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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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Open house, grand opening launch new APD

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM – If you drive by the new Agawam Police Headquarters located at 1070 Suffield St., the parking lots are looking a lot fuller.

Last Saturday morning, the parking lot was even more filled up as members of the public were able to go to the new location and get guided tours of everything their tax dollars paid for.

In addition, Mayor Christopher Johnson cut the ribbon alongside Police Chief Eric Gillis as a short grand opening ceremony was also held at the open house.

Also in attendance at the event was former Mayor William Sapelli, who secured the location during his tenure as mayor a few years ago. He worked with the city council to secure the borrowing for the project, which included purchase of the former HUB Insurance building, followed

by money needed to renovate and retrofit, and reinforce the building into a very secure facility to hold police operations, which includes more than 40,000 pieces of evidence which the department is carefully moving to the new facility.

During the past month since Johnson also held tours for elected officials and the media, most of the police operations have moved over from former location at Springfield St. The location was the police department's home for 40 years and was cramped and overflowing.

It's makeup also was not as secure, due to cramped confines forcing the police to bring civilians into what should be secure locations, such as the booking area and secure interview rooms. Evidence and records also had to be in scattered locations as the building continuously ran



The ribbon is cut on the new police headquarters last Saturday.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

POLICE | page 7

New offerings, taste tests highlight food service initiatives

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM – The programs initiated by the Agawam Public Schools Food Services Department are gaining traction.

At the Dec. 9 School Committee meeting, Liz Moulton, who is in year six as Food Service Director, shared some of the recent successes.

Breakfast in schools continues to be free to all students. Participation in the Agawam Public Schools breakfast program has increased significantly since it started in September 2019, when data showed about 2,700

participants. The participation has boomed to 12,306 as of last September.

One interesting part of the breakfast program is Moulton has advocated to have the program be available "after the bell."

"There is a cart going down every hall in the morning," she said. "They are doing an incredible job. Kids are eating and the numbers are continuing to increase."

Because of that, participation in the program has absolutely boomed and is thriving.

With the lunch program, participation is at about 70%.

"Our menus and our kids are growing," she said.

There has been some turnover in staff in the past years. There are eight new hires this year, and the schools have their first dietetic intern this year, former Agawam student Ava Ferrandino.

While the menus have continued to be popular in schools, Moulton said there is taste testing once a month at Agawam High School. Foods being tried by students this month include chicken meatballs, vegetarian taco meat, and Rebellious Foods-plant based protein.

"I thought, 'why can't we do a taste test once a month?'" Moulton told the committee. "We're doing it at the high

school because it's a little easier to get high schoolers to try things."

Another new program highlight is "Try It Tuesday." Moulton said some new items are made available on a Tuesday.

"Other than pizza on Friday, I put my foot down and we don't menu things more than once a month," she said. "This gives it a tag line."

Items tried on the new day include the chicken ramen bowl, homemade broccoli cheddar omelet, and beefy nachos. She said the beefy nachos were very difficult to prepare ahead of time, but has been a big seller so far.

Moulton shared a couple photos of the taste testing setup. She said vendors are invited to come into the school and students are able to come into the cafeteria to try the new items and give feedback.

She told the committee the department had recently taken part in some professional development opportunities, including going one from the Gulf of Maine Institute where they learned more about white fish and how it can be served in the schools.

School Committee Student Representative Aiden Therrien raved about recent new items, including egg rolls. "It's a lot different now,"

he said. "We are able to try new things almost every day. It thinks it's great. I think the food has massively improved."

He also complimented the friendliness of the cafeteria staff.

School Committee member AJ Christopher said he was happy to see the various programs in the school, especially those that aimed at providing opportunities to try new things.

"It's great to see this going on in this schools," said Christopher. "It's good to see the staff interact with the students and its good to see the numbers trend in the right direction."

Jammie Junket



Roberta Doering students show off their jammie donations for a recent drive conducted by The Agawam Health Department. Please see more details and photos inside.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Town increases its spending on road work, maintenance

By Gregory A. Scibelli
 gscibelli@turley.com

AGAWAM – While it may never seem like enough, the Town of Agawam continues to increase its spending on road paving and sidewalk construction.

During a recent presentation to the Agawam City Council, Mayor Christopher Johnson highlighted road and sidewalk construction that has taken place in 2025. Construction season has now ended with the frigid cold temperatures and snow falling in early December.

Johnson said full depth reclamation and reconstruction has taken place on Anthony St., Valentine St., Valentine Terrace, Arrowood Dr., and Cottonwood Ln.

"That's where they bring a machine in rip it out and

resurface," Johnson.

Milling and resurfacing also took place on parts of Poplar St., Garden St., Barry St., South St., South Brook Ln., and Main St.

Johnson said the road was completed in early November.

Following those six streets, funding ran out to do anymore streets.

Johnson said several more streets received preventative maintenance this year, which includes crack-sealing, delta mist.

"These are more modern techniques used to extend the life of modern paving," Johnson said.

Johnson showed how funding for roads and sidewalks has increased over the past four fiscal years.

ROAD | page 6



Adult programs remaining this month at library

AGAWAM – Snow is falling and Agawam Public Library is calling. Join us for a great lineup of events for December that will keep you mindful and joyous this holiday season.

Our annual Festival of Trees is back and you won't want to miss out. The Festival of Trees is a community-wide holiday gallery of hand-made trees displayed throughout the library. Create something truly unique by building a tree out of unusual materials like soda cans or egg cartons. Families, friends, coworkers, classes – everybody is encouraged to join in on the fun. Completed trees should

be dropped off at the library by Dec. 18. For more information and guidelines for submission, please visit the library Information Desk or go to agawamlibrary.org. Trees will be on display at the library from Dec. 18 through Jan. 5, beginning with our Opening Reception on Thursday, Dec. 18 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room. Come view the creative trees, enjoy the sounds of the season and indulge in some holiday treats. Please register to attend.

Instructor Heidi Taberman will lead participants in an hour of gentle Chair Yoga on Wednesday mornings at 9:05 a.m. Classes are drop-

in; please note that there is no class on Dec. 24.

Looking to have some fun and indulge in the music of the season? Join us for Holiday Music Bingo on Monday, Dec. 22 at 6:30 p.m. Get in the holiday spirit as we play bingo and enjoy some seasonal treats. Prizes will be awarded to those who have a winning bingo card. Our Adult Craft Night this month will take place on Monday, Dec. 29 at 6:30 p.m. and participants will make a cute hand painted snowman ornament. This craft features acrylic paint, a wooden round, fabric and pompoms. Make a sweet snowman friend to keep around all

winter long. Please register to attend these events.

Our monthly programs are an excellent way for folks to pursue their interests or try out something new. Join our Writers Group hosted by Katherine Anderson on Thursday, Dec. 18 at 6 p.m. This in-person workshop is open to writers of all levels and genres. There will be opportunities for peer and host feedback, finding opportunities for submission to magazines, literary journals, and presses, and more. Registration is required.

Professional wrestling fans take note. We have an extra special event coming up in the new year that you

won't want to miss. Author, podcaster and former WWE media journalist Brian R. Solomon will host a presentation and book signing for his latest book, *Irresistible Force: the Life and Times of Gorilla Monsoon* on Saturday, Jan. 24 at 10 a.m. Brian's encyclopedic knowledge of professional wrestling is clearly displayed in his biography of Gorilla Monsoon, one of the original character wrestlers in the early days of the WWWF/WWF and later the "voice" of the WWF events. Don't miss this amazing opportunity to connect with this prolific chronicler of the professional wrestling world! Registration to attend this event will

open on Dec. 22.

Thank you to the Agawam Center Library Association for sponsoring select library programs. The library will continue collecting non-perishable food items throughout December. Upcoming holiday closings include: closing at 12:30 p.m. on Dec. 24, closed on Dec. 25, closing at 5 p.m. on Dec. 31, closed on Jan. 1. During the winter months, any closings or late openings due to inclement weather will be reported to local TV stations 22 and 40, as well as their websites and the library's social media platforms.



The West of the River Chamber of Commerce recently donated proceeds from Food Fest West to Partnership for Education.

Chamber makes donation from Food Fest Event

AGAWAM – The West of the River Chamber of Commerce (WRC) and the West of the River Chamber 501c3 Foundation announced today a charitable donation to the Partnership for Education in West Springfield, made possible through a portion of the proceeds raised at the Chamber's Annual Food Fest West celebration held in November.

The donation reflects the Chamber's ongoing commitment to supporting educational initiatives that strengthen the local community and create opportunities for students, educators, and families in West Springfield.

"Each year, Food Fest West brings together businesses, residents, and community partners to celebrate the vibrancy of our region," said Robin Wozniak, Executive Director of the West of the River Chamber of Commerce. "We are proud to extend the impact of this event by supporting the Partnership for Education and the important work it does to enhance learning experiences for students across West Springfield."

The Partnership for Education provides funding, resources, and volunteer support for programs that enrich curriculum, foster in-

novation, and promote student success. Contributions such as this one help sustain initiatives that would otherwise be beyond the reach of traditional school budgets.

The Chamber's Annual Food Fest West featured local restaurants, breweries, and food businesses, drawing strong attendance and community engagement. WRC and its Foundation plan to continue supporting educational and charitable organizations throughout the region as part of their mission to strengthen the local business community and enhance quality of life in the West of the River region.

Colleen contest applications closing this weekend

AGAWAM – Applications are now available for the 2026 Agawam Colleen contest. The contest is open to young women of Irish heritages age 17 to 22. Applications are due Dec. 20 and can be found at the new St. Patrick's Committee website, www.agawamst-patricks.com.

At that link you can find the application as well as information on the upcoming events sponsored by the committee and the entire

Irish season calendar.

Applications for the Colleen competition will be invited to attend an information meeting at Agawam Public Library on Jan. 3 at 11 a.m. to learn more about the process. Anyone with questions can also email: agawamstpatricks317@gmail.com.

Last year, the event featured just four contestants. Typically, a Colleen is chosen along with four court members. In previous years,

the contest has featured anywhere from 10 to 20 contestants, giving judges, who are drawn from different communities' St. Patrick's Committee to ensure neutrality and objectivity in the selection process, a choice in who is crowned Colleen and who else is named to the court.

But in recent years, there have been right around five contestants, making the biggest choice who is named the Colleen.

Christmas Tree collection set to take place in mid-January

AGAWAM – The Department of Public Works is pleased to announce that USA Waste and Recycling will be providing a collection of Christmas Trees during the week of Jan. 12 to 16.

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 7am 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.

Sacred Heart Church announces upcoming holiday Mass schedule

AGAWAM – Sacred Heart Church in Feeding Hills has announced its upcoming Mass scheduled for the Christmas and New Year's holidays.

On Christmas Eve, Dec. 24, there will be a 4 p.m.

Mass. That will be followed by a late-evening pass at 10 p.m. called the Solemn Christmas Mass at Night. About 15 minutes prior to the Mass, there will be a musical selection.

On Christmas Day,

will be celebrated at 10 a.m. For the New Year's holiday, known as the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, Mass will be celebrated on Wednesday, Dec. 31 at 4 p.m. and on Thursday, Jan. 1 at 10 a.m.

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December events for kids and teens at the Agawam Library

AGAWAM – There is a lot to celebrate at the Agawam Library this December. We will have fun, free programs for kids and teens, including a Lantern Making & Winter Sing-along for all ages. At the Lantern Making and Winter Sing-along we will make lanterns together and sing together to celebrate the Winter Solstice. To register for this event, or any of our other December events go to our website: agawamlibrary.org or call 413-789-1550 ext. 3.

Programs are listed in alphabetical order.

Art and Stories - For ages 3-5

Tuesday, Dec. 23 at 9:30

a.m. - Drop-in.

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

Family Take and Make Crafts - For all ages

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

A new Take and Make craft will be available the first day of each week and again on Thursdays.

Dec. 22 and 24: Deer Hand Puppet,

Dec. 29 and 31: Fireworks Paper Cup Craft

Grow, Play and Learn - This program is provided by

Pathways for Parents.

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

No class Dec. 24 through Dec. 31

Stories, songs and skill building, led by an Early Childhood Developmental trained staff member, guiding caregivers in strengthening interactions with their child.

Pre-K Pals - For ages 3-5

This program is provided by Pathways for Parents.

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

No class on Monday, Dec. 29. We will provide activities to help your child to learn

through playing.

Special Saturday Drop-In Craft: 3-D Winter Ornament Craft - For All Ages

Saturday, Dec. 27, All Day - While supplies last - Drop-in and pick up.

Create snowy scenes you'll be proud to display. Great for winter crafts, these 3D ornaments feature either a smiling snowman or cheerful reindeer.

Stroller Strides with FIT4MOM - For parents & their child ages 1 month - 10 years old

Saturday, Dec. 20 at 9:30 a.m. - Registration is required

This program is brought to us by FIT4MOM. Stroll-

er Strides is a 60-minute total-body workout with strength, cardio, and core training, all while engaging the little ones in a stroller.

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

Tuesday, Dec. 23 at 2 p.m.

Stop by the library after school and visit the Activity Room. Play our Nintendo Switch, try out the button maker, eat snacks, or just hang out. No registration necessary. There is no Drop-in on Dec. 30.

Teen Take and Make Craft - For grades 7-12

Available now Stop by the Teen Space to pick up a Take and Make Craft kit. They'll be available

until we run out of supplies. No registration necessary.

Teen Trivia Thursday - For grades 7-12

Thursday, Dec. 18 from 2 to 3:30 p.m.

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

Toddler Time - For 19 mo. - 36 mo.

Monday, Dec. 22 at 9:30 a.m. - Drop-in.

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

Winter Bingo - For grades K-4

Tuesday, Dec. 30 at 6 p.m. - Registration is required.

Come play winter themed bingo. Prizes will be awarded every round.

HCC opens registration for Spring 2026 noncredit classes

HOLYOKE — Holyoke Community College has opened registration for its Spring 2026 catalog of non-credit personal enrichment and professional development classes.

The spring calendar begins Jan. 12, with individual classes running on different schedules throughout the semester.

New next semester is a series of classes for seniors focused on basic technology. Each one-hour class is available for just \$20 and cover a wide range of subjects, including Windows 11, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint, Canva (for graphic design), Arti-

ficial Intelligence, Zoom, smartphone use (Android or iPhone), managing and editing photos, document storage, web browsers, and computer scams.

Other classes for spring include cooking (Caribbean, charcuterie, Puerto Rican, Southern), wine tasting (winter reds, Tuscany, New Zealand, Rose, summer wines), sewing (for beginners), sewing (machine), watercolor painting, acrylic painting, drawing, piano, conversational French, conversational Spanish, music technology, voice-over coaching, financial literacy, retirement planning, K-12 education (professional development), writing

and publishing (fiction, nonfiction, screenwriting, short stories, query letters, mysteries, travel, blogs), ChatGPT, how to launch a pet-sitting and dog-walking business, and Quickbooks.

Most classes meet in the Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development on the main HCC campus, 303 Homestead Ave. Cooking and wine-tasting classes meet at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, 164 Race St. Some classes meet over Zoom.

To see complete spring course listings and schedules, or to register, please visit hcc.edu/bcs.

More classes will be added as spring approaches.



Cookie donations

Members of Feeding Hills Congregational Church packaged Christmas cookies for the residents of Soldier On. Pictured are Deb Burba, Sandy Pitzer, Linda Heinze, Maddy Brown.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

HCC welcomes Richard Michaud as director of facilities and engineering

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College recently welcomed Richard Michaud as its director of facilities and engineering.

Michaud comes to HCC with decades of experience in facilities management, engineering, infrastructure and utilities improvement projects.

Most recently, he worked as the chief engineer and director of facilities management for Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Administration Medical Center in

Bedford, Mass., where he was responsible for facilities operations, maintenance and repair, new construction and renovations. He previously worked for 12 years as project engineer for the VA Boston Healthcare System.

Michaud earned his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering at Boise State University and holds a master's degree in business administration from Phoenix University. He served for 24 years with the U.S. Navy, including 10 years with the Civil

Engineer Corps. He was honorably discharged in 2014.

"We're excited that Richard has joined us," said Narayan Sampath, HCC vice president of administration and finance. "His depth of knowledge and experience, both at the VA and in the Navy will be a valuable asset to HCC. I look forward to working with him and his team in the future addressing the infrastructure needs at the college."

Michaud started his job at HCC on Nov. 10.

NAMI holding calendar raffle

HOLYOKE – NAMI-WM is holding a calendar raffle fundraiser for February 2026. Participants will pay \$15 for a chance to win prizes awarded each day of the month. These prizes include gift cards to various local businesses, and cash prizes. Through our fundraising, we are able to

raise awareness and provide essential education, advocacy, support groups and programs throughout your Western Mass area. Mental health support and awareness has become an increasingly important issue with all of the changes in the world. Our dedication and commitment to

mental health awareness and support within our communities is vital. Our Board of Directors, along with our dedicated staff, colleagues and volunteers work together with an ongoing goal to get our services, advocacy and assistance out into the community.

Agawam Day in Florida tradition continues

ST PETERSBURG, FL – The 45th annual "Agawam Day in Florida" will be held on

Wednesday, March 4, 2026 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Former Agawam residents, old friends, classmates and relatives will meet at

Fort DeSoto National Park, St. Petersburg, FL. for a reunion, picnic, raffles, hugs and to share old memories. For more information, contact: Hank Drewnowski call/text 860-462-7273 or email - hdrew2452@gmail.com.

Two positions open on Zoning Board of Appeals

AGAWAM – Please be advised that there are openings for a permanent position and an alternate position on the Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals effective January,

2026. Interested parties should contact Barbara Bard at 413-726-9716 or send in a letter of interest to bbard@agawam.ma.us as soon as possible.

Town nurse announces last-chance flu shots

AGAWAM – Flu season is upon us. The Agawam Health Department still has a very limited supply of senior High-dose flu vaccine and regular flu vaccine available. Once gone there will be no more until next year. Home visits available to be scheduled for homebound seniors.

Don't be sick for the holidays, get vaccinated today.

Please call Nurse Pam at 726-9722 to schedule an appointment.

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Opinion

Guest Column



About remarrying and benefits from an ex-spouse

Dear Rusty:
I am almost 57, divorced after a 14-year marriage. My former spouse is 15 years older than I and made significantly more money than me. I am required to retire from my job at age 60 but expect to keep working in some capacity.

I have a girlfriend of a similar age to me. She did not earn as much as her former husband as she mainly raised their children. She is also divorced from an older spouse who made more money than she did. I am trying to figure out if we will be penalized if we marry or if it matters if we wait until after we reach 60 years of age. Can I claim my own benefits when I become eligible at 62, then claim survivor benefits later, whenever my former spouse passes? Is that affected if, or when, I remarry? I do not want to give up my potential survivor benefits from my ex-spouse. Are those affected if I remarry?

If I understand correctly, if I remarry even after 60, we would both forfeit divorced spousal benefits, is that right? Given that my girlfriend's former spouse probably made more money than I, would she be forfeiting her former spousal benefits if we were to marry, even after age 60?

Lastly, I am considering retiring abroad as an expat. Any suggestions about how that would affect our Social Security benefits?

Signed: Starting Over

Dear Starting Over:
With certain exceptions, benefits from a living ex-spouse cannot be collected if you remarry (regardless of your age when you remarry). So, from what you've shared, whenever you remarry both you and your new wife will forfeit eligibility for benefits from your respective ex-spouses while they are living (FYI, there are exceptions for those who are disabled).

However, the rules are different for a surviving ex-spouse: if you remarry before age 60, you will forfeit your surviving ex-spouse benefit. But if you remarry after age 60, you retain eligibility to collect survivor benefits from a deceased former spouse. So, if you and your girlfriend remarry after you are both age 60, you will both still be able to claim survivor benefits based on your former spouses' records.

And, yes, it is possible for you to initially claim your own SS retirement benefit at 62 and claim your surviving ex-spouse benefit later after your former spouse dies. Provided you remarry after age 60 you do not lose that option, but if you were to claim a surviving ex-spouse benefit before reaching your Full Retirement Age, the monthly payment amount would be reduced, all SS benefits taken before FRA are reduced.

Note too, that if you plan to continue working after you are first eligible for SS benefits, Social Security has an "earnings test" which limits how much you can earn from working while collecting early benefits. The limit changes yearly for 2025 it is \$23,400 and if exceeded, SS will take back \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. And, as you likely know, claiming at age 62 will also mean a benefit payment of about 30% less than available at your FRA of 67. So, if you plan to work after age 62 and plan to claim early SS, you should take the "earnings test" into consideration. FYI, the earning test no longer applies after you reach your Full Retirement Age.

Now, regarding retiring overseas, be aware that Social Security has limits on where you can collect U.S. Social Security benefits. I suggest you use Social Security's Payments Abroad Screening Tool to find out if benefits are payable wherever you plan to retire abroad. That SSA tool can be found here:

https://www.ssa.gov/international/payments_outsideUS.html

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



Two holidays plants suited for gift giving

Are you in need of a plant for a hostess gift this holiday season but poinsettias aren't your cup of tea? Look no further! I will give you my top two non-poinsettia picks, and share my experiences growing these plants.

Hopefully you will find the perfect gift for someone on your list.

Florist Cyclamen (Cyclamen persicum) is a delightful indoor plant that flowers during the winter months and is available at local nurseries and box stores. Its quarter-sized blooms in red, pink and white are unique in that the petals are bent back and held above pretty, heart-shaped, silver-margined leaves.

There are varying types available with fancy flowers and intricately patterned foliage.

The cyclamen plant is tuberous and unfortunately

leaves will yellow and shed and it will demand next to no water. This time frame is opposite of what we are used to with our perennial flowers that bloom during the summer and go dormant during the winter.

In late August, we can begin watering again and leaves will sprout anew before the blooming cycle begins during the fall.

Another favorite holiday plant by the name of Paperwhites start out as a bulb. The bulbs are available now by mail and from local nurseries and garden centers.

Sometimes you can "fill a bag" with the exact number you want, which is really neat. Upon inspection of the bulb and the picture on the label, you'll note that Paperwhites look very much like our outdoor daffodils.

Paperwhites are cousins to these spring harbingers

GARDEN | page 5

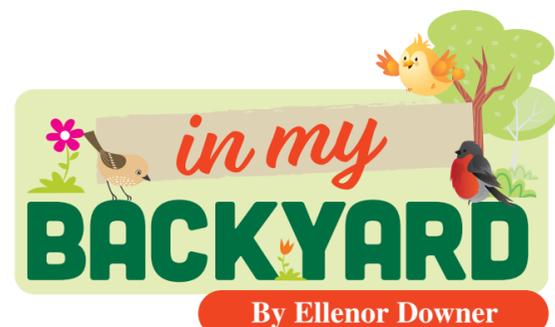


Purple finch

An Oakham resident saw a purple finch in her yard recently.

The purple finch is about six inches long. It has a sturdy body, short tail and a conical bill designed to crack seed. The male has raspberry red covering its head, chest and back. The color fades into a lighter pink tone on the belly. The wings and tail are brown with red highlights. The female has no red coloring and is brown and white with heavy streaking. It has a white eyebrow stripe.

The purple finch and house finch are often confused. The purple finch as a more uniform raspberry color and the house finch is more orange red color. The house finches color is limited to the head and upper chest. The purple finch also has notch at the base of its tail and is larger.



Purple finches breed primarily in Canada and the northeastern United States including New England and the Great Lakes region. The purple finch is the state bird of New Hampshire.

A typical clutch consists of four or five pale blue eggs with small dark speckles. The female incubates the eggs for about 12-14 days while the male provides food. Once hatched, both parents feed the nestlings a mixture of regurgitated seeds and insects to ensure proper nutrition. The fledglings leave the nest roughly two weeks

after hatching, though parents continue feeding and protecting them for another week or two.

They are fond of black oil sunflower seeds, safflower seeds, and millet offered in tube or platform feeders. In summer they supplement their diet with insects and caterpillars as well as blackberries and cherries.

Birds during snow storm
A Brimfield resident emailed, "During the recent snow storm (Tuesday, Dec. 2) there were 30 plus dark-

BACKYARD | page 5

Agawam Advertiser News welcomes letters to the editor

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

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

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper

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

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



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

must include a name, address, and daytime telephone number for author verification purposes. We do not publish anonymous letters.

All letters are subject to editing for content and length. The deadline is Monday at noon. Please send letters to Agawam Advertiser News, care of Turley Publications Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, or e-mail aan@turley.com.



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Museum announces return of 'Penguin Plunge'

WESTFIELD - Amelia Park Children's Museum announces the return of the Penguin Plunge to be held on Saturday, Jan. 24, 2026, at 1 p.m. at Hampton Ponds State Park, Westfield MA. Check-in begins at 11:30 a.m. Proceeds from the Penguin Plunge will benefit the museum.

"The Penguin Plunge is a long-standing tradition in Westfield. We are very excited that we're able to host the Penguin Plunge in 2026," said Diane Chambers, Executive Director of the museum. "We want to make this event a Plunge for the record books!" A member of

the founding board, Chambers, explains that interest in the museum is at an all-time high. "We are seeing a tremendous increase in the number of visitors we serve. Please join us as we work to enhance our facility and programs to continue serving our community's growing needs." Through the years participants and sponsors of the Plunge have helped to raise over \$370,000 to support Amelia Park Children's Museum.

Plunge participants may 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. Those under the age of 18 will receive a registration discount of \$25.

There are monetary prizes of "cold hard cash" for the top three individuals or teams that raise the most money; first place - \$300, second place - \$200, third place - \$100.

A costume contest is part of the fun, and participants are encouraged to come dressed creatively. There will be prizes for Best Individual Costume and Best Team Costume.

Register in advance online or at the Plunge on the

day of the event from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Participants will receive a free 2026 Penguin Plunge T-shirt (while supplies last).

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.

Don't want to jump in the water? No worries! Be a spectator and cheer on the brave participants. Hot chocolate, coffee, s'mores and other refreshments will be available to keep everyone warm.



BACKYARD ■ from page 4

eyed juncos in the yard and one white-throated sparrow.

Bird bath visitors

The Brimfield resident said he went looking for his bird bath heater and could not find it.

He said, "Eventually I did find it, in the bird bath. It wasn't connected and grass had grown over the cord so I couldn't see it, but dug around and eventually found the cord, got it plugged in and now the bath isn't freezing."

He has a trail camera near the bird bath. Lots of birds are using the bird bath, mostly to get a drink. Birds coming to the bird bath include blue jay, Carolina wren, cardinal, cedar waxwing (six), chickadee, goldfinch, mourning dove, robin (three), titmouse and white-throated sparrow.

He said, "Robins took a bath but when it was warmer, temperature in the upper 40s. Junco are the only cold weather bathers." Mammals seen at the bird bath are opossum, raccoon, mouse at least two and a mole.

He thinks the tub he uses for the bird bath has a leak because the water level goes down and he has to refill it ever couple of day. He said, "The local pond are now frozen. We did a few trips around the area and never saw any migrating ducks, just mallards and Canada geese."

Helping birds

Birds are attracted to water during winter months. They do not bath when temperatures are below freezing, but they do take a drink. A source of unfrozen water

will attract birds.

Providing wild birds with clean drinking water is helpful. However, providing a roomy bathing area that stays thawed even in severely-cold weather can be harmful in some cases. Before heating devices kept birdbaths ice free, birds could bathe in naturally-melted water and be able to fly off without their feathers freezing. According to the blog Cool Green Science-Stories of The Nature Conservancy, birds bathing while air temperatures are frigid risk harm due to frozen feathers: <https://blog.natre.org/2022/01/31/should-you-provide-birds-water-in-winter/>.

The article suggests modifying heated birdbaths so that birds can safely drink, but not bathe. A metal heating element that keeps a small section of the birdbath thawed works well. People, who have bird feeders or simple feeding stations may add shallow unbreakable container around the area. Yes, it can be labor-intensive, but they can easily pour water into them (hot water when it's below freezing) and provide fresh water for at least a short period of time. As a source of drinking water, the containers can be filled with pebbles that will form small pockets of water where birds can get a drink of water.

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.

Scholarship and Fellowship funds available

WESTFIELD - The Horace Smith Fund, located in Westfield, Massachusetts has scholarship and fellowship money available for residents of Hampden County, MA. Graduating high school seniors and students already in college may apply for Scholarships of up to \$12,000. Those in their final year of college and previous college graduates pursuing advanced degrees may apply for Fellowships of \$15,000. Applicants must maintain at least a B average in college and be enrolled as full-time students.

Awards are made based on both academic achievement and merit. Of great importance is a personal written account of why the student feels deserving of financial assistance and their goals in pursuing higher education.

Last year, \$297,000 was awarded to 24 individuals. Scholarships were given to 18 graduating seniors from 11 Hampden County high schools. Three scholarships were also awarded to current college students to

assist them in completing their undergraduate degrees, and three fellowships were given to college graduates pursuing advanced degrees, who had graduated from Hampden County high schools.

The Horace Smith Fund was established in 1899 by the successful and generous philanthropist named Horace Smith, co-founder of Smith & Wesson, established in Springfield. The scholarships and fellowships are named for Walter S. Barr, a West Springfield businessman, whose widow left the bulk of the family estate to The Horace Smith Fund in 1950.

Completed applications must be received either electronically or by mail to The Horace Smith Fund at 16 Union Avenue, Suite 2K, Westfield, MA 01085 no later than March 15, 2026. Applications will also be available at local high school guidance offices, college financial aid offices, online at www.HoraceSmithFund.org or by phoning (413) 739-4222.

Agawam DPW hosts used holiday light collection

AGAWAM - Frustrated with broken holiday lights, or just have a bunch that no longer suits your needs? No matter what the reason, resist the urge to throw old holiday lights in the curbside trash or recycling collection cart. Holiday light strings are known as "tangles" in the recycling industry. Tangles are things like plastic bags, ropes, cords, hoses, wires, and light strings that jam sorting machinery by wrapping around the equipment, which is dangerous for workers.

Light strings may be delivered to the Department of Public Works front office from Dec. 1 to Jan. 16. This program is for light strings only: incandescent, LED and "icicle" light strings with wires and attached bulbs. Boxes, bags, and packaging must be removed before placing lights in the recycling container. Alternative options for recycling light strings would include mail back programs such as HolidayLEDs.com or Christmas-light-source.com

Blue Christmas Service on Dec. 21 at 7 p.m.

AGAWAM - Feeding Hills Congregational Church, 21 North Westfield St. invites the community to a Blue Christmas Service on Sunday, Dec. 21 at 7 p.m. This may be the first holiday season after a loss, or perhaps 2025 has been a difficult

year. All are welcome to seek hope together in a supportive worship service. Come as you are, to join for prayer, songs, and an Advent reflection. Join us as we seek hope and healing together. For more information call 413-786-5061.

GARDEN ■ from page 4

and bloom easily inside with little more than light, something to anchor the developing roots (soil or rocks) and water to get them growing. They don't need to go through a period of cold in order to bloom like outdoor narcissus do.

In just about four weeks after planting you'll be delighted with flowers galore!

Decide for yourself if you like the fragrance or you find it a little overpowering. Prevent leaves and stems from stretching by placing your

container in a cool spot in your home during the night and enjoy the flowers in your living spaces during the day.

After flowering is done, throw the bulbs out free of guilt; they won't bloom again consistently. One year you may remember that I did try to regrow the bulbs by allowing them to dry out within the container I had first grown them in. Of the four bulbs, two had life left in them a year later.

I watered and waited and leaves did grow, but no flowers ever came. I ended

up chalking it up to an experience and starting over with new bulbs the following winter.

Have fun experimenting with these plants or any number of beauties worthy of a good home for the holidays.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email

it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.



Nobody dreams of having multiple sclerosis

Some dreams are universal: hitting a ball over the Green Monster; winning the World Series with a grand slam in the bottom of the ninth inning. Finding out you have MS is not one of them.

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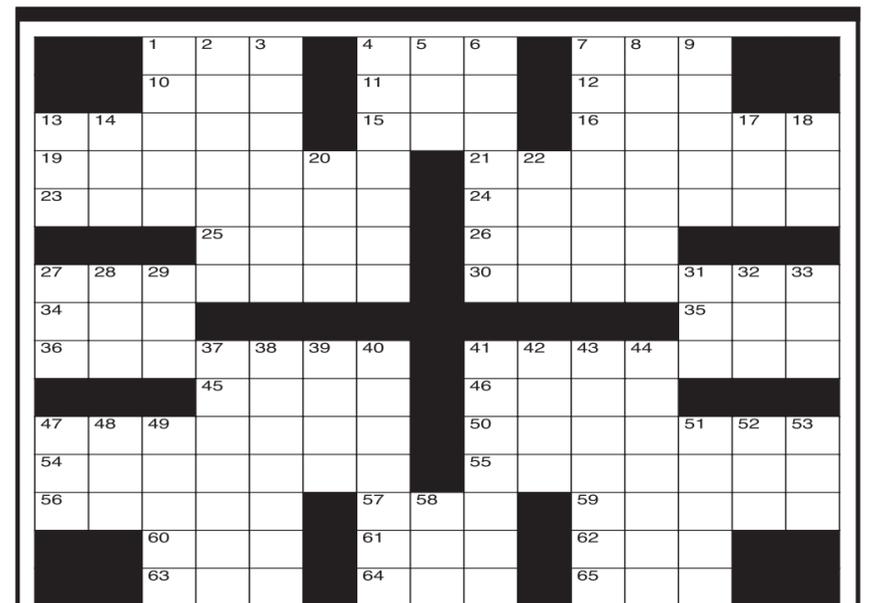
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CLUES ACROSS

- American automotive titan
- Tire term
- Two-year-old sheep
- Indigenous people of Thailand
- Anti-Soviet Cold War group
- Actress de Armas
- Not moving
- Cool!
- Plants of the arum family
- Connected with touch
- Pen stain
- Monetary units
- School kids' art project
- Early Bell Canada executive
- Sword
- Hates
- Fixed in one
- place
- Pie ___ mode
- Moved swiftly on foot
- Carrier on vehicle
- A path to get through
- "Rule, Britannia" composer
- Spiritual leader
- Flowing
- Respectful compliments
- Cure
- Soft, lightweight fabric
- Building material
- Japanese delicacy
- A way to cause to be swollen
- One and only
- You might get one in summer
- Wreath

- Thus far
- They ___ reference number

CLUES DOWN

- Policemen (French)
- Toy dog
- Intestinal condition
- Muscular weaknesses
- Helps little firms
- Alphabetical lists
- Takes down
- Facilitates
- Ethnic people of Ethiopia
- Engine additive
- Explorers group
- Written account
- Consumed
- Opposite of first
- No (slang)
- Government lawyers
- NY Giants great
- Small amount
- A way to save for your future
- Fall behind
- Midway between northeast and east
- Head pain
- Wildly popular sport
- "Princess Diaries" actress Hathaway
- Boat race
- About fish
- Nursemaid
- Able to be marketed
- Not as large
- Parts per billion (abbr.)
- Paddle
- Oneness
- Bitter chemical
- Not around
- Very fast airplane
- Main tributary of the Rhine

Jammie Jingle nets huge donation for multiple charities

AGAWAM – The Agawam Health Department had a great response from multiple schools and community groups as they collected pajamas to be donated to those in needs.

Pamela Franco, Agawam's Public Health Nurse, organized the event. She thanked the community for their help.

"A huge thank you to all who supported Jammie Jingle 2025. A special thanks to St. David's church, Heritage

Woods, Roberta Doering School, Agawam Junior High School, and Agawam High School for your collection efforts," Franco said. "A total of 328 pajamas were collected in the Town of Agawam alone. Thank you for your generosity and spirit of giving this holiday season."

All donations go to Shriner's, CHD For Kids, DCF Springfield, and The Ronald McDonald House.



More donations for the collection.



Jammie donations are loaded up.



Mayor Christopher Johnson shows off the donations collected at town hall.



Jammies were also collected at St. David's Church.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Lions Club makes Toys for Tots donation



The Agawam Lions Club completed a recent donation drive, donating a few boxes of toys to the Toys for Tots program last week.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

ROAD ■ from page 1

In 2022, about \$990,106 was dedicated to roads and sidewalks. That number increased by \$1 million in 2023, and in 2025, the town has budgeted more than \$2.73 million for road paving. Each line item, preventative maintenance, rehabilitation, and reconstruction, has seen significant increases. Johnson added that bills are still coming in, so that \$2.73 million numbers could be higher by the end of the year.

"We have substantially increased what we are spending on road maintenance," Johnson said. "Local funding has increased. The millionaires tax has helped increase Chapter 90 funds coming back to towns. We have done

more in the past two years than has ever been done."

Johnson said he knows everyone wants their road to be resurfaced, but it is a balancing act to choose what roads need the work the most.

"Priority also has been made to main roads so they are serviceable," Johnson said. "We do have some main roads that will need to be done in the coming years. And we may have to bite the bullet to get the smaller roads done."

While the construction season concluded for 2025, the fiscal year continues into the spring and the town will be doing more work once the paving plans open up in the spring and reconstruction and maintenance can begin once again.

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New Year's will bring early deadlines for all ads & legal notices to run in TURLEY PUBLICATIONS the week of Dec. 29, 2025 - Jan. 2, 2026:

Friday, December 26 at 2 PM for January 1 issue

- Country Journal • The Register • Wilbraham-Hampden Times • Agawam Advertiser News

Monday, December 29 at 2 PM for January 1 issue

- Sentinel • The Journal Register • Ware River News • Barre Gazette

Tuesday, December 30 at 2 PM for January 2 issue

- Quaboag Current • Town Reminder • The Holyoke Sun • Chicopee Register

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POLICE ■ from page 1

out of space.

Now, residents got a first-hand look at a facility made for modern policing, including a lot of space to hold records and evidence.

Johnson, Gillis, and many other members of the police department were on hand to help with tours and give residents an inside look at the new facility, especially as many areas of the department will become secure locations following the open house in

an effort to run a properly secure headquarters.

The move starts a new era for the Agawam Police Department and its officers. The open house saw a very good turnout, and the facility is just about complete with just small items remaining to be done as the moving process is also completed. The town also has to dispose of a lot of old furniture from the previous building. Some of it will be used by the department as well as furniture from the Springfield St. facility.



Above left, Police Chief Eric Gillis speaks during the grand opening ceremony. Above right, Officers greet the public.



Above, attendees of the grand opening ceremony salute the flag. Left, Officer John latterelle with his baby at the open house. Right, Police Chief Eric Gillis, with Mayor Christopher Johnson and former Mayor William Sapelli showing the plaque in the police headquarters lobby.



The Agawam Police Headquarters sign is up.

Mayor Christopher Johnson talks about the new facility with interested residents.



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SPORTS

Brownies start strong, take care of West Side

AGAWAM – For the second straight year, Agawam High School boys basketball opened up with a rivalry matchup against West Springfield and played it on the campus of the University of Massachu-

setts-Amherst at the Mullins Center. Agawam held West Springfield to single digits in the first two frames and rode that to a 68-40 victory. Trevor Moynihan had 26 points to lead the Brownies, with

Gavin Cruz coming up with 10 points. Agawam starts out 1-0 and faced Minnechaug earlier this week on the road. Agawam's first home game is Thursday, Dec. 18 against Pope Francis at 7 p.m.



Clockwise from top left: Caeden Roeder gets some air while catching a pass; Dylan Jorgensen has to pivot after running into a defender; Matthew Letellier powers his way to a short-range shot; Trevor Moynihan attempts a layup; Brody Sheehan makes an inbound pass; Yusef Ebrahim passes after passing midcourt.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Worcester Railers score win over Portland Pirates

PORTLAND, ME – The Portland Pirates ruined a lot of nights for the Worcester IceCats and Sharks through the decades.

The Railers got some revenge here Saturday evening by beating the Pirates, 4-2, in front of 4,803 fans as the Maine Mariners did a nostalgia game playing as the old AHL team.

The game went down to the final minutes with Worcester clinching it on Drew Callin's empty net goal with 26 seconds left in the third period. It was a 2-2 game with less than

10 minutes to go in the third, then Ryan Miotto broke the tie with a great wrist shot from the left circle at 10:25.

Cole Donhauser and Matt DeMelis had the other Railers goals. Max Andreev and Robert Cronin scored for the Pirates. Once again Worcester got splendid goaltending from Parker Gahagen who stopped 32 of 34 shots.

It was an outcome that could easily have been reversed except that Worcester refused to give in.

"I think we stuck with a lot of our game plan," coach Nick

Tuzzolino said. "We got put back on our heels a little bit at the start of the second period after a pretty good first period but I thought we responded well."

The victory allowed the Railers to finish a seven-game road trip with a 4-2-1 record. They earned nine of a possible 14 points, a .643 pace. Worcester is 9-3-1 in its last 13 games.

The first period was played at a yellow light pace and ended 0-0 although Worcester outshot the home team, 13-7. Things quickened in the second and intensified just

before the clock hit the game's midway point.

The Railers were a man short when they developed a 3 on 1. They crashed the Maine zone but probably got in too deep. Ross Mitton was the last man to touch the puck but had no room to beat goalie Brad Arvanitis.

On cue, the Mariners came back with an odd-man rush of their own. They finished this one well with Andreev firing 20-footer under the crossbar from the left circle.

Worcester did not trail for long.

Donhauser stole the puck at center ice and outskated a pair of defenders. He made a little move between the circles and as Arvanitis reacted, Donhauser put a short shot between his pads.

DeMelis gave the Railers a 2-1 lead at 5:41 of the third period, scoring from in close. Cronin tied it on a power play at 9:12. Once again Worcester responded quickly as Miotto hit the top far corner from the left circle at 10:25.

The home team pressed but Gahagan shut them down until the buzzer sounded.

The two Worcester AHL teams had played the Pirates many times through the years and it was a very intense rivalry. Including playoff games, they battled 206 times. Worcester's record was 91-86-29. The IceCats were 43-45-16, the Sharks 44-37-13.

The city's AHL teams were 36-45-18 in what is currently called Cross Arena.

The American Hockey League won't put this one in the standings, but the Railers were very happy to issue some payback for their predecessors.

Sports

Brownies ice hockey suffers tough opening loss

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WEST SPRINGFIELD – A year ago, Sean Kefalas recorded a hat-trick leading the Ludlow hockey team to an overtime win against Agawam in the season opener.

Kefalas began his senior season with two more goals, as the Lions coasted to an 8-1 win over the Brownies at the Olympia Ice Center in West Springfield, last Saturday afternoon.

“It feels great to win another season opening game,” said Kefalas, who’s been a member of the Lions varsity hockey team since he was a freshman. “We won the Western Mass. Class B title when I was a freshman. We had a lot of statement wins that season. This was another big statement win for us.”

Kefalas, who’s a starting defenseman, has scored 28 career goals.

Ludlow sophomore goalie Jack Benda (6 saves) made his first varsity start in this year’s season opener.

Benda was replaced in goal by senior Ethan Steigmeyer (8 saves) in the middle of the second period.

“Jack played his heart out in his first varsity start. Then Ethan came in and he also played very well,” Kefalas said. “I’m very proud of both goalies.”

Kefalas is one of the Lions captains, along with junior Evan Dias, senior Tannar Severyn, and senior Nick Deroin.

Agawam freshman Thomas Christopher and Kefalas are cousins.

“My cousin plays for Agawam, and it was a lot of fun playing against him for the first time,” Kefalas said. “I told my cousin that we were going to beat his team today, but I didn’t think we would score that many goals.”

Agawam senior goalie Joe Wilkinson (15 saves) also made his first varsity start.

Wilkinson was replaced by senior Brady Blanchette (10 saves) before the start of the third period.

“Neither one of our goalies had played in a varsity game before,” said Agawam head coach Todd Rowley. “We have about 15 new players on the varsity roster. Making the jump up to this level is extremely difficult.”

Ludlow took a 1-0 lead at the 2:37 mark when fresh-

man Teddy Iwasinski netted his first career goal, which was unassisted.

With three minutes left in the opening period, Kefalas scored his first goal of the season, which was assisted by senior AJ Stupak.

The Lions scored another goal by freshman Nathan Ribeiro less than twenty seconds into the second period, but it was disallowed by the referee.

Sophomore Andrew Lambert did score a power-play goal two minutes later, which was unassisted, giving the Lions a 3-0 lead.

Lambert is one of the six players from Belchertown High School listed on the Lions varsity roster.

The other five Belchertown players, who play hockey for Ludlow as part of a co-op, are junior Will Mitus, senior Gavin Harrington, freshman Nolan Chianciola, freshman Luke DeStafano, and senior Donald Rogers.

The Brownies supporters had something to cheer for following a tap-in goal from senior Andrew Holton, who’s an alternate captain, along with senior Casey Thomas. Senior captain Anthony Bar-



Ivan Gonzalez tries to keep possession of the puck.

barini was credited with the assist.

Ludlow quickly answered back with goals from Ribeiro and senior Connor Kokosa. Iwasinski assisted on Kokosa’s goal.

With the Lions holding a 5-1 lead, Ludlow head coach Paul Rivest decided to

change goalies.

“I told Jack and Ethan that they would be splitting playing time in today’s game,” Rivest said. “I wouldn’t have changed goalies if Jack still had a shutout going.”

Rogers and junior Peter LeBorgne are also goalies for the Lions.

“We have four very good goalies, who could probably start for any other team in Western Mass.,” Rivest added. “We didn’t have a goalie a couple of years ago. I wish a couple of them were defensemen.”

BROWNIES | page 10

T-Birds get clutch goals for win over Utica

UTICA, N.Y. - The Springfield Thunderbirds (7-11-3-2) received a pair of clutch, tie-breaking goals in the final period en route to a 3-2 win over the Utica Comets (5-14-3-1) on Saturday night inside Adirondack Bank Center.

For a second straight road contest, the T-Birds had to lean on their goaltender in the opening period, as Georgi Romanov was a frequently-tested goalie, making 14 saves in the opening period, including a flashy left pad save on an in-tight chance from Utica captain Ryan Schmelzer on the first shift of the night.

Springfield had the lone power play in the first, but instead, Romanov was pressed into duty again, to which the Russian backstop answered the bell with a 2-on-1 denial on Nathan Legare.

The Comets’ efforts finally led to a breakthrough at 6:14 of the second as Dylan Wendt slid a pass to a streaking Jonathan Gruden, who threw a forehand over Romanov’s shoulder from the left side to give Utica the 1-0 advantage.

Just over six minutes later, Springfield equalized as Chris Wagner drove the puck down the left wing to the goal before stuffing a forehand through Nico Daws to make it 1-1 at 12:39. The goal was Wagner’s fifth in his last six

games.

As the game entered the third, the T-Birds were about to receive two clutch connections from a pair of rookies. First, Nikita Susuev netted his first AHL goal, as he swooped to a rebound behind Daws’ net before wrapping it around to the right post and behind the Comet netminder to give Springfield a 2-1 lead just 1:48 into the third.

Lenni Hameenaho swiftly got Utica back to a tie score at 4:09, as he unleashed a wicked one-time slapper through Romanov’s stick side, bringing the game to a 2-2 deadlock.

One more time, though, the T-Birds had a rebuttal, this time from Marc-Andre Gaudet, who uncorked a slap shot that ricocheted off a Utica defender before bouncing behind Daws at 8:47 for the go-ahead goal, 3-2.

Romanov and the Springfield defense batted down the hatches from there, killing off a Utica power play and receiving numerous shot blocks in the closing minutes, including a clutch denial by Alek Kaskimaki in the dying seconds. Romanov improved to 2-0 for the season against Utica, stopping 65 of 67 Comets shots over his two victories.



Kaleb Progulskis tries to get a grip on his opponent in a 138-pound match.

Brownies take part in Knight-Hawk

AGAWAM – A representative group of the Agawam High School wrestling team took part in Holyoke’s Knight-Hawk Classic. The Brownies scored 51 points in the meet, and had one participant take second place. Kaleb Progulskis was a runner-up at 138 pounds in the meet. Agawam had its first dual-meet at home against Ludlow Tuesday and will be back hosting the Phil Tomkiel Holiday Tournament after Christmas on Dec. 29.

Domenick Pisano locks up in a first-round matchup.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Andrew Amato tries to bring his opponent to the mat.

HCC wraps up first part of schedule with win

HOLYOKE – Women’s basketball wrapped up the fall semester portion of their season on Saturday afternoon, winning a third straight game. The Lady Cougars racked up a season-high in points, thrashing local rival Springfield Technical CC 98-40. The home win extends Holyoke’s perfect home record to 4-0.

Vivian Timmons (West Springfield, MA / Guilderland HS) and Annastacia Dixon (Keene, NH / Keene HS) led the charge for the Cougars, each registering a double-double in the contest while scoring a season-high in points. Timmons led Holyoke in points for the third straight game, scoring 36 in

the win to go along with ten rebounds. Dixon tallied 29 points and grabbed 15 rebounds for her double-double while also leading the Lady Cougars in steals with seven. Tatiyana Zuniga (Westfield, MA / Westfield HS) led the way in assists with ten and had six steals.

Women’s basketball finishes the fall half of their campaign with a 6-2 regional record and a 7-4 overall record. Their scheduled Sunday, December 14th game has been postponed. Holyoke will enjoy some time off during the season hiatus, resuming with games on Jan. 10. They play their next home game on Thursday, Jan. 15 at 5:30 p.m.

BROWNIES ■ from page 9

Stupak scored a pair of goals during the final two minutes of the second period giving the Lions a 7-1 lead entering the final period.

Kefalas scored the Lions final goal on a wrist shot less than two minutes into the third period.

It was the only regular season match-up between the two squads.



Clockwise from above:
Nick Brown turns play around;
Brady Klinakis gets the loose puck behind the goal;
Anthony Barbarini tries to get away from an opposing player;
Joe Wilkinson gets ready to pounce on a loose puck;
Jackson Bates makes a backwards pass.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



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 12, 2026 at 6:30PM for all parties interested in Natalya & Andrey Domnenko's appeal of the Inspector of Buildings' Zoning Violation Notice, dated October 28, 2025, as allowed under the Town of Agawam's Charter, Section 2-8, Paragraph C and MGL, Ch.40A, Section 8, regarding the premises identified as 262 Colemore Street.

Doreen A. Prouty, Chairperson
Agawam Zoning Board of Appeals
12/18, 12/25/2025

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758 Docket No. HD22P2328EA Estate of: Barbara Ann D'Agostino Date of Death: 06/02/2017 CITATION ON PETITION FOR ORDER OF COMPLETE SETTLEMENT

A Petition for Order of Complete Settlement has been filed by David J D'Agostino of Feeding Hills, MA requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including the allowance of a final account and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition.

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 01/14/2026.

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 10, 2025
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
12/18/2025

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758 Docket No. HD25P1768EA Estate of: Katy Lanae Meneke Date of Death: 05/21/2025 CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons: A Petition for Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Laura L Meneke of Greenfield, 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

Laura L Meneke of Greenfield, 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 01/02/2026. 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

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: December 04, 2025
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
12/18/2025



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Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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The Town of Sturbridge is accepting applications to fill the part-time, 10 hours per week, Veteran Service Officer position. The position will act as a Veterans Agent and thus requires all appropriate State and Federal certification.

Applications are available on-line on the Town of Sturbridge website under job opportunities.

https://www.sturbridge.gov/your-government/pages/job-opportunities

The position is non-union and reports to the Town Administrator. The Town is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE).

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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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The naughty list: BBB's 12 scams of the holidays

Paula Fleming pfleming@boston.bbb.org

When shopping or donating this holiday season, watch out for schemes trying to swipe your cash or steal your personal information.

You can avoid most of the scams on this list by taking a few simple precautions. Always exercise caution with social media ads promoting discounted items, holiday events, job opportunities, and donation requests, as well as direct messages from strangers. If you are asked to make a payment or donation by wire transfer, through a third party, or by prepaid debit or gift card, treat it as a red flag.

Be mindful of these scams that could cut into your holiday cheer

1. Misleading social media ads:

As you scroll through your social media feed, you often see products advertised.

Always research before you buy. BBB Scam Tracker receives daily reports of people paying for items that they never receive, getting charged monthly for a free trial they never signed up for, or receiving an item that is counterfeit or much different from the one advertised.

The 2024 BBB Scam Tracker Risk Report found that online purchase scams were the fourth riskiest scam reported by consumers in 2024.

Before ordering, check out the business profile on BBB.org and read the reviews.

2. Social media gift exchanges:

Each holiday season this scheme pops back up. The older version was called "Secret Sister." Newer versions of this scam revolve around exchanging bottles of wine or bourbon; another suggests purchasing \$10 gifts online. Another twist asks you to submit your email to a list where participants get to pick a name and send money to strangers to "pay it forward." There is even a twist about "Secret Santa Dog" where you buy a \$10 gift for your "secret dog." In all these versions, participants unwittingly share their personal information, along with those of their family members and friends, and are further tricked into buying and shipping gifts or money to unknown individuals. It's also an illegal pyramid scheme. Stick to buying your friends gifts from trustworthy businesses, and check BBB.org before you buy.

3. Holiday apps:

Apple's App Store and Google Play list dozens of holiday-themed apps where children can video chat live with Santa, light the menorah, watch Santa feed live reindeer, track his sleigh on Christmas Eve, or relay their holiday wish lists.

Review privacy policies to see what information will be collected. Be wary of free apps, as they can sometimes contain more advertising than apps that require a nominal fee. Free apps can

also contain malware. Be sure to read reviews as well.

4. Fake toll collection texts:

If you're planning to drive a long distance to visit family or take a vacation this holiday season, watch out for fake road toll collection texts, which have been on the rise this year.

In this con, scammers impersonate a state road tollway collection service and text you saying you owe a road toll fee and provide a link to click to make your payment. If you receive a text, don't click the link. Instead, if you think you may owe road tolls, verify your outstanding balance with the legitimate agency.

5. Free gift cards:

Nothing brings good cheer like the word "FREE." Scammers have been known to take advantage of this weakness by sending bulk phishing emails requesting personal information to receive free gift cards. In some of these emails, scammers impersonate legitimate companies and promise gift cards to reward their loyal customers. They may also use pop-up ads or send text messages with links saying you were randomly selected as the winner of a prize. If you have received an unsolicited email with gift card offers, do not open it. Instead, mark it as spam or junk and delete it. However, if you opened the email, do not click on any links.

6. Temporary holiday jobs:

Employment scams were identified as the number one riskiest scam for people ages 18-34 in 2024. If you're looking for seasonal work this holiday season, keep an eye out for opportunities that seem too good to be true.

Retailers typically hire seasonal workers to help meet the demands of holiday shoppers. Shippers and delivery services are top holiday employers because of the increase in online orders that need to be delivered before Christmas. Job seekers need to be wary of employment scams aimed at stealing money and personal information from job applicants.

7. Impostor scams:

Impostor scams can take many forms, especially during the holiday season when you may be purchasing and returning gifts. When shopping online, be on the lookout for fake, look-alike websites created by scammers to trick people into downloading malware, making dead-end purchases, and sharing private information.

If you're reaching out to a business on social media for customer support, watch out for fake social media accounts pretending to be a customer service representative for a business. When in doubt, go to the business's website and find their official social media handles, or use the information on the site to reach out.

8. Fake charities:

The last few weeks of

the year are a busy time for charitable donations. Donors are advised to look out for fraudulent charities and scammers pretending to be individuals in need.

Avoid impromptu donation decisions to unfamiliar organizations. Responsible organizations will welcome a gift tomorrow as much as they do today. Verify a charity at BBB's Give.org or on the Canada Revenue Agency website. Where possible, donate to the charity through their website and use a credit card.

9. Fake shipping notifications:

More consumers making online purchases during the holidays leads to an increase in the number of notifications about shipping details from retailers and carriers. Scammers use this surge to send phishing emails and texts about package deliveries with links enclosed that may allow unwanted access to your private information or download malware onto your device.

They may also try to trick people into paying new shipping fees. Never click a link in a text or email that you're not expecting. If you want to track a package, find the original email or text confirmation you received directly from the store and use that link.

10. Advent calendars:

Each year, there are more and more advent calendars being sold; CNN has a list of over 20 calendars, and many are in hot demand. In past

years, BBB received reports to Scam Tracker about advent calendar ads on social media not delivering as promised. Some were not received, and others received inferior products or incomplete orders.

Consumers should research before they buy, read reviews and look up the company on BBB.org before purchasing. BBB also has a shopper's guide to help you purchase that niche advent calendar.

11. Holiday wishlist items:

Low-priced luxury goods, jewelry, designer clothing, and electronics are almost always cheap counterfeits and knockoffs. The same applies to popular toys. This year, the Tosy Magnet Cube, Klutz Lego Gravity Drop Activity Kit, Easy Bake Ultimate Electric Oven Toy, and the Ms. Rachel Emotions Learning Doll Stuffed Animal are some of the items in high demand. Be very cautious when considering purchasing popular toys from resellers on Facebook Marketplace and other platforms.

12. Puppy scams:

Many families may be considering adding a furry friend to their household this year. However, be on the lookout for scams. Many would-be pet owners turn to the internet to find their future cat or dog, but experts say a shocking 80% of sponsored pet advertisements may be fake. Be sure to see the pet in person before making a purchase.

Baystate Health announces program to Support Transformation Efforts

SPRINGFIELD - Baystate Health is committed to delivering exceptional care to western Massachusetts while strengthening our long-term stability. Over the past year, our collective transformation work has strengthened Baystate Health in meaningful ways, allowing us to reinvest in our people, technology, and patient care. Thanks to these efforts, we've made

important progress, and we must now sustain our momentum through continued financial transformation.

Like many health systems nationwide, we've faced significant financial pressures from rising labor costs, inflation, and reimbursement challenges. Addressing these realities is essential to continue investing in our people, services, and facilities. As we

plan for our future, we face new challenges, including external pressures such as the One Big Beautiful Bill, which is creating additional headwinds for health systems across the country.

In light of these factors, we are taking proactive steps to position Baystate Health for long-term stability and success by introducing a Voluntary Separation Pro-

gram across Baystate Health and its subsidiaries, including Health New England. This program offers eligible employees in non-direct patient care areas the option to voluntarily separate with financial support, helping us responsibly manage costs and align our workforce with future needs. We continue to significantly recruit and hire physicians, Advanced Prac-

tice Providers and bed-side caregivers to support the health needs of our communities.

This voluntary program is designed to minimize the need for other workforce reductions. We recognize how personal this decision is and are approaching it with empathy, respect, and transparency. We're committed to providing clear communi-

cation and resources to support employees during this transition.

This initiative is part of Baystate Health's broader multi-year transformation to achieve operational excellence, strengthen our financial foundation, and ensure we can continue our mission: improving the health of our communities every day, with quality and compassion.

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