position on a different committee. While serving on this Board they were able to award twelve students each a \$1,500 scholarship. She was also proficient in helping the board transition to the next levels of moderation by using various media platforms, emails, etc. to help reach the public and educate them about these opportunities available to them.

At the University of Pennsylvania Rivera-Colon helped organize a science carnival in the basement of a church for parents and kids to introduce them to networking with mentors and creating various science experiments.

All these things have led Rivera-Colon to her passion for continued learning and teaching biology. After being hired as a professor, she helped with a summer Future Facility Workshop at Northeastern University where she spoke about her experience regarding applying for a teaching professorship.

Rivera-Colon is very excited about another local program she's been helping with that will have kids actually building microscopes that they can

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Opinion

KINDNESS ■ from page 4

keep so they can experiment and enjoy experiences involving science. She quoted her belief, "Give talent, time or treasures."

Rivera-Colon has also served on the educational committee as the Education Chair for the Biophysicist Society where scientists from all over the world come together to learn what other scientists are working on and discuss their projects. She very proudly told me she is not only the first Latina to be the chair of the committee but was also the youngest person to actually make some progressive chang-

es within this Society.

Rivera-Colon feels very strongly about helping the younger generation to feel empowered and volunteers with Girls, Inc. of the Valley which was founded in 1864. The women work with girls from five years old to college age by teaching them their own value and how to be strong, smart and bold by focusing on the development of the whole girl. Within this opportunity is the Eureka! program. This summer program has the young girls working with professors at UMASS in their classrooms and labs plus out in the field and is available for girls from 8th grade through their

senior year. It also teaches them about building leadership skills which will carry them through their lifetime. They also get a "college readiness bootcamp" at Bay Path University. Volunteering truly is a random act of kindness, just by being willing to give of yourself to help others.

The non-profit Girls on the Run partners with Girls, Inc. and has similar beliefs, focusing on the important connection between physical and emotional health for young girls. Rivera-Colon is hoping to work with this organization in the future as well because it's another way for young people to learn critical life skills

including resolving conflict, helping others or making intentional decisions. Some of the girls shared it helped them improve their confidence, caring, competence, character development or connection to others.

Rivera-Colon is truly making a difference in our young people's lives. I hope you take the opportunity to do a random act of kindness of your own because these gestures truly make a difference with spreading positivity.

If you would like to tell me a story about a Random Act of Kindness please contact me at bdt514@aol.com or 413-788-7514.

AUDITOR ■ from page 4

Further, we looked at whether SORB used all the resources at their disposal to accurately identify sex offenders who were in violation of maintaining their registration.

I was disappointed to find that SORB underperformed in a way that could have a negative impact upon the public.

While incarcerated sex offenders are supposed to be assigned a classification at least 10 days prior to their release, per state law, SORB failed to do so with approximately 1/3 of those released during our two-year review window. More concerning, 77 offenders didn't receive their classification until after they were released.

This lax approach to the law meant those sex offenders' names, addresses, offenses, and registration statuses were not

appropriately posted to SORB's website for level 2 and 3 sex offenders and were not otherwise available to the public.

Our audit team also identified other vulnerabilities regarding how SORB tracked offenders who have been released from incarceration. Namely, SORB's database was not kept up to date in all situations, with approximately one out of five offenders showing incorrect addresses when compared against records maintained by other state departments (such as the addresses the Department of Transitional Assistance records).

Part of the benefit of SORB is that it tracks the location of high level offenders. By not ensuring that it has the current addresses of sex offenders considered in violation, SORB is not able to consistently communicate information about sex offenders' whereabouts, their offenses, and

their classifications to local law enforcement agencies and the general public.

What's disturbing is that some of these issues were identified the last time my predecessor audited SORB. These issues must be immediately addressed.

Our office has recommended that SORB increase their collaboration with correctional facilities to establish more reliable procedures for providing anticipated release dates for incarcerated offenders. We've also recommended the implementation of a tracking process that identifies any delays or issues that may arise, to ensure that all sex offenders are assigned final classifications prior to each offender's release.

For ensuring residential address accuracy, SORB needs to not only work more closely with other state agencies to verify addresses - SORB must also make a point

of updating those addresses in their system when they are found.

We will continue to work with SORB and encourage their adoption of practices that maximize public safety.

As always, please feel free to contact my office at any time for more information at auditor@sao.state.ma.us and 617-727-2075.

The Office of State Auditor Diana DiZoglio conducts audits, investigations, and studies to promote accountability and transparency, improve performance, and make government work better. DiZoglio is the 26th Auditor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, sworn into her first term on Jan. 18, 2023. She is committed to help move Massachusetts forward by working to increase transparency and accountability in state government.

OWLS ■ from page 7

an excellent way to increase your monthly Social Security payment. Your benefit will grow by .667% for each month suspended and, if your benefit is still suspended when you turn 70 years old, Social Security will automatically resume payments at that time, at your higher maximum monthly amount.

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 Citi-

zens 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. .NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org.

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- CLUES ACROSS**
- 1. Nocturnal S. American rodent
 - 5. Requesting
 - 11. Give temporarily
 - 12. Happiness
 - 16. Military branch
 - 17. - __, denotes past
 - 18. Middle Eastern city
 - 19. Air hostesses
 - 24. Partner to Pa
 - 25. Percussion instrument
 - 26. Popular computers
 - 27. Decrease light
 - 28. Valley in the Osh Region
 - 29. "To __ his own"
 - 30. Absence of difficulty
 - 31. Notice announcing intended marriage read out in church
 - 33. Trims by cutting
 - 34. Impact
 - 38. Military member
 - 39. A French river
 - 40. Member of prehistoric people in Mexico
 - 43. Messenger ribonucleic acid
 - 44. Musician Clapton
 - 45. Greek sophist
 - 49. Largest English dictionary (abbr.)
 - 50. Narrow valley
 - 51. A way to disentangle
 - 53. Indicates not an issue (abbr.)
 - 54. Recommending
 - 56. Genus of legumes
 - 58. Friend to Larry and Curly
 - 59. Off-Broadway theater award
 - 60. Fencers
 - 63. Small Eurasian deer
 - 64. Denoting passerine birds
 - 65. Separate by category
 - 3. Photographic equipment
 - 4. Confirms a point
 - 5. Developed over time
 - 6. Not the leader
 - 7. __ Lang (country singer)
 - 8. Adults need one
 - 9. Nests of pheasants
 - 10. Antelopes
 - 13. One quintillion bytes (abbr.)
 - 14. Japanese three-stringed lute
 - 15. Type of cat
 - 20. Cools your home
 - 21. The ancient Egyptian sun god
 - 22. Pouches
 - 23. Trigraph
 - 27. Form of Persian spoken in Afghanistan
 - 29. __ route
 - 30. Body part
 - 31. Bridge building degree
 - 32. Indicates position
 - 33. Political action
 - 34. Tasty snack
 - 35. Part of a quadruped
 - 36. Locate
 - 37. Pitching statistic
 - 38. Of I
 - 40. City in Utah
 - 41. Football players in the trenches
 - 42. Hammer is one
 - 44. A "nightmarish" street
 - 45. Performers
 - 46. Slang for cut or scrape
 - 47. More breathable
 - 48. Most slick
 - 50. Provokes
 - 51. Home to college's Flyers
 - 52. Sodium
 - 54. Large fish of mackerel family
 - 55. Zero
 - 57. __ and behold
 - 61. The Palmetto State
 - 62. Popular Tom Cruise movie franchise (abbr.)

CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE 9

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CDC recommends getting your flu shot now

SPRINGFIELD – It's flu shot time. No one knows exactly what to expect about the severity of this flu season, but flu is already in the community.

While the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend getting your flu shot by the end of October, it's never too late, and if you haven't gotten the vaccine yet, don't wait any longer to protect yourself and those around you.

"Whether we have a severe or mild flu season predicted should not matter when it comes to getting your flu shot. Everyone with some exceptions needs to get one," said Dr. Armando Paez, chief, Infectious Disease Division, Baystate Health in a press release.

The CDC recommends that everyone 6 months and older who does not have any conditions that may prevent them from getting flu vaccine, such as a prior reaction after receiving the flu vaccine, should be vaccinated now, preferably before the end of October. The flu vaccine composition for 2023-2024 has been updated to best match the flu viruses that are anticipated to be commonly circulating this season.

One-dose flu shots are appropriate for most people, with rare exceptions for children younger than 6 months of age and those with severe, life-threatening allergies to any ingredient in the flu vaccine or who have had a previous severe allergic reaction to a dose of flu vaccine.

Some children aged 6 months through 8 years may require two doses.

Flu vaccinations are particularly important for those individuals at risk of severe illness and complications from flu. These include older adults, residents of long-term

care facilities, women who are pregnant, adults and children with a weakened immune system, and those with chronic medical conditions and obesity.

Persons who live with or care for individuals at risk of severe infection such as healthcare personnel and others living in the home are also essential to be vaccinated.

For people 65 years and older, there are three preferentially recommended higher-dose or adjuvant flu vaccines: Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent vaccine, Flublok Quadrivalent recombinant flu vaccine and Flud Quadrivalent adjuvant flu vaccine.

More information is available at <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/65over.htm>.

Yet another concern, according to Paez, "In addition to flu, COVID-19 and RSV infections can complicate and pose additional threats to vulnerable individuals with weakened immune systems."

A flu outbreak can be devastating for children.

"Influenza and RSV have always been a significant illness in young children. Children with underlying medical conditions, especially prematurity, asthma and immunodeficiencies, kids under age five, as well as those with asthma or serious underlying pulmonary, cardiac, neurologic, or immune system illnesses are at particular risk for a serious influenza infection," said Dr. Cecilia Di Pentima, chief, Pediatric Infectious Diseases, Baystate Children's Hospital.

During the 2022-23 influenza season, 174 children of all age groups died of influenza.

She noted the best way to protect children from more severe influenza infection is with annually available vaccines. While

protection from immunization might not prevent getting sick with influenza, it does offer protection against more severe illness.

Children between 6 months and 8 years of age who have never received at least two doses of flu vaccine at any point in time during their lives (not necessarily during the same flu season) need two doses of flu vaccine given at least four weeks apart in order to be better protected from flu.

But it's not just about the flu for kids this fall and beyond.

"As the RSV season arrives, newborns, and infants under 8 months of age can be protected for severe RSV infection with a single intramuscular injection of a newly approved monoclonal antibody (Nirsevimab). Older infants between eight months and 19 months of age with underlying risk factors are also eligible to receive Nirsevimab," said Di Pentima.

Monoclonal antibodies are man-made proteins that mimic the antibodies our bodies naturally produce when exposed to harmful germs. Because these antibodies are not produced by our own immune system, they are called "passive-immunization."

Although COVID-19 infections in children tend to have a milder impact than in adults, severe lung and heart disease can lead to complications in children as well. Since the onset of the pandemic, over 2000 children and teenagers 17 years of age and younger have died of COVID-19 infection.

Infants as young as 6 months of age and older can be protected with the updated COVID-19 vaccines.

"The best way to learn more about influenza, RSV and COVID-19 prevention is by

talking to your pediatrician now, before the colder weather increases the risk of transmission of all respiratory viruses," Di Pentima said.

Given the potential triple-demic of respiratory infections by RSV, flu and COVID, Paez noted Americans at risk of severe disease from these infections are urged to get vaccinated.

Flu shots can be given at the same time as other vaccines, including the updated COVID-19 vaccine. However, there are mixed messages on adding the RSV vaccine at the same time.

The CDC has stated that it may be given at the same time as other vaccines. However, some health experts cite the fact there is little research about administering an RSV shot with another vaccine.

Consult your doctor if you are unsure as what to do.

For more information on Baystate Health, visit baystatehealth.org or for more information about Baystate Children's Hospital, visit baystatehealth.org/bch.



Firefighter safety grant opportunity available

STOW – The Healey-Driscoll Administration announced today that \$5 million in grant funding is available to support the purchase of firefighter turnout gear, fire suppression equipment, and related items through the FY24 Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant program.

The competitive grant program, which is administered by the Executive Office of Public Safety & Security and the Department of Fire Services, reimburses local fire departments for the purchase of qualifying safety equipment. Departments of every city, town, fire district, and eligible state authority may apply for a grant. Maximum funding amounts are based on the size of the population the department serves.

"The equipment funded through these grants will make firefighters and their communities safer," said Secretary of Public Safety and Security Terrence M. Reidy. "Whether it's a complete set of turnout gear or ballistic protection for

use on a rescue task force, every dollar goes toward protecting the people who protect us."

More than 130 different categories of tools, meters, personal protective equipment, communications devices, and other items are eligible for reimbursement through the program.

"The Firefighter Safety Equipment Grants are an investment in the health and safety of Massachusetts firefighters," said State Fire Marshal Jon M. Davine. "The flexibility of the program is especially valuable because it allows each department to make purchases based on their specific needs and resources."

For more information on the FY24 Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant program, including eligibility requirements and conditions, fire chiefs and/or department grant managers should read the Notice of Funding Opportunity posted on the Department of Fire Services' website.

Agawam to participate in textile competition

AGAWAM – The Town of Agawam is excited to announce its partnership with the Hartsprings Foundation and Town of West Springfield in a friendly competition to collect used unwanted textiles. In an effort to reduce the amount of textiles entering our waste stream and supporting Hartsprings Foundation's mission of financially supporting Big Brothers and Big Sisters, Hartsprings will be sponsoring the friendly competition. The community that collects the most textiles in weight will win a \$500 donation to a program within their community. The \$500 donation will be made out to either the Agawam Municipal Scholarship Fund or West Springfield High's Terrier Closet Program.

"The Town of Agawam is very excited to participate in this friendly competition with West Springfield again" stated Mayor William Sapelli. "Having fun while encouraging our residents to make responsible waste reduction practices is a win for our community and solid waste disposal

costs. We look forward to this challenge and hope to receive the funds for our community".

Residents and supporters of the Town of Agawam are encouraged to donate their bagged or boxed used clothing, linens, hats, shoes, belts, towels, curtains, drapes, and other cloth items, on either or both of the two drop off dates between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. the Department of Public Works, 1000 Suffield St., Saturday, Nov. 4 or Saturday, Dec. 2.

Acceptable donations include clothing, bedding, draperies, table cloths, towels, shoes, hats, mittens, gloves, etc.

A Hartsprings truck will be at the DPW for collection and the driver will help residents transfer donations from their vehicles. Hartsprings Foundation, Inc. is a registered non-profit that collects used goods and through the sale of those goods, financially supports Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring programs in Massachusetts and Connecticut. www.hartsprings.org.

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SPORTS

Brownies cap off unified season

AGAWAM – The Unified basketball team was able to have a couple more games as they participated in a jamboree event hosted by the Special Olympics last Thursday at Holyoke High School. Agawam has had unified basketball for the past few years and several participants will now look forward to the upcoming track season in the spring.



Dharbi Cooper launches a shot.



The 2023 Agawam High School Unified basketball team.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHTOS.COM



Bernard Wangameti tries to shoot under pressure.



Massimo Laprise makes his way down the court.



Patrick Wagoner sprints for the hoop



Trevor Midura drives to the basket.

Agawam defeats Pittsfield

AGAWAM – Thanks to a couple of early turnovers and some good defense, Agawam was able to finish its nonplayoff schedule with a win over Pittsfield 30-6 last Thurs-

day night at home. The Brownies also achieved a .500 record at 5-5 as they get ready to take on their final opponent on Thanksgiving morning, West Springfield.



Ryan Litz takes off on a run.



Benjamin Tokarev is tackled after making a catch.



Rian Villareal breaks up a pass.



Michael Sibilia attacks on the defensive line.



Quarterback Domenick Pisano tries to throw on the run.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

COLLEGE

Owls win conference

Agawam alum Emily Ottomaniello is a member of the team

WESTFIELD – Westfield State junior Delaney Parker (Orange, Mass.) delivered the game-winning goal with 24 minutes left in regulation to lift the Owls to a 2-1, come from behind win over top-seeded Bridgewater State in the 2023 Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference championship game at Mazzaferro Field in Bridgewater earlier this month.

Westfield earns the league's automatic bid to the NCAA Division III Tournament with the win.

For Westfield, it's the Owls third straight, and 10th overall MASCAC tournament title, all coming in the last 16 years under current Owls head coach Todd Ditmar.

"It shows how old I am," joked Ditmar. "I think we have talented players, they all have good attitudes and it makes it easy to coach them. Players just want the opportunity to get on the field and show how good they are."

Westfield fell behind on a fluky first goal from the Bears just 6:38 into the match. Granted a free kick from near midfield, Bridgewater's Sydney Dewhurst

Sports

Hall of Fame creates new award with Ice Cube

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame and ground-breaking rapper, renowned blockbuster film producer and actor, entrepreneur, and co-founder of the BIG3 basketball league, Ice Cube, are thrilled to announce a pioneering partnership culminating in the creation of the inaugural Ice Cube Impact Award.

This unique collaboration is set to honor Ice Cube's extraordinary contributions to the world of basketball, his unparalleled passion for the game, and his unwavering commitment to encouraging crucial dialogues surrounding inclusivity, equal opportunity, and racial and social justice while contributing to initiatives focused on education and community development.

"The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame Award named in my honor is truly remark-

able, and words alone can't express my gratitude for this recognition from such a prestigious organization," said Ice Cube, a lifelong Lakers fan who grew up playing basketball at the Inglewood YMCA. "Having an award bearing my name only intensifies my commitment to advancing inclusivity and equal opportunity in sports, alongside my unwavering dedication to community activism."

The Naismith Hall of Fame will permanently house and amplify the Ice Cube Impact Award in its museum and honor subsequent award winners each year through a dedicated exhibit and in-depth storytelling about honorees who use basketball as a platform for good works in their own communities.

"Ice Cube's unquestionable passion for

the game and his desire to see it utilized as a catalyst for positive impact on communities are unwavering," said John L. Doleva, President and CEO of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. "His sphere of influence in both the entertainment industry and in the professional sports arena brings remarkable authenticity and value to this award. We are delighted to join hands with Ice Cube as he leverages his love of the game to inspire others. The Ice Cube Impact Award will stand as a testament to the power of basketball and the profound impact it can have on communities worldwide."

Ice Cube's remarkable journey through the world of basketball has had a profoundly transforming effect. As the visionary founder of the BIG3, he created a professional league built on the game's proven

bests--Hall of Famers, World Champions, and All-Stars. The BIG3 has launched and revitalized careers and opened doors for all players and coaches who wish to continue to positively contribute to the game in a format that captures the hearts and imagination of fans nationwide. His unique and innovative approach to the game, which incorporates elements of streetball and professional basketball, also showcases the immense power of sports in uniting communities, as exemplified by the Young3 program focusing on youth in underserved areas.

The Ice Cube Impact Award will be presented to Ice Cube at the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame on Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Monday, January 15, 2024) in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Springfield Thunderbirds fall in 'School Day' game

HARTFORD, Conn. -- The Springfield Thunderbirds (7-6-1-0) the Hartford Wolf Pack (7-3-2-0) on Wednesday morning inside the XL Center.

The Wolf Pack took a page out of Springfield's school day playbook and came out with an offensive flourish in the opening 20 minutes. Just 5:05 into the festivities, and just under 15 seconds after beginning their first power play, the Pack man-advantage took a 1-0 lead on a tap-in goal on the near post by Hartford captain Jonny Brodzinski.

Just under six minutes later, Brodzinski became the passer, as he filtered a perfect pass to the slot area from the trapezoid, and Alex Belzile cashed in to make it 2-0 at 10:59.

Hartford's offensive blitz did not end there, and Adam Sykora got his first goal of the season, cruising down the slot to beat Vadim Zherenko over the shoulder at 18:53 to give the Wolf Pack a 3-0 lead at intermission.

The T-Birds could not find any puck

luck in the second period, as a Hugh McGing chance on a 2-on-1 caught the crossbar early in the period. Later on, Nikolas Brouillard found his way to the crease area to jam a rebound through Zherenko on the backhand at 12:58 of the period, extending the lead to 4-0.

At the other end, Louis Domingue had been perfect until an innocent-looking wrist shot from the right circle off the stick of Mathias Laferrriere slipped through the veteran's legs at 15:20 of the period, finally getting Springfield on the board and narrowing the lead to 4-1 heading into the third. It was Laferrriere's first goal of the season, with Zach Dean and MacKenzie MacEachern picking up the helpers.

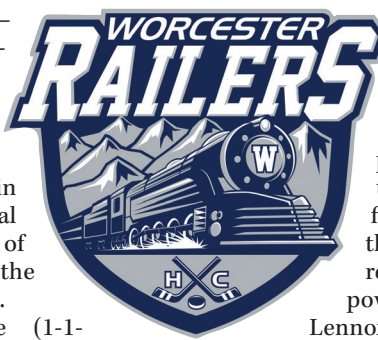
Unfortunately for the T-Birds, the goal would only be a footnote, as Hartford extended back to a four-goal lead on a deflection tally from Adam Edstrom at 5:44 of the third to round out the scoring. Zherenko battled throughout and finished with 32 saves. Domingue needed to make just 23 saves for Hartford.

Worcester Railers pick up win over Newfoundland Growlers

ST JOHNS, NL – The Worcester Railers HC (4-5-1-1, 10pts) toppled the Newfoundland Growlers (5-5-2-0, 12pts) on Nov. 12 in overtime by the final score of 2-1 in front of a crowd of 4,284 at the Mary Brown's Centre.

Trevor Cosgrove (1-1-2) broke open the scoring for Worcester in the first, putting Worcester ahead 1-0 after one. Zach O'Brien (1-0-1) scored for Newfoundland in his return to the Growlers lineup for the first time this season. Ashton Calder scored his second game-winner in three games for Worcester in overtime as the Railers came out on top to wrap up the weekend, 2-1.

The Railers scored the game's first goal for the third time this season, as Trevor Cosgrove (1st) danced through the defense to beat Luke Cavallin in net for Newfoundland glove side. Zach White would drop the gloves with former Railer Josh Victor twenty seconds later. Worcester was outshot in the first period 13-10, but led at the end of twenty



minutes, 1-0.

Zach O'Brien (1st) returned to the Growlers lineup for the first time this season after playing in Slovakia to start the season and potted his first goal since returning in the second. He grabbed the rebound off the post on the power play and patted it past Lennox to tie the game heading into the third at 1-1.

Worcester suffocated Newfoundland in the third, taking the period's first fifteen shots while preventing the growlers from getting their first until there was just seven minutes left in regulation. Zach White was awarded a penalty shot in the third but failed to capitalize as the game remained 1-1. Grant Cruikshank committed a tripping penalty late in the third period which sent Worcester to the power play to end regulation.

Ashton Calder (6th) found the puck along the near side just 13 seconds into overtime and ended up slapping the puck top-shelf past Cavallin to give Worcester their second win on the weekend, and four out of a possible six points against Newfoundland.

UMass hosting PV Tip-Off

AMHERST – The Pioneer Valley Tip-Off is a student-run high school basketball showcase featuring some of the best talent in Central and Western Massachusetts. The PVTO was started in 2011 by Scott Moses and Pat Salle, both students at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and it continues to be entirely student-run by the McCormack Student Leaders Club today.

The PVTO is held each December on the

University of Massachusetts Amherst campus, where we strive to create a professional environment for fans and players alike. This year's event will be held on Dec. 9 and 10 and will feature teams from throughout the region.

A schedule is online at www.pioneer-valleytip-off.com. All games will be held at the Mullins Center on the UMass-Amherst campus.

How to contact the Sports Editor

Have the scoop on a local sports story? Want to submit a team photo, pass along a potential story idea, or just find out how to get a copy of that great photo of your young athlete? Please send all sports-related press releases and information to Sports Editor Greg Scibelli at: sports@turley.com or call, 1-413-283-8393.

OWLS ■ from page 7

launched a long ball into the penalty area which appeared to be misjudged by Owls GK Julia Robak (Chicopee, Mass./Comp), who slipped a bit while changing direction to come off her line, and the ball skipped into the right side of the goal on one hop.

"We wanted to start strong and play good possession, and I was worried we could take a step back after the early goal," said Ditmar. "Bridgewater is an intimidating team, Dewhurst is a force, and we were like 'oh no!'"

Westfield had several good chances to level the match before the half, but a long shot from Parker was saved by Bears' keeper Logan Levesque in the 22nd minute, then in the 24th minute Emily Ottomanello's (Agawam, Mass.) header off of a free kick was saved.

Dewhurst had another good attack up middle of the Owls' defense before the break, but her shot from top of box was saved by Robak to keep the deficit at one.

"We put some good pressure on, but were attacking straight on, needed to attack from the wings and try to move their goalkeeper," said Ditmar. "At the half we talked about changing formation, but the players wanted to keep with it and said it was working."

Tournament MVP Kiana Maratsuka (Mililani, Hawaii) got the Owls on the board, and leveled the game at 1-1 with a free kick blast from 31 yards out, well-placed over the wall and into top left corner of the goal off the hands of goalkeeper Levesque, 7:18 into the second half.

"After Kiana got the goal, you could see that they were more anxious and we were more relaxed, that was huge momentum change," said Ditmar. "I think it really helped to see we could get one past their goalie, who is really good, and our players stepped up and believed in themselves, and our bench was supportive and positive



throughout."

Parker's game winner came with 24:19 left to play, as Muratsuka deflected a Bears' attempt to clear the ball, and the high arching deflection wound up on the right side of the penalty area. Muratsuka beat a Bears defender to the ball and slipped it left to Parker, who dribbled through traffic from the right side across the top of the goalkeeper's box and whistled it to the left upper 90 for the goal and the 2-1 Owls' lead.

Westfield's best chance for an insurance goal came when Tia Tollis (East Longmeadow, Mass.) juked a defender but fired a shot just over the top of the crossbar with just under 14 minutes left. Westfield kept the offensive pressure on the Bears for the entirety of the second half.

Bridgewater's best chance to level the game late came when Dewhurst ripped a shot from the top of the penalty area, but her blast was blocked point blank by

Owls' defender Jaida Cochran (Middleboro, Mass.) with 3.5 minutes left in the game.

Westfield outshot the Bears 13-3 overall in the second half, and the Owls didn't allow any shots on goal in the half.

Westfield is now 13-6-1. The Owls will learn their destination and opponent in the NCAA tournament on Monday, when the selection show is streamed at NCAA.com at 1:30 p.m.

Bridgewater's season comes to an end at 11-6-1.

Westfield entered the game as the number two seed. The Owls' lone loss of the conference season came two weeks ago at the feet of the Bears, by a 2-1 final in a game where Westfield had out-shot Bridgewater 23-11.

Today, Westfield out-shot the Bears 23-8 overall and 11-3 in shots on goal. The Owls also recorded four corner kicks to none for Bridgewater.

Levesque finished with nine saves for the Bears, while Robak made three saves for Westfield.

Bill of Rights introduced for paraprofessionals, support staff

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senator Edward J. Markey (D-Massachusetts), a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, introduced the Paraprofessionals and Education Support Staff Bill of Rights, a resolution that would call for living wages, good benefits, and fair working conditions for the paraeducators, classroom assistants, bus drivers, custodial workers, and others who serve as the backbone of our education system by providing essential services which keep schools running and students thriving.

Senators Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont) and Elizabeth Warren (D-Massachusetts) are cosponsors of the resolution.

Paraprofessionals and education support staff far too often work for low



Edward J. Markey

wages, few benefits, and without job security. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, 331,000 school staff have left their jobs.

A 2022 survey found that one in five paraprofessionals recently visited a food pantry, while 25 percent said they could not afford to live in the communities where they worked. Yet, families rely on paraeducators as often the only heritage language speakers in schools; on bus drivers to safely transport their children; on food service workers to provide healthy meals; and on instructional assistants to ensure all students access high quality education.

“For too long, we have asked paraprofessionals and education support staff to do too much with too little,” said Markey

in a press release. “We have asked them to educate, feed, transport, and support students in their path to grow, learn, and thrive - all without the pay, benefits, and job security they deserve. My Paraprofessionals and Education Support Staff Bill of Rights is a call for action to provide these workers with the dignity, respect, and recognition that they have long deserved. Well-paid, well-treated, union staff make stronger schools and stronger communities.”

Markey’s resolution would call for paraprofessionals and education support staff to have:

- Livable, competitive wages, and access to benefits, including health care and paid leave;
- The supplies, resources, and training they need to do their jobs;
- Meaningful voice in workplace policies and the right to negotiate for better

working conditions;

- The dignity of safe, healthy, and adequate staffed workplaces; and
- Year-round job security and opportunities for growth.

The resolution is endorsed by National Education Association, American Federation of Teachers, Service Employees International Union, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, Latinos for Education, National Rural Education Association, NREA Coalition, Autism Society of America, Citizens for Public Schools, Council of Administrators of Special Education, Network for Public Education, Milwaukee Teachers’ Education Association, the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, First Focus on Children, National Urban League and Arc of the United States.

Public Notices

LEGAL NOTICE PUBLIC HEARING AGAWAM

The Agawam City Council will hold a public hearing on **Monday, December 4, 2023 at 7:00 P.M.** in Veterans Hall at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. The purpose of this hearing will be to hear an Ordinance to amend Chapter 103 and Chapter 180 of the Code of the Town of Agawam as sponsored by Councilors Calabrese and Russo (TOR-2023-10). This public hearing will be live-streamed on the Town of Agawam’s website at www.agawam.ma.us and will also be televised on Cable Access Channel 15. TOR-2023-10 is available for public inspection by emailing the office of the City Clerk for an electronic copy at vgioscia@agawam.ma.us

BY ORDER OF:
Christopher C. Johnson
City Council President
11/16, 11/23/2023

LEGAL NOTICE PUBLIC HEARING AGAWAM CITY COUNCIL

The Agawam City Council will hold a public hearing on **Monday, December 4, 2023 at 7:00pm** in Veterans Hall at the Agawam Senior

Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. The purpose of this hearing will be to hear authorizing the amendment of Section 20 of Chapter 169 of the Code of the Town of Agawam with the establishment of a school zone at the Agawam High School as sponsored by Mayor Sapelli and Councilor Sandlin (TOR-2023-9). This public hearing will be live-streamed on the Town of Agawam’s website at www.agawam.ma.us and will also be televised on Cable Access Channel 15. TOR-2023-9 is available for public inspection by emailing the office of the City Clerk for an electronic copy at vgioscia@agawam.ma.us

BY ORDER OF:
Christopher C. Johnson
City Council President
11/16, 11/23/2023

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD23P2321EA
Estate of:
Judith A Neylon
Date of Death: 08/14/2023
CITATION ON**

PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Pamela J Kappel 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: **Pamela J Kappel 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 12/11/2023.**

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: November 13, 2023
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
11/23/2023

LEGAL NOTICE PUBLIC HEARING AGAWAM CITY COUNCIL

The Agawam City Council will conduct a Public Hearing

on **Monday, December 4, 2023, at 7:00pm**, in the Veterans’ Hall of the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA to consider TR-2023-84 which is the adoption of a Residential Tax Factor pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 56 as submitted to the City Council by the Mayor on November 2, 2023.

TR-2023-84 is available for public inspection by emailing the office of the City Clerk for an electronic copy at vgioscia@agawam.ma.us

BY ORDER OF:
Christopher C. Johnson
President of the City Council
11/16, 11/23/2023

Legal Notice Town of Agawam Planning Board

The Agawam Planning Board will hold a public hearing on **Thursday, November 30, 2023 at 6:00 PM** at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. The purpose of this hearing will be to hear the petition of City Councilors Calabrese and Russo for a proposed amendment to sections 17(G) and 23(K) of the Code of the Town of Agawam Zoning Ordinance. A copy of the pro-

posal can be obtained from the Office of Planning and Community Development between the hours of 8:30 AM and 4:30 PM at the Agawam Town Hall, 36 Main Street, Agawam, MA.

By Order Of:
Vi Baldwin,
Acting Chairperson
Agawam Planning Board
11/16, 11/23/2023

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COMMUNITY
BUSINESSES**

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 \$225, 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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www.turley.com

Community Newspaper EDITOR WANTED

Turley Publications is looking for a “hands on” energetic candidate who loves telling stories to be the editor for two weekly publications. This position will include managing and coaching a small news staff that will provide the community with a great local newspaper.

The editor will need to cover local government and events while representing the newspaper at public venues.

The successful candidate will have strong community journalism skills and is also expected to gather news and write stories for the two papers as well as for other occasional companywide publications.

This is a job for a self-starter who has a vision for growing and connecting with our valued readers, and who thoroughly enjoys community journalism.

This full-time position with flexible schedule is based in our Palmer office at 24 Water St., this is not a remote position.

Qualifications should include:

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent experience
- Willingness to mentor a staff writer and correspondents
- Editing experience and ability to write clean copy in a fast-paced, deadline-driven environment
- Proficiency in Associated Press style
- Management experience and/or experience managing content for a print publication.

Please send resume and writing examples to:

Eileen Kennedy, Executive Editor
24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069
or email directly to
ekennedy@turley.com

BALLOT ■ from page 1

ly voting and mail-in voting.”

Both mail-in and early voting can be crucial for residents in the town. Mail-in voting is essentially absentee voting, but without having to state why a person is voting absentee. It creates less barriers for those who may need the mailed ballot.

“Mail-in voting is ‘hey, I can request a ballot by mail and I don’t have to say it’s because physically I can’t go to the polls or perhaps for a religious reason,’” Johnson said.

Early voting allows for residents, especially seniors to vote at a designated time, place and location that is convenient for them.

The town had sent this ballot question to the state for approval and managed to get it signed by the governor on Wednesday, Sept. 27.

Many involved with the ballot had thought it was going

to be an easy pass, and were surprised when it was not approved by the voters.

Johnson believes that the issue was that many people simply did not understand the question itself.

“I think it was that people didn’t quite understand what it was,” Johnson said. “And so I think when you don’t understand something you tend to default to the status quo.”

Johnson said that on election day he, unfortunately, had several people ask him, after they had voted, what the question was about.

Johnson hopes to speak with members of the city council and see if they want to try to bring the question back for a future ballot.

“We could either put it on in this state/federal election cycle, which would mean that in the next municipal election in 2025 we could extend the date between preliminary and final election,” Johnson said.

MAYOR ■ from page 1

versations and we’ll be working on what the exact plan will be.”

Though they do not have the exact details planned out, Johnson knows he will be working closely with the various department heads around town to ensure the transition goes smoothly.

“My plan is to work with Mayor Sapelli, the department heads and the superintendent’s office just to get up to speed with what is going on in the day-to-day operations,” Johnson said.

For his day one, week one priorities Johnson wants to focus on getting to know all of the staff he will be working with.

“I want to really be able to sit down and meet a lot of the staff and hopefully foster communication and cooperation with members of the council and school committee, the superintendent’s office and the school principals,” Johnson said. “It’s essentially trying to meet everyone and get every-

one on the same page.”

Johnson wants to ensure that everyone is able to work together and communicate well in order to ensure that all can run smoothly in Agawam.

“You can’t get anything done in any large organization unless you do it with teamwork,” he said.

He also hopes to use this time to get the staff used to his style of leadership, which he describes as very cooperative and teamwork focused with high expectations for those around him.

“I expect a lot from the people that work with me and for me but my style is one of cooperative leadership,” he said.

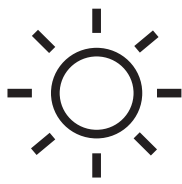
Not only does Johnson expect a lot from those he works with, but he also promises to expect a lot from himself. He will dedicate himself to doing the best he can in his capacity as mayor to ensure Agawam continues to move forward as a town.

“I’m fond of saying that I only ever promise to do one thing and that is to work hard, to do what’s best for Agawam,” he said. “That’s my plan as I sit here today.”

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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.

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As children went around the library to complete the scavenger hunts they also got a chance to see the different named and decorated "critters" that were made by the library staff.



As children participated in the scavenger hunt they had the opportunity to enjoy different areas of the library, such as this cozy corner.



The signs for the different hunts were placed all around the Children's Room, allowing those participating to explore the area.



The clues resulted in a great trip through the library.



As children solved the math problems and riddles for the scavenger hunts they also could enjoy some other activities of the library, such as this button box.



One sign for the scavenger hunt allowed the participants to see and enjoy the book stand featuring books with the theme "keep calm and be kind".

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA


TURKEY ■ from page 1

areas of the library that they may not have been to before. "I like that the kids have to really look around the Children's Room and really pay attention to what they see and they might have to walk into a section of the library that they normally don't go into," she said.

As she sees the kids working to solve the clues, Weingart also enjoys when kids try their hand at solving the riddle without having found all of the clues.

"If they have trouble finding all the letters for the clues some of the kids try to see if they could figure it out, and that's really fun, seeing them try to use their problem-solving skills," she said.


Once the scavenger hunt is closed, all those who have solved the riddle get their name put into a raffle. From there they are randomly selected and those selected are given a \$5 Barnes and Nobles gift card as a prize.



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Turley Publications would like to help you show off the newest member of your family this Christmas, FOR FREE!

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Palmer, MA 01069
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Include a self addressed/ stamped envelope if you would like the picture returned or email photo to: jamie@turley.com with subject line: BABY'S FIRST.
This offer is available to all babies born in 2023. Pictures will be published the week of December 18-22, 2023.



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June 5, 2022
Parents: Jonathan & Marcie Kosnicki
Grandparents: Marc Davignon & Lisa Dube, Chicopee
John & Pamela Kosnicki, Palmer

Baby's Name: _____

Birthdate: _____

Parents' Names: _____

Parents' Town of Residence: _____

Grandparents' Names & Town of Residence: _____

Telephone #: (not to be printed - for office use only) _____


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<input type="checkbox"/> Chicopee Register	<input type="checkbox"/> Town Reminder
<input type="checkbox"/> Country Journal	<input type="checkbox"/> Ware River News
<input type="checkbox"/> The Holyoke Sun	<input type="checkbox"/> The Wilbraham-Hampden Times
<input type="checkbox"/> Journal Register	

Deadline for photos and forms is Friday, December 6, 2023

Unwrap


ASSISTED LIVING




TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5
4:00 PM

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