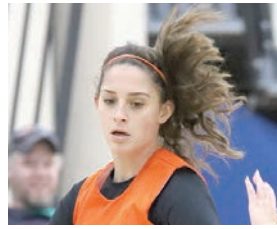




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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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City Council to decide on school zone in front of AHS

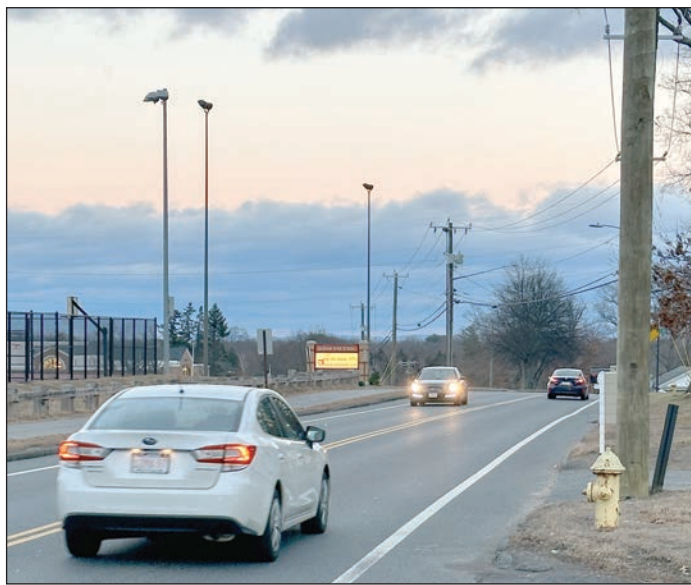
By Quinn Suomala
 Staff Writer

AGAWAM – At their meeting on Dec. 4, the city council held a public hearing to discuss the implementation of crosswalk lights and a school zone at Agawam High School.

This idea was initially proposed by City Councilor Rosemary Sandlin, who had heard many concerns from the community about the safety of crossing the street in that area.

“The concern was that it should be, and should always have been, a school zone,” Sandlin said. “We’re hopeful that that’s the next step to make it much safer for people to cross the street.”

During different sporting



The city council is debating establishing a school zone on Mill St. near Agawam High School in an effort to slow traffic and make it safer.

TURLEY PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

SCHOOL ZONE | page 10

Tax rate to drop for Fiscal 2024

By Quinn Suomala
 Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The Agawam City Council approved a new tax rate for the town at their meeting on Dec. 4.

The residential tax rate is set to \$14.54, which is a decrease of \$1.24 from last year’s rate. The commercial, industrial and personal property rates have all decreased by \$2.65 from last year’s \$30.19, to have a rate of \$27.54.

This proposed tax rate was presented by Mayor William Sapelli and Assessor Carolyn Reed.

For fiscal year 2023, Agawam had the lowest industrial tax rate and was among the lowest residential tax rates of any surrounding community with split tax rates.

Sapelli and Reed that this trend will continue for FY24, if not even improve.

“Agawam has one of the lowest residential and commercial industrial tax rates with surrounding communities, based on what we’ve seen this year we’ll probably be in the same category if not the lowest on both the residential and commercial side for this year,” Reed said.

Despite the decrease in the tax rates, many families may experience an increase in their overall taxes, due to an increase in the assessed value of their homes.

“When it’s tax time people aren’t happy when their assessed value [of their homes] goes up as it means their taxes go up,” Sapelli

TAX RATE | page 10

Community celebrates holiday season with tree lighting

By Quinn Suomala
 Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Agawam held community tree lightings with cocoa and caroling at the Feeding Hills Center and Veterans Memorial Green.

The idea for this was proposed by Agawam School Committee Member Dawn DeMatteo.

“Dawn DeMatteo reached out to me trying to do some sort of tree lighting to bring the community together for a community event,” Benjamin J. Phelps PTO President Krista Comee said.

A tree lighting has been held by Clifford M. Granger School PTO for the past several years, but many community members wanted the event to include more of the community.

Therefore, DeMatteo came up with the idea to have the event welcome all the elemen-

tary schools in Agawam. She reached out to the PTO presidents at each school and they all worked together to create this event

“We brought all of the PTO presidents together to try to figure out how to make this work with what we’re doing in the schools,” Comee explained.

In the end, two separate tree lightings were held, one at Feeding Hills Center for Clifford M. Granger School, the Early Childhood Center, and William P. Sapelli School and one at Veterans Memorial Green for Phelps and James Clark. Both of these events were a big success.

“We figured one may be a bit too big, so we separated them into two separate ones,” Comee said. “It’s our first time doing multiple schools together, so it’s a nice opportunity for us to bring the community together.



Agawam hosted their first Community Tree Lightings with Cocoa and Caroling.

TURLEY PHOTO BY QUINN SUOMALA

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DPW's Christmas tree collection starts Jan. 8

AGAWAM – The Department of Public Works is pleased to announce that Republic Services will be providing a collection of Christmas Trees during the week of Jan. 8 through the 12.

Christmas trees will be collected on the same day as scheduled trash collection. Please be aware that the regular trash truck will not be collecting trees, a separate truck will be running for the collection of trees.

Christmas trees 7' or larger must be cut in half and placed on the tree belt no earlier than 7 a.m. of the collection day listed above.

Trees in plastic



bags will not be collected.

It is not the responsibility of the hauler to dig out trees buried in the snow due to plowing or excessive snowfall prior to the scheduled collection days.

In the event of a snow delay during the scheduled collection week, residents should make alternative arrangements to recycle their trees at the Bondi's Island Landfill. Collection routes for trees will not be re-scheduled.

Residents may dispose of trees prior to or after the scheduled collection days at the Bondi's Island Landfill.

ACAA exhibit back at APL

AGAWAM – The Agawam Public Library welcomes back the Agawam Community Artists and Artisans for their yearly December exhibit. The ACAA's mission is to promote and encourage community participation in and develop an awareness and appreciation of the arts. They offer educational opportunities to local artists and artisans, and provide connections and camaraderie among artists in the area.

Meetings for the ACAA are held at the Agawam Public Library on the second Wednesday of the month, where artistic demonstrations are exhibited. For more

information on the ACAA, visit agawamarts.com. Art from a variety of local artists and a variety of mediums will be displayed on the main floor gallery walls, in the Johnson Case, and in the cases leading to the Youth Room.

Visitors are welcome at the Agawam Public Library during regular open hours: Monday through Thursday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please contact Adult Services Library Associate, Erica LeFebvre at (413) 789-1550 x8858 or elefebvre@agawamlibrary.org if interested in displaying artwork at the library.

Blue Christmas service Dec. 21

FEEDING HILLS – Feeding Hills Congregational Church, 21 North Westfield St., invites the community to a Blue Christmas Service on Dec. 21 at 7 p.m. This may be the first holiday season after a loss or perhaps 2023 has been a difficult

year. All are welcome to seek out hope together in a supportive worship service. Come as you are, to join for prayer, songs, a special Advent wreath ceremony and reflection. For more information call the church office 413-786-5061.

Golden Bell Choir to perform

AGAWAM – The Alice Morre Golden Bell Choir will ring some favorite Christmas carols

at 9:30 a.m. before the Sunday, Dec. 10 service of the Lighting of the Second Sunday of Advent Candle of Peace at Agawam Congregational Church. Join in this special

Sunday Christmas celebration. The Church is located at 745 Main St., in the Historic District and is

handicapped accessible with a large parking lot. For more information, contact the church at 413-786-7111 or office@agawamcongregation.com.

Photography submissions needed for open virtual 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, photo-journalism and pictorial. The entry fee is \$25 per entry. Deadline for submissions 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.agawamlibrary.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.

Advent service to be held on Dec. 24

AGAWAM – On Sunday, Dec. 24, Agawam Congregational Church will hold its special Advent 10 a.m. service in addition to a 10 p.m. Christmas Eve service with special lighting of the Sanctuary.

All are invited to attend. Located at 745 Main St. in Agawam's Historical District, the church is handicapped accessible with a large, well-lit parking lot.

For more information, contact the church at 413-786-7111 or office@agawamcongregation.com.



Holyoke Community College opens Itsy Bitsy Closet for student-parents

HOLYOKE – First there was the Itsy Bitsy Zoomcast, a pandemic-inspired series of videos produced by the faculty from the Early Childhood Education department at Holyoke Community College that debuted online in 2020.

Next came the Itsy Bitsy Learning Lab, a suite of early education classrooms at HCC modeled after pre-school and kindergarten facilities. Then, in 2022, HCC opened the Itsy Bitsy Child Watch, a free service center for student-parents in need of short-term child care while they attend classes.

And now, making its debut in November, the college's latest offering is The Itsy Bitsy Closet.

During the fall semester, HCC students transformed a large storage room for surplus equipment into a family-friendly resource room stocked with donated children's clothes, jackets, shoes, books, and more.

And all the items are now available for free to student-parents.

"It's open to all HCC student-parents," said Emily Webber, who, as director of the Itsy Bitsy Child Watch, now also oversees the Itsy Bitsy Closet, which is conveniently located next door. "Student-parents can come and take whatever they need for their children – clothing, jackets, coats, shoes, and also books, to promote literacy at home."

The Itsy Bitsy Closet was Webber's idea. To bring it to life, however, she enlisted Psychology Professor Sheryl Civjan, whose Psychology of Women's class took on the assignment as a Service Learning project. The students organized clothing and book drives and collected donations both on and off campus.

"Week after week, they sorted through



HCC Psychology Professor Sheryl Civjan and students in her Psychology of Women class transformed a storage room full of surplus equipment into the Itsy Bitsy Closet.

the donated clothes, weeded out the rejects, then washed, folded, and organized everything to create the space," said Civjan.

Over the course of the semester, Civjan's students also conducted research on early childhood literacy and how it is impacted by child care. The result of that research is a Family Resource Guide that will be available in the Itsy Bitsy Child Watch center and the Itsy Bitsy Closet.

"The research focused on why child care is so important to working mothers, and to college student mothers," said Civjan. "We did a project last year that was focused specifically on child care. This is a little broader issue about early literacy."

Webber hosted a reception for Civjan's class on Nov. 28 to celebrate the opening. It wasn't long before nursing student Maddy Gray from Colrain wandered in after picking up her 3-year-old son Orion from the Itsy Bitsy Child Watch next door.

Gray grabbed some winter clothes; Orion picked out a book.

"We got some nice shirts and pants," Gray said. "And they're nice clothes too. This makes a huge difference for us. With inflation and one income, I cannot express my gratitude enough to everyone involved, the students, and Professor Civjan. I'm so thankful. My boy will be nice and cozy, and this left us more money in the bank to get him something a little extra for Christmas."

Gray said she'll be checking back weekly and plans to donate Orion's clothes after he outgrows them.



Nursing student Maddy Gray, of Colrain, and her 3-year-old son Orion were the first visitors to HCC's new Itsy Bitsy Closet, a free resource room for student-parents.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Friends of APL looking for new members

AGAWAM – The Friends of the Agawam Public Library has been in existence for over 20 years. They are a dedicated group of local citizens who support the library with both time and money. The Friends hold monthly meetings to discuss ways they can best help with the library's mission.

Over the years the Friends have supplied the library with numerous items that were not included in the town's budget, such as: a slide projector, a people counter, a Laser HP color printer, a wireless Lavalier microphone system, a portable Public Address system, an ongoing lease for a color pho-

tocopier, furniture for the children's room, protective sleeves for library cards, a DVD player and computers and software for the Children's Room.

The Friends help the library in various other ways too. Some ways are by funding library events throughout the year, such as the Elementary Summer School Reading Challenge (where cash prizes are awarded to Agawam's 4 grade schools), English as a Second Language classes and a number of museum passes. They raise the money for funding by holding an annual Holiday Basket Raffle, presenting an annual Juried

Photography show, selling used books, offering canvas tote bags and mugs with the Friends logo created by Agawam's own David Cecchi, and volunteering in various library-supported activities.

The Friends welcome all who want to bring attention to the library's vital role in our town by becoming a member, volunteering at activities, or simply offering support through book and monetary contributions. The Friends are always grateful for any volunteer help with library projects. If community members are interested in becoming a Friends member, you can find the

application on our website <https://www.agawamlibrary.org/about-2/friends/>, print it out and mail it in or look for the Friends form in the Friends kiosk in the library and pay in person.

And, to make things even more exciting, if you are interested in becoming a Friend and pay your Friends membership by Jan. 1, 2024, you will be entered in a drawing on Jan. 4 (at the Friends January meeting), to win a \$50 Amazon gift card.

The time is now for the community to join The Friends of Agawam Public Library, it is loads of fun and extremely satisfying.



Agawam Day in Florida March 6

ST.PETERSBURG, FLA. – Agawam Day will be held on Wednesday, March 6, 2024., from 10 a.m. to noon, at Fort De Soto National Park, shelter #14, in St. Petersburg.

Agawam Day in Florida has been held on the first Wednesday of March since 1981. Each year 40 to 60 former Agawam residents join together for a reunion of friends and family for a picnic, raffles, beautiful scenery, hugs and to share old memories.

For more information contact Hank Drewnowski by cell phone call or text at 860-462-7273 or by email at hdrew2452@gmail.com.

Should animals be given as gifts for Christmas

EAST BROOKFIELD – In the heartwarming videos circulating every holiday season, the joy of receiving a surprise puppy or kitten is undeniable. The excitement is infectious, and you might be tempted to create a similar moment for a loved one this year. Second Chance Animal Services suggests a thoughtful alternative: consider a shelter visit as the gift of a lifetime.

While those viral videos capture the immediate happiness, Second Chance founder and CEO Sheryl Blancato emphasizes the unseen aftermath of pets surrendered to shelters shortly after festivities. "The decision to bring a pet into your family is immensely gratifying, but it's also a substantial commitment. Extensive research and careful consideration of your family's lifestyle are critical. Owning a pet is a considerable responsibility, both when they're young and as they age. Adopting a pet is a pledge for life."

Blancato advocates against surprising someone entirely with a pet. "Of course, we hope all our pets will spend the holidays in their new homes, but we want them to find homes with committed, loving families ready to take on the responsibility of caring for their new, furry family member. Being surrendered back to a shelter takes



a serious toll on animals. Witnessing them wait for their owner's return is truly heartbreaking."

To encourage responsible pet adoption, Second Chance recommends gifting a pet bed or bowls accompanied by a note expressing your intent to explore pet ownership responsibly. A handmade gift certificate for a local shelter visit, paired with an informative book on pet care, can be an excellent present for young children. This approach ensures that the decision to welcome a pet is well-informed and creates a memorable experience of the joy of going to the shelter together to choose the pet.

Donations needed for Christmas bags

AGAWAM – The Missionary Committee of Agawam Congregational Church is assembling Christmas bags filled with hats, gloves, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, and soap.

The Christmas bags will be given to the West Springfield-Agawam Parish Cupboard in time for the Christmas holiday season. For more information, contact the church at 413-786-7111 or office@agawamcong.com.



Holyoke Community College celebrates fall 2023 graduates

HOLYOKE – The first time Alannah Brunt tried Holyoke Community College, she flunked out after one semester. The next semester, she only passed one class.

"I was working a ton of hours and had not yet invested in school," she recently said. "I hadn't found a way to get excited about being a student. It was COVID times, folks, and it was not fun."

But Brunt eventually did find a way to get excited about college, and that led her to where she now stood - on the stage of HCC's Leslie Phillips Theater as one of the student speakers for the college's first-ever Fall Graduate Reception, held on Nov. 29.

"Fear not," said Brunt, who will complete her associate's degree in Latinx Studies this month before heading to the University of Massachusetts in the spring. "In my journey at HCC, I found a community of people who became my village."

According to the HCC Registrar's Office, 172 HCC students will be fall 2023 graduates at the end of the current semester. Like Brunt, many of them will transfer to four-year schools in the spring. Although fall graduates are always invited to attend HCC's formal commencement ceremony in the spring, historically, many do not attend.

"This is really just the beginning of your celebrations as a college graduate," said President George Timmons. "Today, we honor your achievements with this reception because what you just achieved deserves immediate recognition. In June, we will come together again and formally welcome you as HCC alumni."

The family-friendly event began in the HCC theater, followed by food and photo opportunities in the PeoplesBank Room of HCC's Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development.

"Our goal with this ceremony is to cel-



Left to right are student speakers Marcos Figueroa, of Holyoke, Angela Tindell-Gula, of Three Rivers, and Alannah Miigros Brunt, of Springfield, with President George Timmons at HCC's first Fall Graduate Reception on Wed., Nov. 29.

brate our fall graduates, strengthen their connection to HCC in the hopes that they will remain engaged with the college and attend our 76th Commencement ceremony on Saturday, June 1, 2024," said Sharale Mathis, HCC vice president of Academic and Student Affairs.

The fall 2023 graduates and their families also heard from student Marcos Figueroa, who had nearly completed his degree in criminal justice from the Universidad Interamericana in Puerto Rico before Hurricane Maria disrupted his life and education.

"Fate led me here to Holyoke, Mass.,

and the doors of Holyoke Community College," said Figueroa, now a communications, media and theater arts major. "I must say, I am extremely grateful. Here, I didn't just find refuge, I found my passion. Photography and cinematography became my new path - a discovery that reshaped my life."

Figueroa is on his way to Emerson College to study filmmaking in the spring while working as a video journalist for WGBZ CBS-Boston.

"Adapting to a new culture wasn't easy," he said, "but it was through this journey that I met incredible individuals who be-

came my guiding lights."

Student Angela Tindell-Gula, a creative writing major from Three Rivers, talked about "surviving" adolescence and deferring her college dreams for two decades as she became a wife, mother, and small business owner.

"No one could have prepared me for how hard going back to school as an adult would be," said Tindell-Gula, who will attend Westfield State University in the spring. "Every day I fold my life lessons from the past and tuck them safely in my backpack, and that gives me the drive to put one foot in front of the other."

For Brunt, the recipe for college success was getting involved in campus life. She joined the college radio station, WCCH, and became a DJ. Through Student Engagement, she joined clubs: "Lots and lots of clubs," she said, including the Radio Club, the Psychology Club, and the Latinx Empowerment Association. She found an internship in the Financial Aid office through SAMP - HCC's Student Ambassador Mentorship Program, and discovered El Centro, a bilingual support program for HCC's Latinx students.

At El Centro, Brunt said, "I found people who look like me, who understand me, and who helped me navigate higher education in a way that I had never seen before. I love the community that El Centro provides and the people who are here who help me find joy."

Local graduates

Ian Gregory Burns, Jan Misael Gonzalez, Jordan Anne Gurau, Patrick Michael Murphy, Shelby Stathis and Zachary Xavier Zollo, along with Rachel Elizabeth Barkyoub, Carmen Gonzalez, Joseph Jendrysyk and Angela Marie Majka, of Feeding Hills, were among the graduates.

Opinion

Guest Column



I'm returning to work; what should I do about Social Security?

Dear Rusty

I started collecting Social Security at age 62 earlier this year.

I had an opportunity to partner in a new business this year that will allow me to earn about \$200,000 in 2024. Because this is significantly above the allowed earnings when collecting early benefits, I need advice on how I handle this with the Social Security Administration.

Am I supposed to call them and advise them of my change in income for 2024? If so, am I going to be penalized in any way? I expect they will stop all payments in 2024 once I alert them to the change. Will I be eligible for Social Security payments when I retire again? This is planned to take place before I reach full retirement age of 67. For information, my 2023 income will not exceed the 2023 allowable income limit.

Signed: Un-retiring Temporarily

Dear Un-retiring

You have a couple of options, considering that you recently claimed early Social Security benefits but are returning to work with income significantly more than the 2024 earnings limit of \$22,320.

The first is to simply contact Social Security and tell them you are returning to the work force and tell them your anticipated 2024 income. They will suspend your SS benefits for all of 2024 to avoid overpaying you and making you return those 2024 payments later. If you plan to continue in your new business beyond 2024, you can advise them of that as well and they will continue the suspension of your benefits, until such time as you either discontinue working or reach your Full Retirement Age, the earnings test no longer applies after you reach your FRA.

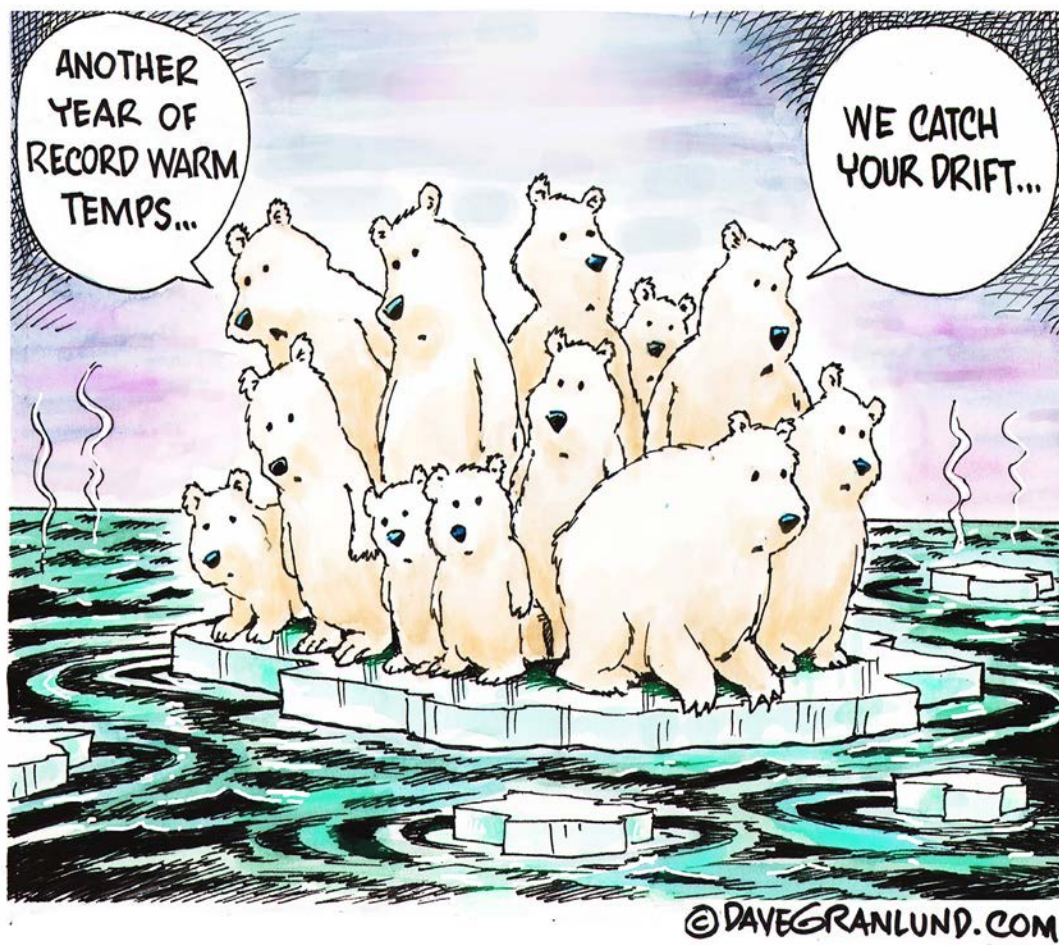
At that time, SS will resume your monthly Social Security payments and, at your FRA, will give you time credit for all months your benefits were suspended, providing you with a higher monthly payment after your full retirement age is attained with an adjustment for benefits already paid).

Your other option is to contact Social Security soon and request that your recent application for Social Security benefits submitted earlier this year be withdrawn. You have 12 months from the date of your application to do this, but you will need to repay Social Security all money which they paid to you or on your behalf (including your monthly payments, any income tax you had withheld from those payments, and any dependent benefits which might have been paid based on your record..

That will effectively "wipe the slate clean" with Social Security and will be as though you had never claimed, allowing you to simply wait until you stop working or until your FRA or even beyond your FRA, to re-apply for Social Security at a higher monthly amount. The advantage of this option is that when your benefit restarts there will be no adjustment (reduction) for past benefits paid.

What I suggest you not do is simply wait to see what happens. That would result in Social Security catching up after the IRS informs them of your 2024 earnings, resulting in you receiving an Overpayment Notice from the SSA demanding repayment of 2024 benefits paid.

In that case, you would need to quickly repay Social Security in a large lump-sum or have your SS benefits withheld



Guest Column



Fox sparrow

I received an email last month from a Brimfield resident who reported an acquaintance from Hardwick had a fox sparrow and pine siskin in his yard recently.

The fox sparrow is a large sparrow, seven inches. It has rufous sneaking on a gray head and back, whitish underparts and boldly streaked with brown or rufous. It has an irregular central dot on its breast and a reddish brown rump and tail.

These sparrows feed on the ground with seeds, fruits and insects making up its diet. They often jump forward and back to remove debris from the ground to uncover food. They come to feeders eating the seeds scattered on the ground by other birds.

The female lays four to six light blue, green eggs with darker marks in a cupcake nest if grasses, lichens and leaves lined with grasses, fur and rootlets. It is placed on the ground under a small tree or shrub. Their song is a series of clear melodious whistles and is more melodic than most sparrows.

Loon life span

In the Loon Preservation Committee newsletter, they discussed the loon life span.

"How long do loons live?" is one of the most common questions that LPC biologists are asked.

The two oldest known loons in the world breed in Michigan, at the Seney Wildlife Refuge. They used to be a pair, however, in recent years they have gone their separate ways. The male's exact age is known because he was banded the year that

he hatched. The female's exact age is unknown because she was banded as an adult, however, we know her minimum age. This summer, the female was at least 37 years old, while the male turned 36 years old.

New Hampshire has a male loon who was banded as an adult in 2000, making him at least 26 years old In addition to his advanced age, he has another claim to fame: he is the only loon, so far, in New Hampshire that has produced chicks after surviving lead poisoning.

The oldest known loon in New Hampshire is a female, who occupies a territory on Lake Umbagog. She was originally banded as an adult in 1993. Because she was banded as an adult, we don't know her exact age. We only know for sure that she was at least three years old in 1993. However, loons don't hatch chicks, on average, until they are 6 years old, and this loon hatched chicks the year she was banded. That means she was likely 6 years old or older in 1993. She is at minimum 33 years old, but more likely 36 or older.

Decrease in bird activity

I received an email from a man who said this year he has a very noticeable decrease in bird population.

He reports he has a male and female bobcat and squirrels, rabbits and chipmunks have disappeared. He said "maybe that's part of it." He said he started to leave one feeder out overnight testing to see if there are still bears about. Here's hoping they have all gone into hibernation.



Goldencrowned Kinglet

Bird club

A Brimfield resident emailed, "On Nov. 30 I took part in a project for the bird club and afterwards we went to Forest Park in Springfield and saw a black duck, a chilly looking great blue heron, a hermit thrush and several golden-crowned kinglets.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.



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Penguin Plunge to be held this January

WESTFIELD – Amelia Park Children’s Museum is announcing the 20th annual Penguin Plunge to be held at Hampton Ponds State Park, on Saturday, Jan. 27, 2024. Check-in begins at 11:30 a.m. and the plunging starts at 1 p.m. All proceeds from the Penguin Plunge will benefit Amelia Park Children’s Museum.

Amelia Park Children’s Museum and the Penguin Plunge have been a longstanding institution and tradition respectively in Westfield. Through the years participants and sponsors of the Plunge have helped to raise over \$350,000 to support Amelia Park Children’s Museum.

“We are striving to attract more plungers to this event,” says Diane Chambers, executive director. “It’s a fun outing for the whole family or a group of friends whether they are plunging or watching. We’re adding new activities and entertainment, plus incentives to entice more plunge participants in 2024.”

New this year is the Petite Plunge for children ages 2 - 6. Little ones will have the opportunity to dip their toe or boot into a kiddie pool. Fun games like cornhole and a “snowball” toss will be added to the activities. S’mores and other refreshments will be available. Lively musical entertainment will be provided by Jay Pagluica of JP Lighting and Sounds.

Join as an individual or as a team. Each participant pledges to raise a minimum of \$75 from friends and family and is encouraged to collect as many sponsors as

possible. Full time students will receive a registration discount of \$25 with valid school ID and pledge to raise at least \$50. The registration fee for the Petite Plunge participants is \$25.

The following prizes will awarded dependent on amount of money raised per individual:

Penguin Plunge 2024 T-shirt to those adults that raise \$75 - \$149 (* \$25 for those 2 - 6, \$50 for those 7 - 18); Penguin Plunge 2024 hat and T-shirt for those that raise \$150 - \$299; Penguin Plunge 2024 drinkware, hat and T-shirt for those that raise \$300 - \$499; Penguin Plunge 2024 jacket, drinkware, hat and T-shirt for those that raise \$500 or more; Monetary prizes of cash for the top 3 individuals or teams that raise the most money; 1st Place - \$300, 2nd Place - \$200, 3rd Place - \$100.

A costume contest is part of the fun, and there are prizes for Best Individual Costume and Best Team Costume.

Register in advance online or the day of the event from 11:30 am to noon. All participants will receive a free 2024 Penguin Plunge T-shirt.

Sponsorship opportunities, registration and pledge forms are available via the museum website <https://www.ameliaparkmuseum.org/penguin-plunge> or can be picked up at the museum. Penguins may also use the Fundly page to collect sponsors; <https://fundly.com/penguin-plunge-2024>.

The money raised by the Plunge goes to providing playful learning for area children and their families. This event is crucial in supporting the work of Amelia Park Children’s Museum

Amelia Park Children’s Museum is located at 29 South Broad St. and is open 9 a.m to 4 p.m. Thursday-Tuesday. The museum offers hands-on learning for children ages 1-7 in a safe and welcoming environment. Cost of admission is \$8 per person; grandparents have a reduced rate of \$4. Admission is \$2 per person on Thursday afternoons from noon 4 p.m. Call us with questions at (413) 572- 4014 or email questions to: fun@ameliaparkmuseum.org. Learn more about the museum at www.ameliaparkmuseum.org.



Free photos with Santa

AGAWAM – Heritage Woods Senior Living is offering free photos with Santa Claus on Saturday, Dec. 16 from 2 to 3 p.m. Parents will use their own cameras to take photos of their children with Santa. The event will take place at 462 Main St. For more information call 413-786-9704.



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SECURITY ■ from page 4

until the debt for exceeding the earnings limit was repaid. In a nutshell, I suggest you call Social Security and tell them you are returning to work, what your earnings are expected to be, and for how long.

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.

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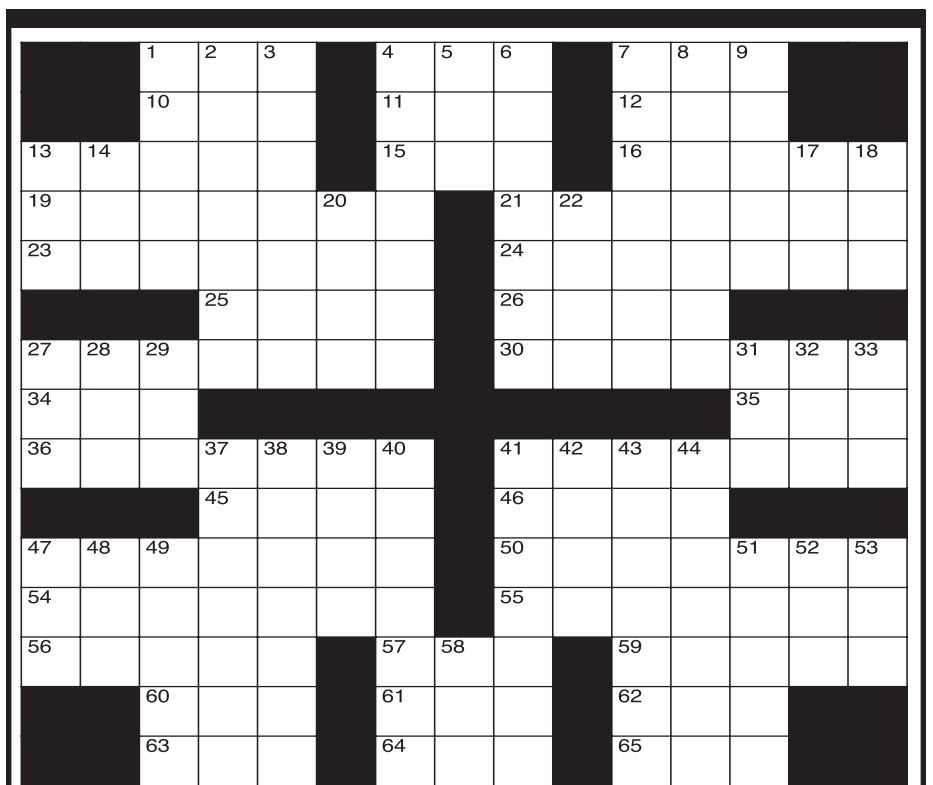
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11. Crony
12. Political action committee
13. 1991 Wimbledon winner
15. Affirmative
16. Exclamation of disgust
19. Action of connecting
21. A way to calm
23. Especially fine or decorative clothing
24. Walked proudly
25. Group of people related through male heir
26. Supplemented with difficulty
27. Soft touch
30. Erases

CLUES DOWN

34. Spanish river
35. A princess can detect it
36. Clouds of gas
41. A way to get through
45. Part of a book
46. Southwestern US state
47. Fields where rice is grown
50. Area in Ghana
54. Sayings
55. Involve deeply
56. Compels to act
57. “Ignore all rules”
59. Indoor entertainment space
60. Born of
61. Back muscle
62. Sea dweller
63. Tools that resemble an axe
64. Prefix denoting class or kind
65. Tooth caregiver

CLUES DOWN (abbr.)

1. Inspiring
2. Put into a box
3. Breathes out
4. Pacify
5. Patriotic society for women
6. Fell down
7. Clothing
8. Dishwasher detergent brand
9. Former French republic
13. Single lens reflex
14. Men’s fashion accessory
17. Consumed
18. Marry
20. ___ up: intensifies
22. Body of water
27. People of southern Benin
28. Decorate a cake with frosting
29. Snag
31. Yearly tonnage
32. Records brain activity (abbr.)
33. Car mechanics group
37. Brought up to snuff
38. ___ faire: Economic approach
39. Phil ___, former CIA
40. Affixed
41. Period of adolescence
42. Substance
43. Danced
44. Baked without its shell
47. Parts per billion (abbr.)
48. Satisfaction
49. Balkans river
51. Christmas carols
52. Partner to tonic
53. “The Godfather” character Johnny
58. Swiss river

CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE 9



Shepherds and sheep were added to the manger scene this year at Agawam Congregational Church. SUBMITTED PHOTO

Shepherds and sheep added to manger scene this year

AGAWAM – All are invited to see the Manger scene on the front lawn of Agawam Congregational Church. This season, shepherds and sheep were added to last year's manger. The church's Men's Ministry participants drew, cut out, assembled, and located all on the front lawn of the church located at 745 Main St.

Materials were purchased from the church's Junk For Jesus Committee who

pick up items that folks want to discard. Old washing machines, stoves, and other things are gathered during the course of the year.

"Next season we will be adding three Kings to the scene," said David Christian, a member of both the Junk For Jesus and Men's Ministry.

The scene, lit at night as well, can be seen as people drive by.

Wreaths Across America travels to Agawam

AGAWAM – The public is invited to join the Town of Agawam in welcoming the Wreaths Across America delivery truck on its way to the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Agawam to make the first delivery of wreaths of this season. A total of 9,528 will be delivered to the cemetery before National Wreaths Across America Day on Saturday, Dec. 16.

The Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Agawam is one of 4,000 locations that will honor the service of Veterans and those currently serving our nation on that day.

The "Rolling Welcome" is a first for

Agawam and is designed to express support for Veterans, as well as appreciation to the truck's driver, Chris Locke who donates his time, his truck and the fuel required to deliver the wreaths to cemeteries throughout New England. Locke's commitment to Wreaths Across America personifies this year's theme for Wreaths Across America which is Serve and Succeed.

The route will start at The Veterans Green, at the corner of Main Street and School Street and end at the entrance to the cemetery. It will include a police escort and a contingent from The Patriot Guard Riders.



Scholarship applications are now being accepted

AGAWAM – The Polish Junior League of Massachusetts welcomes area college students of Polish heritage to apply for one of the annual academic scholarships. Students must have a permanent address in one of the four Western Massachusetts

counties: Hampshire, Hampden, Franklin or Berkshire. Application forms with related information are available at www.polishjuniorleaguema.org/applications. The deadline for all applications and related materials is May 1, 2024.



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SPORTS



Agawam was not in the Western Mass. tournament last year, but did qualify for the state tournament, losing to Westborough in its playoff opener.



Agawam's went 9-10 overall last season.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



The Agawam girls basketball team traveled to Suffield for an exhibition matchup.



The Brownies have had two weeks of practices before starting the regular season this week.

Brownies gear up for season against Wildcats

SUFFIELD, CT – Last Tuesday evening, Agawam High School girls basketball matched up with neighbor Suffield High School for a scrimmage. The Brownies have regularly met Suffield in the pre-

season as they prepared to open the regular season. Agawam's was on Tuesday against Drury. The Brownies are now headed on the road to play Pope Francis Friday, Dec. 15 at 7 p.m.

Brownies open season with big win over Ludlow

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

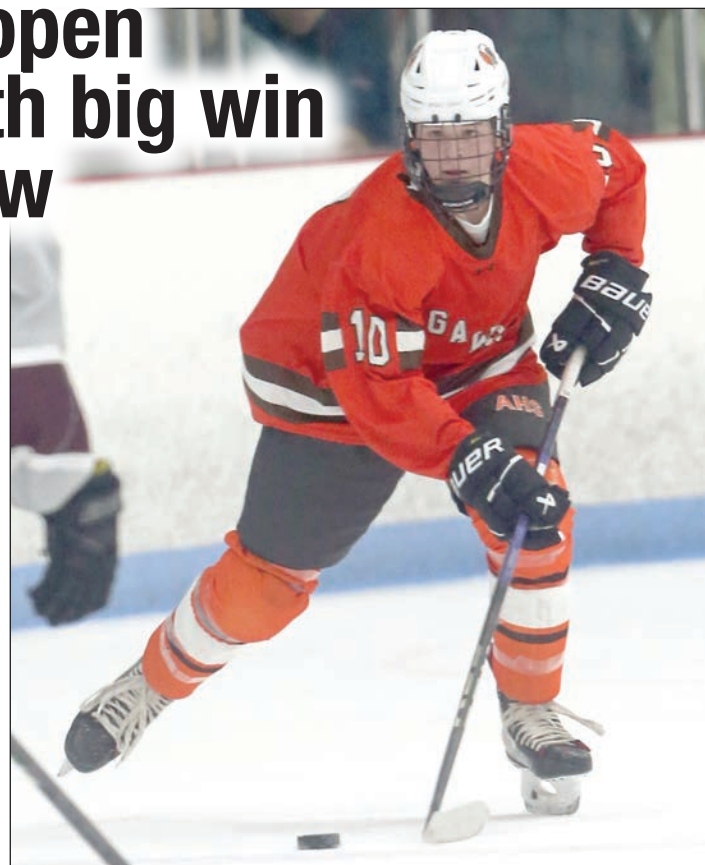
WEST SPRINGFIELD – The Agawam hockey team has won eight league titles during the past 15 years. They were co-champions of the Fay Division with Amherst Regional last year.

The Brownies, who are looking to add another league title to their growing collection, began the 2023-24 regular season with a 5-1 victory over league rival Ludlow at the Olympia Ice Center in West Springfield, last Saturday.

“One of our goals is to win the league title every year,” said Agawam head coach Todd Rowley. “All of our league games are extra special. This is a huge season opening win for us.”

The two teams split the season

HOCKEY | page 7

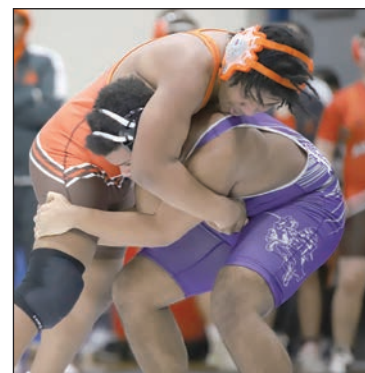


Cole Buffum makes a pass.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Joe Breault wrestling in the 157-pound match.



John Alicea tries to get the advantage in his match at 190 pounds.

Agawam opens season with multiple meets

AGAWAM – Last Saturday morning, Agawam wrestling took its squad on the road to Granby High School. The Brownies had multiple meets, including a matchup with league-rival Holyoke. Several Agawam wrestlers had opportunities to wrestle matches or get a couple of matches under their belts. Agawam is scheduled to travel to Guilford High School in Connecticut for a tournament this Saturday morning.



Jamie Shuler tries his luck at 175 pounds.



Dermot Piattirios grapples at 144 pounds.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Sports

Railers suffer loss to Thunder

WORCESTER – The Railers dropped a 3-2 shootout to the Adirondack Thunder here Saturday before a loud Teddy Bear Toss crowd of 5,029. While Worcester did not dominate play in this one as much as it did in Friday's 4-2 triumph, the Railers had more and better chances than the Thunder.

However, Adirondack was 1 for 2 on its power plays, Worcester 0 for 1. This marked the ninth time in 21 games this season the Railers were outscored by the opposition on special teams. Worcester is 2-4-3 in those games.

The Railers did not get a power play until overtime. At 3:08 of the fourth period, something happened that typified the night. A Worcester shot rang off the post, rolled into the back of Thunder goaltender Vinnie Purpura, then bounced back towards the net.

It stopped on the goal line.

Worcester outshot the visitors, 38-28. That included a 21-6 edge in the first period, which ended 1-1 but could have been 5-1.

"Stay the course," was coach Jordan Smotherman's advice to his team in the dressing room. "That's two really good games out of us. We have 80 shots in two nights and we should win both those games. Obviously, we'll take the three-point weekend but prefer the four.

"There's a lot to build on."

The seven-minute overtime was exactly what hockey's honchos had in mind when they thought up the idea. It was

non-stop offense with great goaltending from Worcester's Tristan Lennox and Purpura, both of whom stopped five shots.

The shootout was the kind of thing hockey's honchos are trying to avoid. The teams traded slow-motion approaches to the net. Adirondack's Patrick Grasso had the only goal in eight tries, a 12-foot wrist shot along the ice.

Keeghan Howdeshell and Anthony Repaci had the Railers goals. Worcester never led. Jack Jeffers and Mike Gillespie scored for Adirondack.

Howdeshell's goal came at 19:07 of the first period. It was set up by a physical play by Riley Piercey along the right boards. Repaci redirected a long pass from the right point by Todd Goehring at 13:33 of the second period.

In the last four games the Railers have outshot the opposition by 160-108 but have been outscored — goalie in the net — by 11-8. Worcester's shots have not been time-to-change lines softballs, either. The Railers are pummeling opposing goalies.

"It's the old adage in hockey," Smotherman said. "If you keep getting the chances they're gonna go in at some point. I'd rather be getting them than not."

Saturday night's game marked the 16th time the Railers and Thunder have met in the last 30 games going back to the end of last season. That ridiculous overload is almost over. The teams play just three more times this year, one of those games next week.

Thunderbirds stuff Islanders on annual Teddy Bear Night

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (12-8-2-0) thoroughly controlled the game and came away with a defiant 5-1 win over the Bridgeport Islanders (6-15-1-0) on Saturday night before a sold-out crowd of 6,793 for the annual Teddy Bear Toss.

Fans did not have to wait long to chuck their stuffed animals onto the ice, as Mathias Laferrriere cleaned up a loose puck rebound in front of Jakub Skarek and tucked it home on the backhand just 1:40 into the game, bringing about thousands of bears raining onto the ice sheet.

After a delay in picking up all the stuffed donations, the T-Birds picked right up where they left off, and just 6:10 after the Laferrriere goal, the top line generated another marker. Adam Gaudette connected on a pass to the right side to Nathan Walker. Dylan Coghlan quickly raced up into the play as a trailer and perfectly placed a wrist shot over Skarek's blocker arm to make it a 2-0 game at 7:50.

Vadim Zherenko was mostly untested in the T-Birds' net, as the offense for both teams went dry for well over the next 30 minutes of game action.

The game's temperature then rose at the 3:18 mark of the third as Sam Bitten and Travis Mitchell dropped the mitts in an old-school style scrap, bringing up the noise on both benches and inside the building. When the game moved to 4-on-4

following matching minors three minutes later, the T-Birds put the game out of reach with two goals in short order.

First, Calle Rosen drifted back toward his blue line and stunned the Islanders with a perfect diagonal pass to a streaking Walker, who beat Skarek with a backhand to make it 3-0 at 7:18 of the third. Just 22 seconds later, Walker was the distributor off the rush, setting up Wyatt Kalynuk for a snapper through Skarek's five-hole, and in a matter of a half minute, the lead had ballooned to 4-0 for the T-Birds.

Matt Maggio broke up Zherenko's shutout bid with a shot that caromed off a defender and through Zherenko's legs at 10:27 to make it a 4-1 game, but that would be all the Isles could muster on this night.

Coghlan would add his second of the night on Walker's fourth point of the evening, blasting a one-time power play slapper through Skarek's legs at 13:59, rounding out the scoring with his seventh goal of the year and his second multi-goal game.

For the first time this season, the T-Birds went the full 60 minutes without having to play shorthanded, and Springfield scored on their lone power play chance to make it a perfect night in special teams. Zherenko got his fourth straight win with 34 saves. In his last four outings, the second-year netminder has stopped 126 out of 132 shots.

HOCKEY ■ from page 6

series a year ago.

Agawam won the first meeting by the final score of 5-3.

Ludlow won the second meeting by the same score a month later.

One of the key players for Agawam in this year's season opener was junior goalie Frankie DiSanti, who made a total of 20 saves. DiSanti took over the starting duties from Jake Croteau, who graduated last spring.

"I was a little bit nervous before the start of today's game, but it all worked out very well. I'm just happy that we won the game," DiSanti said. "I couldn't have done it without the help of my teammates. We're hoping to win a championship this year."

DiSanti was a starting goalie for the second time in a varsity hockey game. He made 16 saves in an 8-4 win over South Hadley last February.

"Frankie made a couple of big saves on breakaway shots in today's game," Rowley said. "I just thought he did a great job."

While the Brownies played their first game of the regular season, the Lions (0-1-1) tied Taconic, 1-1, in their first game two nights earlier. Junior Ryan Goodwin scored the goal in the Lions season opener, which was assisted by sophomore A.J. Stupak, and junior Owen Kumiega.

Freshman goalie Peter LeBorgne was credited with 19 saves against Taconic. He only made five saves against the Brownies before being replaced in goal by sophomore Ethan Steigmeyer at the start of the third period.

LeBorgne, who took over the starting duties from Luke Sunderland isn't the first member of his family to play hockey for long-time Ludlow head coach Paul Rivest.

His father was a member of the Palmer hockey team, which was coached by Rivest.

The Lions, who outshot the Brownies, 6-1, in the first period, failed to capitalize on two power play opportunities.

The Brownies also didn't score a goal on their first period power play and the contest was still scoreless entering the second.

Less than five minutes into the second period, Agawam senior David Newsome fired a low shot from inside the left circle that snuck into the net under LeBorgne's glove for a power play goal.

Agawam's first goal of the season was assisted by sophomore Thomas Connery.

A couple of minutes later, sophomore Casey Thomas scored a goal, which gave the Brownies a 2-0 advantage.

The Lions cut the deficit in half when se-



Anthony Barbarini clears the puck up the ice.

nior Luke Martin netted an unassisted power play goal at the 8:19 mark of the second period.

With 2:23 remaining in the second period, Agawam senior Anthony Buoniconti, who assisted on the second goal, flipped a shot into the net increasing the lead to 3-1.

The senior duo of Hayden Dupre and Jake Paolo were credited with the assist.

Agawam took a 4-1 lead with 18 seconds left on the scoreboard clock following a goal by Cole Buffum, which was assisted by his classmate Landon Ashford.

"Even though we had control of the game entering the final period, I just told the guys in the locker room not to take their foot off the gas pedal," Rowley said. "We got goals from all four of our lines, which was nice to see."

Buffum, who netted his first goal in a varsity game against the Lions last year, scored an unassisted goal two minutes into the third period, which sealed the Brownies season opening victory.

DiSanti made several saves during the final period, including one on a breakaway opportunity by Ludlow sophomore Nick



Frankie DiSanti blocks the right side of the goal.

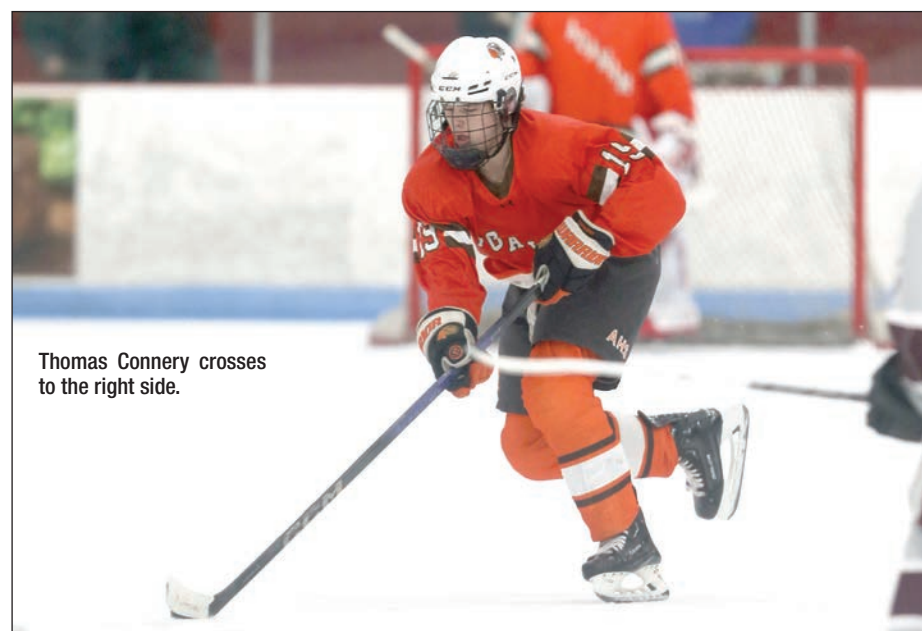


David Newsome guides the puck through the defensive zone.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Deroin, which helped his team maintain a four goal lead.

The Fay Division rivals are scheduled to meet again at Olympia on Feb. 3.



Thomas Connery crosses the puck to the right side.

Sports

Winter Showdown to feature SK Type Open Modified programs

WINTER HAVEN, FL – As tradition has it, motorsports fans from coast to coast will soon be flocking to the Sunshine State, ready to elude the abrasive winter chill in exchange for a full month of racing at a variety of ovals across the peninsula. Auburndale Speedway in Winter Haven, Florida, centrally located between Tampa and Orlando, will join in on the winter action, ready to host its highly-anticipated Winter Showdown on February 6-10.

In total, seven different asphalt divisions will be taking to the Auburndale shorttrack, all of which anchored with the 602 Tour Type

Modifieds, and the Tour/SK Type Open Modifieds, that will headline the week-long Winter Showdown agenda on Thursday through Saturday. The 602 Modifieds, battling for \$500-to-win in each of their respective programs, will compete on all three of the aforementioned evenings with the Tour/SK Type Open Modifieds competing for \$2,000-to-win paydays on Friday and Saturday, only.

A true must-see for any short track enthusiast, the Tour Type Modifieds have never competed at Auburndale Speedway giving fans the opportunity to witness a new piece of Florida history.

Competitors should note, Modifieds will utilize the F45 Hoosier; additional rules will be posted in the coming days.

In addition to the aforementioned Modified divisions, Legends/Bandoleros (highlighted with double programs on Wednesday and Thursday), Mighty TQ Midgets (chasing a \$5,000 total purse), USAC Eastern Midgets, the National Compact Tour, and the infamous Crown Vics, will also join in on the Winter Showdown, activating officially with open practice and track rental sessions beginning Tuesday, February 6.

Registration for Auburndale Speedway's

Winter Showdown is officially open. Competitors seeking to pre-register can do so by clicking the link below. Online registration will close on February 1 with additional registration opportunities available at-track during each day's respective program.

Speed Sport TV, home to the widest variety of motorsports events, award-winning shows and exclusive features with live and on-demand capabilities, is the official broadcast partner of the annual Winter Showdown and is set to broadcast each evening live. Race coverage packages and pricing will be available soon. Learn more at www.speedsport.tv.

Public Notices

AGAWAM ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St., Agawam, MA on **Monday, January 8, 2024 at 6:30PM** for all parties interested in the appeal of Laurie Littlefield, as allowed under MGL Ch.40A, Section 8 and the Town of Agawam's Adopted Charter, Section 2, Paragraph C, from the Inspector of Buildings October 20, 2023 Zoning Ordinance Violation Notice regarding the premises identified as 655 Cooper Street.

Doreen A. Prouty
Chairperson
Agawam Zoning
Board of Appeals
12/14, 12/21/2023

attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 01/09/2024.

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.

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M. Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 06, 2023
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
12/14/2023

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given by Langonet Towing pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c.255, Section 39A, that on **January 2, 2024** at 63 Ramah Cir S, Agawam the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy the garagekeeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicle.

2000 Toyota 4Runner
VIN: JT3HN86R8Y0289699
Gary Croteau
14 Meadow Ave
Agawam, MA 01001
12/14, 12/21, 12/28/2023

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Division Docket No. HD23P2373EA

Estate of: Donald Charles LaViolette Also Known As: Donald C. LaViolette Date of Death: April 16, 2023

INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE
To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by

Petition of Petitioner **Sally E. LaViolette of Agawam, MA** a Will has been admitted to informal probate.

Sally E. LaViolette of Agawam, MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without** surety on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner. 12/14/2023

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758

Docket No. HD22P1183EA In the matter of: Diane C Mooney TRUST CITATION

To all interested persons: A Petition has been filed by: **Bruce Perron of South Hadley, MA** requesting the trust be dispensed with as to beneficiary Terrence Perron aka Terrence Mooney, all as more fully set forth in said petition.

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 **12/29/2023**.

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 date, action may be taken without further notice to you.

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 01, 2023
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
12/14/2023

TOWN OF AGAWAM REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS

Firms interested in providing Public Construction Manager at Risk Services ("CM" or "CM at Risk") for the Agawam High School in Agawam, Massachusetts ("Project") are invited to submit a Statement of Qualifications ("SOQ") to the Town of Agawam. This CM at Risk services procurement is conducted pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 149A. This Request for Qualifications ("RFQ") is the first phase of a two-phase procurement process as set forth in MGL Chapter 149A. The Agawam High School Building Committee ("SBC"), acting on behalf of the Town of Agawam & the Agawam School District ("Awarding Authority") through the CM Prequalification & Selection Committee is prequalifying firms interested in providing CM at Risk services for the project through this RFQ process. The SBC has established a CM Prequalification & Selection sub-committee

which will evaluate submitted SOQs based upon the identified evaluation criteria and will determine if the respondents are deemed qualified to participate in the subsequent RFP phase. Only those respondents deemed qualified will be invited to submit a Proposal in response to a detailed Request for Proposals ("RFP") which will be issued in the second phase of the procurement process. The SBC expects the RFP may be available by January 17, 2024. The project delivery method for construction will be public CM at Risk with a Guaranteed Maximum Price ("GMP") in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 149A.

The RFQ will be available on December 13, 2023 through the Owner's Project Manager, Leftfield, LLC., c/o Ms. Linda Liporto, lliporto@leftfieldpm.com Acting on behalf of the SBC, and the Pre-Qualification Subcommittee, Ms. Linda Liporto, will be the contact person for this RFQ. Upon receipt of the RFQ, firms interested in the submitting their Statement of Qualifications must submit an RFQ Interest Form via email to Ms. Linda Liporto @ lliporto@leftfieldpm.com This form is contained within the RFQ.

Background information regarding this project can be viewed at:

<https://agawamhsproject.com>

CM SOQ's are to be submitted no later than January 10, 2024 – 2:00 PM via electronic upload:

<https://leftfieldpm.egnyte.com/ul/FCgJN15Wo>

Project specifics:
Estimated Project Value: \$231 million
Estimated Construction Value: \$187 million
Estimated Preconstruction Duration: Varies
Construction Duration: +/- 32 months

Project square footage: .235,075 new construction;

Program scope: New High School designed to accommodate 955 students consisting of grades 9-12 as well as a separate building for pre-k. Abatement and demolition of existing school buildings, new building construction; project site programs includes 3 fields, playground, outdoor areas and parking lots.

The SBC, Agawam School District, and Town of Agawam reserves the right to waive any informality in the RFQ process, to reject any and all SOQ's and to make determinations on CM firms deemed "qualified" in its own discretion to be in the best interest of the Project. 12/14/2023

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS Probate and Family Court Department HAMPDEN, Division Docket No. HD21P2357PM

To all persons interested in the estate of Elvia Londono, of Feeding Hills, in said County, a person under Conservatorship, married.

A petition has been presented to said Court for license to sell at private sale - certain real estate of said Elvia Londono for her maintenance.

If you desire to object thereto you or your attorney should file a written appearance in said Court at 50 State Street, Springfield, MA, before **10:00 a.m. on the 9th day of January 2024**, the return day of this decision.

Witness, **BARBARA M. HYLAND**, Esquire, First Justice of said Court this fifth day of December 2023.

Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register
12/14/2023

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.

Early Deadlines

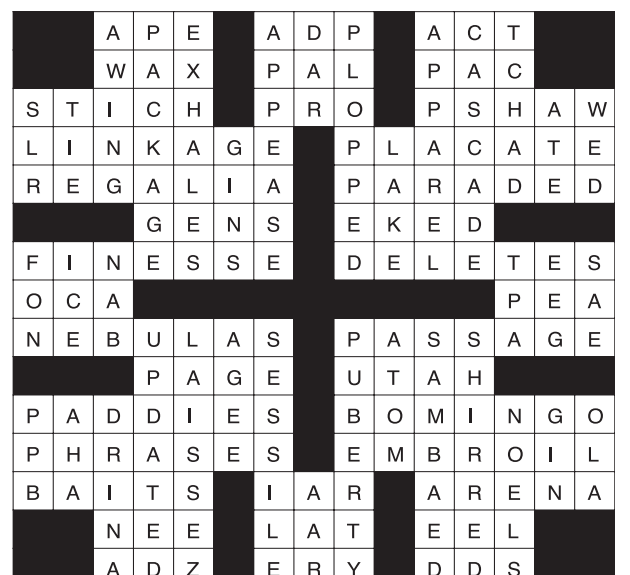
for all LEGAL NOTICES...

All Papers Will Deadline Thursday, Dec. 21 at Noon for Publication Dec. 25-29

Happy New Year!

All Papers Will Deadline Thursday, Dec. 28 at Noon for Publication Jan. 1-5

Happy Holidays!



BBB tips on choosing a meal delivery service

Meal delivery services give consumers a more convenient way to make home-cooked dinners by delivering fresh, pre-measured ingredients and easy-to-follow recipes to your doorstep.

But just like any other service, each company is different.

Pricing, ingredients, and preparation requirements vary greatly between services. You'll need to do some homework to pick the one that best meets your family's needs. If the appeal of a meal delivery subscription is learning new recipes and experimenting with ingredients, you might choose one company. But if your main interest is speed and simplicity, another may be a better fit.

The following tips will help select an ideal meal delivery service for your household:

- **Research the delivery service.** Ask friends and family, read reviews, and check BBB.org to learn about past customers' experiences.

- **Set a budget and check the fine print.** Pricing can vary from one company to the next. Make certain the service aligns with your budget. In addition, not all meal delivery services include shipping fees in their pricing and read the fine print.

- **Know your skill level.** Before committing to a plan, research what kind of cooking techniques you'll need to know. If a company's recipes require searing, roasting, and braising, do you know how? If not, make sure you have the time to learn new techniques.

- **Consider ingredient quality.** Not all companies offer organic, non-GMO, or free-range meal ingredients. If these are must-haves for your family, make sure the company offers them.

- **Determine how much prep work you want.** Some companies do more chopping and sauce-making than others. This seemingly small difference can make a big difference in how long each meal takes to make.

- **Contact customer service.** If there ever is a problem - a missing recipe card or ingredient, for example - you want to know you can count on customer service. Make sure there are clear, easy ways to contact the company, even late in the evening. Read the company's reviews and keep an eye out for any indication that customer service is lacking.

- **Check the cancellation policy.** Before making a decision to subscribe to meal delivery, understand the cancellation policy. Each company is different and some may have very strict policies.

- **Be careful with personal information.** Most food delivery services process payments online. Make sure the company is legitimate before offering up personal information such as financial information and address.

- **Review BBB tips for shopping online.** Since meal delivery services don't usually have brick-and-mortar storefronts, consider the tips in BBB's tips for smart shopping online.

TAX RATE ■ from page 1

li said. "As if your home was worth \$300,000 last year and you're taxed on that amount and then it goes up to \$340,000 the next year, even though we may lower the tax rate, your bill goes up."

There is a proposed tax rate shift of 1.59 for residential and commercial/industrial based on the increase in assessed values of these properties.

"We thought that the 1.59 gives a good balance for both residential and commercial taxpayers," Reed said. "The shift provides a continued opportunity for businesses to thrive but still supporting the residential taxpayers."

The anticipated tax bill for the average single family is \$4,881. This is an increase of \$262 from last year. The average home is valued at \$335,714, about a 14% increase from the last year.

For the average commercial valued at under \$500,000, the anticipated bill is \$7,660, an increase of \$559 from last year. Finally, for a commercial valued at over \$500,000, the

average bill is expected to be \$54,569, an increase of \$1,873 from 2023.

While Sapelli and Reed do understand how frustrating this can feel for community members, they did also emphasize the importance of seeing assessed home values increase.

"The largest asset many of us have is our home," Sapelli said. "And, similar to when you invest money in the stock market, none of us want to see that go down, you want to see that go up. So the assessed values of the homes, it's important to see that go up, as that's the value of something you own, that's an asset."

Reed and Sapelli also emphasized that this increase in housing value demonstrates an increase in the desirability of the town.

"The fact that we have such a community that's appealing to people because of our fire, police, education, the amenities—we have the parks and whatnot—people want to move to Agawam, so the value of the property goes up," Sapelli said.

"As an assessor, new growth is something that we look at to talk about the health of a community," Reed said. "We've had very strong residential growth in Agawam, there's new developments, new condos, new multifamilies, and even in the commercial/industrial side we've got new commercial buildings going up, businesses investing in additional square footage...they all point to a healthy, vibrant community that's attractive to people."

Agawam has experienced great growth over the past year. The assessed value of the town is now \$4,217,478,846, which is about a 14% increase from the prior year. This increase in the overall town value contributed to the proposed shift factor.

The council was supportive of this proposed tax rate for the town.

"No one loves raising taxes, but I think the proposed factor that the mayor selected is the best balance that's available to us," Council President Christopher Johnson said.

The council approved this rate with a 10-0 vote. Council Anthony Suffritti was absent from the meeting.

SCHOOL ZONE ■ from page 1

events, people often have to park across the street from AHS and then cross Mill Street in order to get to the fields. Many community members had raised concerns over the safety of this endeavor.

Additionally, Sandlin mentioned concerns over the speed at which people leave the high school, particularly during arrival and dismissal.

"It's not just for events and the evening, but it's also to slow people down coming out of the high school at 2 o'clock," Sandlin said. "They come out of the high school at 2 p.m. and they take a left or a right and they're anxious to get out of that parking lot and then it's very dangerous along that strip."

The hope is that installing a school zone will work to slow traffic during busier times.

Additionally, installing the crosswalk lights will ensure that pedestrians crossing the street will be easily seen by drivers. These installed lights will be just like the ones installed at the street by the courthouse.

Following the council's vote, should it go as anticipated, they will send the results to the state and receive funding for the crosswalk lights and approval for the school zone.

"If we do this the state will pay some expenses for the installation of the solar, blinking lights to make this dangerous crossing area a lot safer," City Councilor George Bitzas said. "I'm glad that this is in the works now...the state would be able to pay us for the lights if we designate the area as a safe zone."

According to Bitzas, the lights will be solar powered and fairly inexpensive for the town to install.

These lights will also be manually activated by those crossing. Therefore, when someone approaches the crosswalk they will press a button to activate the lights.

"These are manually activated so as you go to cross, you hit the button and then the lights flash," Council President Christopher Johnson said.

According to Johnson, the school zone, if approved, would be marked by signs that indicate the hours in which the speed limit would be 20 mph.


Councilor Robert Rossi emphasized the importance of passing this ordinance.

"I think this is a long time in coming over there at the high school," Rossi said. "To add this as a safety measure is a great idea."

Assuming the council votes in favor of this, the DPW will immediately get to work putting up signs that implement a 20-mph school zone in the area during set hours.

"The speed limit would go into effect as soon as the DPW could erect changes in the signage," Sandlin said.


The council will take the final vote on this matter at their next meeting, which is scheduled for Dec. 18.



CAREER

and Education

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This special section is circulated into all 12 of our papers, those papers include. **The Sentinel, The Chicopee Register, The Sun, The Register, The Wilbraham-Hampden Times, Agawam Advertiser, Country Journal, Town Reminder, Quaboag Current, Journal Register, Ware River News and Barre Gazette.**

The 2023 Career & Education edition publishes **the week of January 10th-12th**
Space reservation deadline is **January 3rd.**

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Full page (9 3/4" across x 16" down)	\$1,800 total

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The Town of Worthington is soliciting letters of interest from qualified candidates for the full-time position of **Equipment Operator/General Laborer** in the Town Highway Department. Valid MA CDL operator, Hydraulic Hoister's licenses and OSHA-10 certification is preferred. Further information can be found on the Town's website: www.worthington-ma.us Questions will be answered by the Highway Superintendent at 64 Huntington Road, Monday - Friday, 7 AM to 3 PM; the telephone number is 413-238-5830. Send letter of interest, resume and three (3) references with relevant contact information to: worthington-highway@gmail.com or to Worthington Highway Department, P. O. Box 643, Worthington, MA. This posting will remain pertinent until the position is filled. The Town of Worthington is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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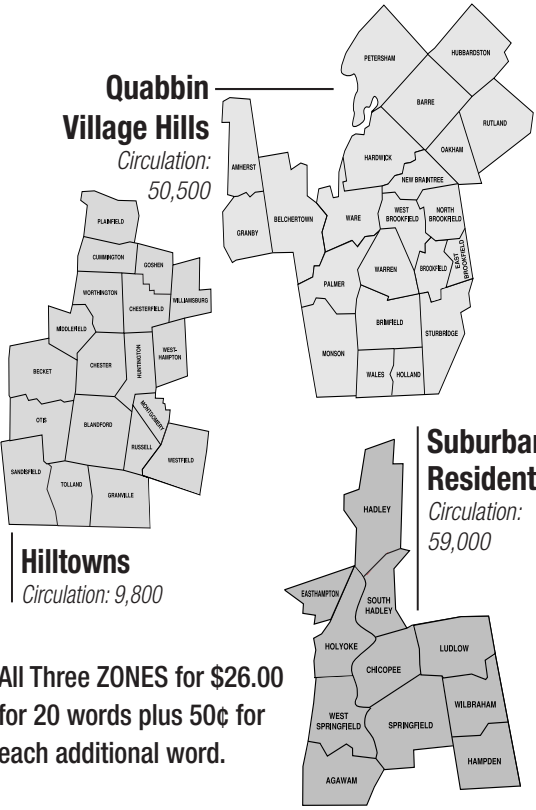
All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, 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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Hundreds of Agawam community members gathered at Veterans Memorial Green outside of Benjamin J. Phelps School for the tree lighting ceremony.



Community members were able to get holiday braceleted and ornaments at the tree lighting ceremony.



Mayor William Sapelli and Santa Claus lit the Christmas tree at the tree lighting ceremony.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA



All the community members at the tree lighting ceremony gathered on the green to enjoy the caroling.



Students from Agawam High School's NHS helped to pass out cookies and hot chocolate to community members at the tree lighting ceremony.



Benjamin J. Phelps Music Teacher Paul Sawyer led Christmas carols for all during the tree lighting ceremony.

Cookies and hot chocolate were offered by the Agawam PTO for all in attendance of the tree lighting ceremony.

HOLIDAY | from page 1

Many of the kids don't get to see each other, but do sports together, so it's a good opportunity for them to come out tonight."

At these events, community members were welcome to enjoy free hot chocolate, cookies and ornaments.

"We're calling it our Cocoa and Caroling Family Event," Comee said. "We have cocoa for all families, cookies that have been donated by families, we have made family ornaments that say 'Hot Cocoa and Caroling Family Event', every family can take one from each of the schools."

There was also caroling led by Phelps Music Teacher Paul Sawyer. As Sawyer performed, the lyrics to each song was projected for community members to follow along to.

Sawyer sang songs including "Jingle Bells", "Dreidel, Dreidel" and "Rockin Around the Christmas Tree", which the hundreds of community members sang along to.

Following the caroling, Santa Claus arrived on a fire truck along with Mayor William Sapelli. Together, they lit the tree and then Santa Claus and Sawyer led the community in a few more carols to close out the night.






"The more we carol, the louder we sing, we will bring the big guy in red," Comee said.

Krista Comee loved seeing all of the families and their children come out to enjoy the event.

"I love seeing all of the children's smiling faces as they're out there caroling with their family," Comee said. "That's what it's all about, we do it for the kids."

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