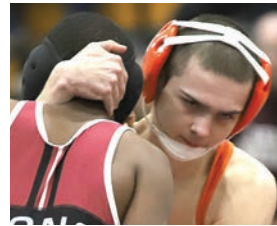




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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

December 28, 2023 | Vol. 45, No. 44 | \$1.00

www.agawamadvertisernews.turley.com



City Council President Christopher Johnson presents a plaque to Councilor Cecilia Calabrese.
 TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA



City Council President Christopher Johnson thanks and congratulates Councilor Paul Cavallo for all of his work on the council.



City Council Vice President Dino Mercadante presents Council President Christopher Johnson with a memento to honor his work on the council.



Agawam City Council Administrative Assistant Barbara Bard presents Christopher Johnson with a gavel in honor of his work on the council.

Council bids farewell to three members

By Quinn Suomala
 Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Two councilors, Cecilia Calabrese and Paul Cavallo, and Council President Christopher Johnson said their goodbyes to the council at their meeting on Dec. 18.

All three councilors have long served on the council, and many were sad to see them go.

Johnson will be returning to the mayor's seat he held more than 20 years ago. But he will be missed.

Each councilor was presented with a small memento to remember their time on the council.

"Tonight marks the last meeting for a few of us councilors, so as tradition we would like to present each outgoing councilor with a memento thanking them for

their service to the town," Johnson said.

Each of these councilors has worked hard over their terms on the council to push Agawam forward, so the council wanted to take the time to honor their hard work.

"I can speak from personal experience to tell you what you see at the meetings is only the tip of the iceberg," Johnson said. "The amount of time that's invested outside of the meetings is much greater than the time we spent actually conducting the meeting here."

Councilors are expected to do outside research, attend functions and events, and ensure they are aware of the issues the community is facing.

Calabrese has served on the council for 18 years, including

some of that time as vice president. She has also worked as President of the Massachusetts Municipal Association and as Vice Chair of the Finance Committee.

"I had the pleasure of working with her for three terms as my vice president," Johnson said. "She was a very strong right hand to me as a president, someone that we're going to miss tremendously on the council."

Johnson thanked Calabrese for always being prepared for any meeting she attends, doing all her research and acting as a true leader on the council.

Calabrese was grateful for all of the well wishes from her fellow councilors and wished the new councilors the best of luck for when they started their terms.

"Thank you all, it has been a

wonderful 18 years working with most of you here that whole time and working with the people of Agawam," she said. "It's really been my honor, my privilege, my pleasure to have been your city councilor...and the new city council I know we're all in great hands."

Also recognized was Cavallo. Cavallo has served Agawam in a variety of capacities for more than 40 years. He has worked as a guidance counselor at the high school, high school administration and the high school principal.

Cavallo also spent time on the school committee and 14 years on the city council.

"He is someone that I greatly respect," Johnson said. "He brings not only the history he has as holding all of those positions and

wearing all of those hats, but is a true gentleman, someone that typifies what it is to care about the community you live in."

Cavallo was greatly appreciated for his many years of dedication to the Agawam community. He took the time to thank, in turn, his fellow councilors for all their work alongside him.

"I'm going to miss all of you, we've had an enjoyable 14 years...I couldn't ask for anything better," he said. "Good luck next year and hopefully this new council is going to be like the one I'm leaving."

Finally, the council took the time to recognize Johnson for all of his work on the council. He has been on the council for 12 years and will be continuing his work shortly as mayor.

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Ordinance allowing hens on residential properties approved

By Quinn Suomala
 Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The Agawam City Council voted 10-1 to approve the first reading of an ordinance that would allow hens on residential property.

Before residents can have chickens in their yard, they do need to get permission through a special permit. Additionally, they need to have the coup 15 feet from the property line, 50 feet from a dwelling and 100 feet from a water source.

Chicken owners will also have to have a plan for how they will dispose of the chicken

waste, in order to prevent any contamination.

The health inspector, the building inspector and animal control will also have the right to inspect the property and enforce the ordinance in accordance with zoning laws.

Several town residents argued for chickens to be allowed in Agawam so that they could have their own fresh eggs.

"You want to know what you're eating and feeding your family," resident Nathaniel Ehle said. "My six-month-old baby had his first eggs and what a joy

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Elementary school name change stays

School committee voted to keep William P. Sapelli Elementary name

By Quinn Suomala
 Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The school committee voted 5-1 at the public hearing on Dec. 12 to keep the name change of William P. Sapelli School.

Resident Joyce Dolat had created the petition protesting against the name change of William P. Sapelli School from Robinson Park School as she felt that the name change dishonored the history of the school.

"I think that erasing the history of Robinson Park School, which was named after William C. Robinson, who donated all that land, is really a shame," Dolat said.

Dolat and other community members who signed the petition would have preferred that another school without such a significant name, such as the Junior High School, had been renamed, rather than changing from Robinson Park.

"We had schools in this town that had no name," resident David Virella said. "Nobody is looking to diminish the work that Mayor Sapelli has done... but why didn't we make the con-

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Following a public hearing, the Agawam School Committee voted to keep the name change for William P. Sapelli Elementary School. A resident petition brought the name change up for question earlier this month.
 TURLEY PHOTO BY QUINN SUOMALA



Veterans Cemetery hosts 'Wreaths Across America'

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The Agawam Veterans Memorial Cemetery hosted a ceremony for Wreaths Across America on Dec. 16.

The day started at 10 a.m. with a ceremony held to honor the veterans who had passed. In this ceremony they laid ceremonial wreaths for each branch of service.

"One of the key points there is that we'll have a 100-year-old army veteran Harvey LaFleur of Chicopee that will represent the army in the laying of that wreath," Agawam Location Coordinator Paul Barabani said.

On top of this, they had new recruits from each of the branches of service, in order to have the oldest and youngest of each branch present to lay a wreath.

The Gold Star mothers and family members were also present at the ceremony, to remember their own contributions to protecting the country.

After this ceremony, 9,528 remembrance wreaths were placed in front of the graves of veterans to honor their memories.

Over 1,300 volunteers participated in this ceremony.

Many of the Friends of the Agawam Cemetery also contributed support to the organization of the ceremony.

"They provide assistance in boarding and departing of the buses and also have a display here for anyone who wants to help with sponsorship of the wreaths in the future," Barabani said.

Volunteers from various military branches in the areas helped to get the wreaths to the cemetery.

This included the 104 Fighter Wing at Westfield-Barnes Regional Airport, the 439 Airlift Wing from Westover and the Veterans Association.

Barabani was grateful to all who contributed their efforts to help this ceremony



A total of 9,528 wreaths were placed on veterans' graves by volunteers after a short ceremony held on Dec. 16 at the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery National Wreaths Across America Day event.

TURLEY PHOTO BY KARA WALSH-VEY

come together. He wanted to ensure that the cemetery workers also got recognition for their help in preparing the cemetery for the ceremony.

"The real individuals behind the scenes are the grounds crew from the Agawam Veterans Cemetery," he said. "Each year, rain or shine, they are here to offload the wreaths and put them in position so when Saturday comes it is organized and runs efficiently."

Without the grounds crew and all the volunteers this key ceremony would not be possible.

He also was grateful to all of the sponsors who put forward their funds to make the 9,528 wreaths possible. Wreaths Across America surpassed their goal of 9,528 wreaths by 2,329 thanks to these sponsors.

The extra wreaths sponsored for this

year will be rolled over to next year's ceremony.

Barabani also wanted to emphasize the importance of ceremonies like these. Not only do they honor past veterans, but they also help to inspire future generations to protect and serve.

Wreaths Across America focuses on its three pillars: remember, honor and teach. The remembrance wreaths and the ceremony help with remembering and honoring those who are gone and those who still serve today.

Ceremonies like these also help teach future generations about the importance of veterans, Barabani says, so that they can take up the position themselves in the future.

"Wreaths Across America is the greatest patriotic event in Western MA of the year,"

he said.

Wreaths Across America is still looking to collect wreaths and raise money for the next year's ceremony.

"Right now Wreaths Across America is offering a two-for-one special that started on Dec. 16 and runs until Jan. 16," Barabani said. "For each sponsorship of a wreath for \$17 they will actually provide two wreaths to the cemetery for next year's ceremony."

Additionally, they will provide \$5 from that \$17 to the Friends of the Cemetery so they can use that revenue for enhancements at the cemetery.

"It's a great opportunity for anybody that wants to sponsor for next year," Barabani said. "Their \$17 becomes \$39."

If interested in donating to this cause, go to <https://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/pages/16181/overview/?relatedId=0>.

Nonmedical home care can provide support to those suffering with Alzheimer's Disease

Certified dementia care professionals share safety, support strategies for Alzheimer's Awareness Month

CHESHIRE, CT – There are currently more than 6 million Americans living with Alzheimer's Disease with that number expected to increase to 13.8 million by 2060. While some families may opt for care at a facility, Connecticut-based nonmedical home care agency Assisted Living Services, Inc. has developed new solutions in combination with technological devices to ensure the right supportive care at home.

"We know from experience that an Alzheimer's diagnosis and other memory related disorders pose real challenges for the entire family," explains Mario D'Aquila, MBA, Chief Operating Officer of Assisted Living Services, Inc. and Senior VP of Assisted Living Technologies, Inc. "It may seem overwhelming, but we can offer support since more than half of our clients have some degree of dementia or memory impairment.

D'Aquila notes that if families want to keep their loved one living at home, they need to be prepared for the responsibilities, which include managing medications, monitoring every-day activities, ensuring home safety, and addressing loneliness and isolation.

First on the list of priorities is being evaluated by your primary care physician or specialist. Although there is no cure for Alzheimer's, there are new medications that can slow progression and lessen symptoms. Accordingly, Alzheimer's patients in mild to moderate stages of the disease can significantly improve medication compliance with today's technology. Automated medication dispensers provide both a visual and auditory alert and can even send a call to the patient as a reminder, as well as notify caregivers if a regimen is not being followed. ALS has experienced compliance

near 95% with clients across Connecticut who use these dispensers that typically cost only \$2 per day.

"Families should partner with a trusted provider who can create a strong plan for day-to-day care management and ensure it is continually implemented," said D'Aquila. "Even better, is an agency like ALS that has management staff who are Certified Dementia Care Practitioners (CDP)."

Administered through the National Council of Certified Dementia Care Practitioners, the full-day 8-hour CDP certification represents that the front line management staff have received comprehensive knowledge in the area of dementia care and completed the Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Care course/seminar. The CDP commits to ongoing professional development and re-certification every two years. The certification reflects a deep personal commitment to maintaining the dementia patient's quality of life physically, emotionally and socially.

Although the agency provides solely nonmedical care, it has focused on staff development that will ensure appropriate support from its team of Homemakers that assist clients with personal care - to its Live-in Companions that provide around-the-clock support. Caregivers receive approximately two hours of training and education on how to work with individuals experiencing memory difficulties due to Alzheimer's or Dementia related disorders. This includes reading materials, testing, and time for dialog with instructor(s). They also benefit from supervisors that have the CDP training to help with managing care as problems arise.

In addition to quality of care, families also need to compare the cost of a facility versus in-home care. If the client qualifies for Medicaid, they may be eligible for the CT Homecare Program for Elders which pays for in home care. This program can benefit those with cognitive disabilities and memory impairment brought on by Alzheimer's Disease, Parkinson's Disease

and other dementia related disorders. ALS is also a credentialled provider of the CT Homecare Program for Elders which also requires specific training for staff.

In conjunction with personal care, the sister company of ALS, Assisted Living Technologies, Inc., offers a wide variety of primarily wireless, sensor-based technologies for a second layer of security. Stove-top fire prevention devices, personal body worn GPS locators, automatic fall detection sensors, video-visit systems and more provide constant monitoring.

"Wandering is one of the most dangerous behaviors of Alzheimer's and may happen earlier in the disease than families expect," said D'Aquila. "Today's technology allows us to set up a virtual safety net inside and outside a home to ensure the well-being of a loved one."

D'Aquila explains that discreet wireless sensors placed throughout a home can detect motion, activity from room-to-room, exiting, sleep patterns, and even moisture to help caregivers address an issue before it leads to something more serious.

D'Aquila encourages family caregivers to visit the ALT Technology Arts Gallery in Cheshire to view and experience all of the latest devices that can assist with every aspect of caring for an Alzheimer's patient. All of the products are available online as well.

"Families need to know that they don't have to go it alone when caring for a loved one," concluded D'Aquila. "There are countless resources and support to ease the stress."

The art of Raymond Shugart to be featured at APL

AGAWAM – The Agawam Public Library is welcoming the art of Raymond Shugart to the gallery walls. Shugart will be displaying his work in the library for the first time, and will be exhibiting in the cases and on the walls of the main floor.

The collection will feature colored pencil illustrations of portraits, mainly of pets and wildlife. Shugart is a retired technical illustrator who worked for various major corporations in the Springfield and Hartford areas during the 80's and 90's, as well as a retired martial arts instructor. He strives for accuracy, dedication, and self-discipline in his work, which he creates from his home studio for clients across the country. Shugart can be found online at rsvpart.com, or through Facebook.

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 note that the library will be closed on Monday, Jan. 1 for New Year's Day and Monday, Jan. 15 for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Contact Adult Services Library Associate, Erica LeFebvre at (413) 789-1550 x8858 or elefebvre@agawamlibrary.org if interested in displaying artwork at the library.

Swearing in ceremony to be held Jan. 2

AGAWAM – On Jan. 2, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. a brief swearing in ceremony will be held for Mayor Elect Christopher Johnson as well as the Agawam City Council and Agawam School Committee.

The ceremony will take place at the

Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St., in the Veteran's Hall. Upon completion of the ceremony, light refreshments will be served at reception so that attendees may meet the new Mayor as well as the other elected officials.

Story of Nugget's second chance

EAST BROOKFIELD – Nugget, formerly known as Natty, faced unimaginable pain and adversity when he arrived at Second Chance Animal Services with a severe leg injury. The dedicated team at Second Chance worked tirelessly to save his leg, but ultimately, the decision to amputate was made to ensure Nugget's comfort and quality of life.

In a heartwarming twist of fate, Nugget caught the attention of Matt and Nellie Zarif, the generous owners of Timberyard Brewing Company and longtime supporters of Second Chance. The brewery, known for its commitment to the community, had not only donated to Second Chance but also hosted events and provided storage for a large donation.

Nugget's story resonated with the Timberyard team, who had just started hosting popular puppy yoga classes to benefit Second Chance, led by the talented yoga instructor Audrey Martinez. The classes, held monthly, include a visit from friend-

ly adoptable dogs available at Second Chance, who romp around the taproom while attendees work on their yoga moves.

Nugget, now thriving after his surgery, found his forever home with the Zarifs, joining a loving pack that includes three young boys and another three-legged dog, Lucy. Nugget's dog-sister wears a prosthetic leg and goes to work with her dog mom, Nellie Zarif, a prosthetist at Hanger Clinic in Worcester, where she helps to inspire people with limb loss.

Nellie considered making a prosthesis for Nugget but quickly realized that he did not need one due to the nature of his amputation and his young age. "He is so fast on three legs that four legged dogs have a hard time keeping up with him," said Lindsay Doray, chief development officer at Second Chance, who expressed admiration for Nugget's resilience. "We were in awe of his determination."

As a proud member of the Timberyard family, Nugget comes to work with Matt

Zarif every day and has become a local sensation. The staff from Second Chance, including the veterinarian that performed his surgery, stop by the brewery from time to time to visit him. "Nugget is the smartest dog that I have ever met," said Matt Zarif. "Like-Lassie level smart; when you talk to this dog, he understands you. He's the perfect brewery dog, so well behaved, sweet, and friendly. He loves being a part of the action."

Nugget has embraced his role as a dog-fluencer, delighting visitors at Timberyard and stealing the spotlight in social media posts. His favorite gig? Greeting attendees on puppy yoga mornings. He's even been spotted auditioning with Santa for a chance to be a reindeer, sitting patiently next to Santa for hours during his visits to the brewery, posing for photos with happy families, and helping to fundraise for a local charity. Nugget's journey from pain to fame is a testament to the power of love, resilience, and a community that cares.



Nugget, once known as Natty, came to Second Chance with a severe leg injury and is now the Timberyard Brewery dog. SUBMITTED PHOTO

Sustaining sobriety and thriving during the holiday season

HOLYOKE – Sara Harpin, a clinician in MiraVista Behavioral Health Center's Opioid Treatment Program, counsels her clients that staying on the path of recovery during the holiday season, especially for those early in recovery, can be particularly challenging.

This is because the days between Thanksgiving and the New Year usher in activities that can be triggers for those in recovery with substance use. These range from parties with an abundance of alcohol, as well as access to other drugs to family gatherings where old conflicts may surface.

Harpin says they don't have to serve as triggers. She advises those in recovery to think ahead and have an exit plan for events.

This may mean taking a friend along with an agreement to leave after a certain period of time. Also, reflecting on who else may be present and a likely person to compromise one's recovery. In both scenarios, it is advised to think out in advance what you will say when you want to leave and how you will refuse offers of alcohol or other drugs.

Harpin reminds that it is OK to say no as preventing relapse is the priority in recovery. Declining an invitation by saying you are grateful to be included, but have a prior obligation is one option.

Harpin says unrealistic expectations contribute to relapse in the form of disappointment when people assume this holi-

day will be better than last year's. Clinicians such as Harpin remind those in recovery that recovery is all about staying connected to one's supports outside family and friends during the holidays and beyond to prevent relapse. Tips for managing recovery and preventing relapse during times of holiday stress and indulgence include:

- Make new memories that involve supportive connections and sobriety.
- Don't isolate as holidays can be lonely and trigger thoughts of loved ones no longer here. Consider extra therapy sessions and more time with friends in recovery to avoid relapse.
- Limit contact where encounters are likely to be toxic for you.

- Be realistic and grateful for how you can positively connect to the joy of the holidays without overspending, oversteering, and overindulging.

- Find the holiday spirit by looking beyond the traditions of the season and rediscover the real purpose and joy of the holidays.

For further information, visit: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/navigating-holidays-recovery-2017121412931>.

If you or someone you know needs support now, you can contact the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline. Call or text 988. For information on MiraVista Behavioral Health Center, visit <https://www.miravistabhcare/>.

Friends of Agawam Public Library 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 photocopier, 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, sell-

ing 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.

MEMA receives \$1.5 million in federal grant funding

FRAMINGHAM – The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency has been awarded \$1.5 million in federal grant funding to facilitate collaboration among and provide training to emergency management professionals through the Northeast Emergency Management Training and Education Center.

The funding comes from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Regional Catastrophic Preparedness Grant Program.

NEMTEC was launched in April 2023, offering accessible, no-cost, comprehensive training and education in emergency management across the six New England states to strengthen the regional response to natural and manmade disasters.

Grant funding will enable NEMTEC to expand its reach and capabilities by developing a specific curriculum to address identified capability gaps and emerging topics. The funding will support the expansion of the number and variety of classes offered and help provide training in multiple modalities and on various platforms to meet the diverse needs of New England emergency management professionals.

"We are fortunate to have a strong New England coalition of emergency manage-

ment partners to address the increasing complexity and frequency of crisis events caused by climate change," said Gov. Maura Healey. "I want to thank the Biden-Harris Administration and FEMA for this funding that will allow MEMA and our neighboring states to deliver relevant and specific training to make our most vulnerable communities more resilient."

During 2023, MEMA and NEMTEC provided more than 75 emergency management classes, serving over 1,100 participants. NEMTEC prioritizes innovation in eLearning and proactively seeks emerging technologies and tools that will expand virtual programs to enhance the accessibility of training courses.

"Through collaboration, training, and planning, emergency management professionals will have the tools to expand their core capabilities within their jurisdictions, increasing community-level resilience and reducing long-term vulnerability, especially within disadvantaged communities," said MEMA Director Dawn Brantley.

For more information about NEMTEC and to register for courses and workshops, please visit the MEMA website at www.mass.gov/mema/NEMTEC.

BBB Tip: Healthcare scams are after your personal information

Healthcare scams are as varied as just about any con out there, according to the Better Business Bureau. The fraudster often poses as a government authority to persuade you to provide personal information related to your Medicare or Medicaid account for identity theft. In other cases, the con artist is after your health insurance, Medicaid or Medicare information to submit fraudulent medical charges.

The scam typically starts with an email, text message or phone call that appears to be from a government agency. Con art-

ists use a variety of stories. In one common version, the "agent" tells you that he or she needs to update account information to send a new medical card. In another version, the scammer asks for your account number in exchange for free equipment or services. A third version involves a threatening robocall purporting to be from HealthCare.gov or the Health Insurance Marketplace. You're told you must buy health insurance or face a fine. Sure enough, you're soon asked to provide personal information. A more recent version has reported Medicare recipients receiving

notices that new Medicare cards with microchips will be sent out and further verification is required.

Don't trust a name or number. Con artists use official-sounding names or mask their area codes by spoofing to make you trust them. Don't fall for it.

Hang up and go to official websites. You can enroll or re-enroll in Medicare at Medicare.gov or a marketplace health plan at Healthcare.gov.

Never share personally identifiable information with someone who has contacted

you unsolicited, whether over the phone, by email, or on social media. This includes banking and credit card information, your birthdate, Social Security or Social Insurance number, and, of course, your health insurance number.

Guard your government-issued numbers. Never offer your Medicare ID number, Social Security number, health plan info, or banking information to anyone you don't know.

Know the signs. Medicare will never contact you via email, text message, or phone, asking you to verify personal information.

Opinion

Guest Column

Are spousal benefits always a factor?



Dear Rusty

Both my wife and I have worked our entire lives. When we retire, will we both be entitled to full benefit amount each or will there always be a spousal factor in there? Also, how are those benefits calculated – based on your highest salaries throughout your career, or your ending salaries when you retire?

Signed: Looking Ahead

Dear Looking

Prior to retiring from work is a smart time to investigate how Social Security will fit into your golden years. To answer your second question first, each person's personal SS retirement benefit is based on the highest earning 35 years over their entire lifetime, with earlier years adjusted for inflation.

The person's Average Indexed Monthly Earnings, essentially the person's lifetime average inflation-adjusted monthly earnings amount, is first determined.

Using AIME, the person's Primary Insurance Amount is calculated using a special benefit formula which will yield a PIA of about 40% or less of the person's AIME. The PIA is the amount received if benefits start in the month full retirement age or "FRA" is attained, as you can see, Social Security likes acronyms.

Since you and your wife were both born after 1959, FRA for both of you is 67. The age when you claim benefits, relative to your FRA, determines how much you'll get. Claim before FRA and your benefit is reduced; claim after your FRA and your SS retirement benefit will be more (up to age 70 when maximum is reached); claim at your FRA and your benefit will equal your PIA – the full (100%) amount you've earned from a lifetime of working.

Spouse benefits only come into play if the PIA for one of you is less than 50% of the other's PIA. In that case, the spouse with the lower PIA gets a "spousal boost" to their own SS retirement benefit when claimed.

The amount of the "spousal boost" will be the difference between the lower PIA and half of the higher PIA, but the amount of the "spousal boost" (as well as the person's own SS retirement amount) will be reduced if benefits are claimed before full retirement age. Any time SS benefits are claimed before full retirement age, those benefits are permanently reduced.

If one spouse is entitled to a "spousal boost"

from the other, the spousal amount will reach maximum at the recipient's full retirement age. Thus, if the lower earning partner's highest benefit will be as a spouse, then that spouse should not wait beyond their FRA to claim. If, instead, the lower earning partner's own SS benefit at age 70 is more than their spousal amount, waiting longer than FRA to claim could be prudent, depending on life expectancy.

So, as you can see, deciding when to claim Social Security benefits should consider many things, including financial need, work status if claiming before FRA, marital status and life expectancy. But it is your lifetime earnings which determines your SS retirement benefit amount, and it is how your FRA entitlements compare to each other that determines whether spousal benefits will be paid.

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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Hamilton on Foreign Policy: Kissinger left complex foreign policy legacy



Possibly no one had more influence on American foreign policy in the late 20th century than Henry Kissinger, who died last month at age 100. In his long and active career, he advised presidents, carried out policies and initiatives, and was a highly visible figure around the world.

While it's early to pronounce judgment on his legacy, it's clear that his impact is deeply mixed. His accomplishments were both positive and negative. He was respected and he was reviled.

Kissinger is the only person to have served as national security adviser and secretary of state at the same time, positions he held in the Nixon and Ford administrations. He was brilliant and secretive, and he wasn't much focused on the human cost of his policies.

He was interested in strategy, not values.

He showed little interest in democratic governance or transparency. A creature of the executive branch, he seemed to almost scorn the idea of three separate and coequal branches of government.

You sometimes got the impression he had contempt for Congress.

I was not close to Kissinger, but our paths did cross on foreign policy matters. I served in Congress, and we approached policy from different perspectives. Coincidentally, we were both connected to the commission that investigated the 9/11 attacks.

Kissinger was the original pick to chair the group, and former Sen. George Mitchell was to be vice chair. Both stepped down because of perceived conflicts of interest.

Former New Jersey Gov. Tom Kean chaired the 9/11 Commission, and I was vice chair.

Kissinger's view of the world, which he characterized as sober realism, may have been influenced by his background as a Jew who spent his childhood in Nazi Germany, before his family fled and settled in New York. He was a very talented man and, wherever he went, in academic, policy circles and government, he rose to power very quickly.

In the 1970s, Kissinger was widely praised for his diplomatic work. When he was named secretary of state in 1973, a Gallup Poll found him to be the most respected man in the world.

He engineered President Richard Nixon's historic visit to China in 1972, opening the door to improved U.S.-Chinese relations and ultimately reshaping the geopolitical map. He promoted détente with the Soviet Union, helping to reduce Cold War tensions.

In the Middle East, his tireless shuttle diplomacy improved relations between Israel and its neighbors. These were real accomplishments.



Rep. Lee H. Hamilton is shown shaking hands with Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in this circa 1969 photo; with Rep. William Broomfield in the background. COURTESY OF THE WELLS LIBRARY LEE HAMILTON PHOTO COLLECTION

Kissinger shared the 1973 Nobel Peace Prize for negotiating the agreement that ended the Vietnam War. His critics found that highly ironic.

During the war, Kissinger orchestrated the U.S. bombing and invasion of Cambodia, which expanded the conflict and fueled a civil war that eventually brought the Khmer Rouge to power, resulting in up to three million deaths. The Cambodia disaster was Exhibit No. 1 for critics who accused Kissinger of war crimes, but he was also tied to a brutal military coup in Chile, Indonesia's bloody invasion of East Timor, a violent civil war in East Pakistan and other foreign policy disasters.

Kissinger later had a lucrative career in consulting. He clearly enjoyed being a celebrity, rubbing elbows with rich and powerful people and being photographed with glamorous women.

He became a great figure on the social circuit in Washington. Getting Kissinger to attend your dinner was a big achievement.

Henry Kissinger left quite a stamp on American foreign policy. He was a master of developing strategy and exercising power.

But American greatness isn't just about using force and gaining advantage. It also relies on our faith in democratic governance and our belief in human rights and the dignity of all people.

There's a place for sober realism, but American foreign policy should be grounded in our values.

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center for Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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The Agawam Advertiser News (USPS 001-170) is published every Thursday by Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, Mass. 01069. Telephone (413) 283-8393, Fax (413) 289-1977. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, Mass. 01069.

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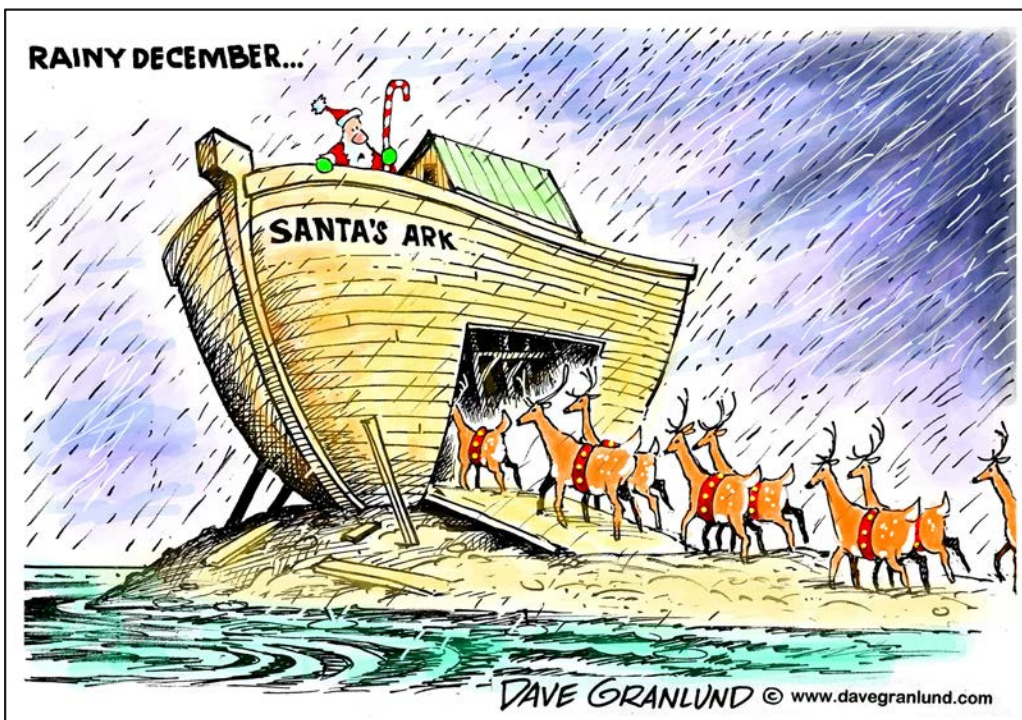
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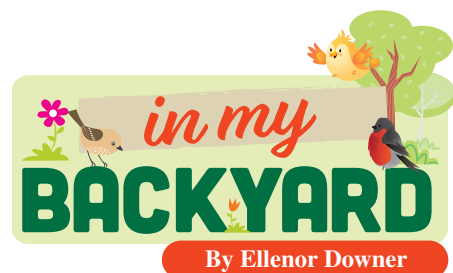
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DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

Opinion

Guest Column



Rick Hendra of Oakham took this photo of sandhill cranes foraging in a field on Stone's Road in Oakham.

In his email, he wrote, "I took this picture this morning (Sunday, Dec. 17) about halfway up Stone Road. Their call was so loud it startled me from 50 yards away. And they were large, but oddly colored."

The sandhill crane is a tall bird about 45 inches, gray colored with a dark red patch on the forehead and a black bill. They have staining of feathers on their back and tail caused by the iron rich soil on its beak when it preens feathers. The immature crane lacks the red patch and has an orange bill. It also may have more rust colored feathers on the back and tail.

The sandhill crane summers on prairies and tundra and during winter feed on agri-



Sandhill crane

cultural fields and roost in shallow water. For several years now, Hardwick had a pair of nesting sandhill cranes, who successfully raised chicks.

The female lays one to three olive eggs with dark marks in a mound like nest of marsh plants, grasses and weeds either placed on the ground or shallow water. Courtship displays are seen during mi-

gration and involve graceful jumps off the ground in a dancing manner.

Many years ago, Richard Jankauskas, saw some in a field on South Street in Barre. He commented about a pair jumping up and down and dancing.

Their voice is a low pitched "karoo, karoo, karoo." Rick Hendra mentioned their call in his email printed above.

Bird count

A Brimfield resident, who visits ponds in Warren, Brimfield, Holland and Sturbridge with his wife listed birds seen on Dec. 8. They included 210 Canada geese, 93 mallards, 70 hooded mergansers, three black ducks, two pied-billed grebes, one great blue heron, one bald eagle, two crows, one white-breasted nuthatch, two black-capped chickadees, three bluebirds, four house finches, one goldfinch, six white-throated sparrows, six dark-eyed juncos and three cardinals.

He also emailed in late November, "I checked the ponds in Warren and there were 14 hooded mergansers very actively feeding and a very cold looking great blue heron that looked like it was not enjoying the 36 degree temperature.

Christmas bird count

For over 120 years the Audubon Society has been doing a Christmas bird count and this year is no different. People can participate in an organized count or just do one on their own in their backyard.

Decline in bird numbers

I received an email on Wednesday, Nov. 29 from a long time birder. He said, "[I] regularly feed them but have noticed a steep drop off of the number and type of birds since around September. Right now we have a loyal troop of blue jays and that's about it. Usually we have copious amounts of starlings, chickadees, grackles, crows, titmice, cardinals, juncos, etc."

He said he asked many people about this phenomena and "they have noticed the same thing but can't explain it either. We are all aware of some birds heading South but the sheer volume has dropped dramatically."

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 edowne@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

Schools & Youth

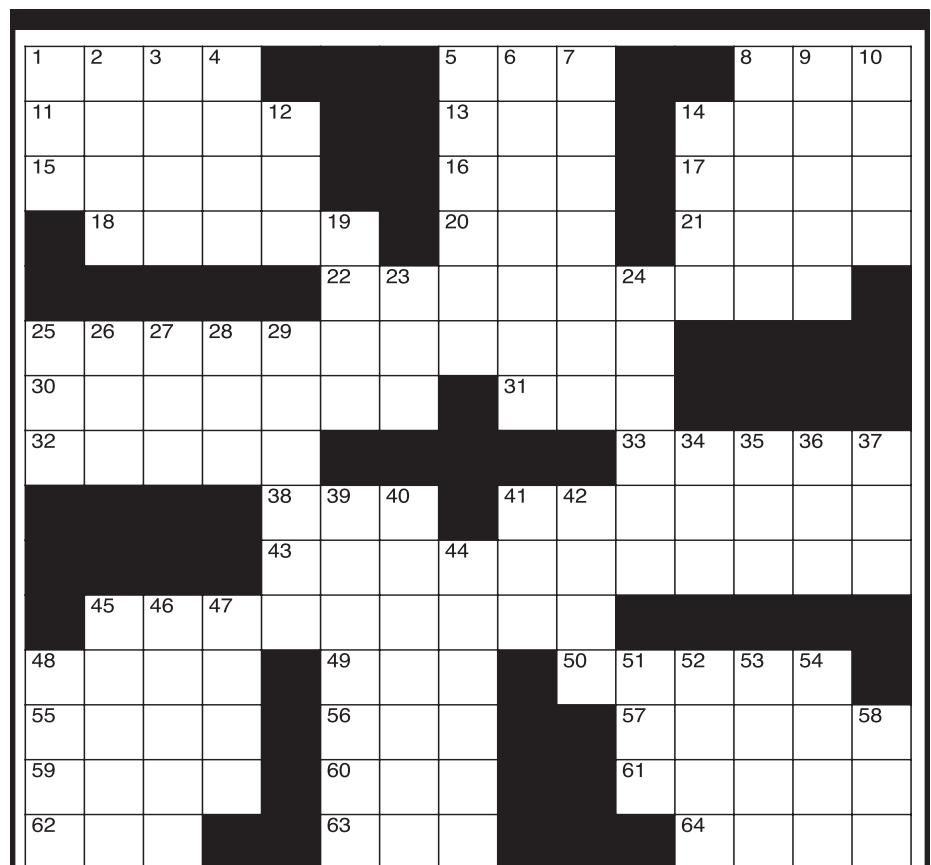
Feeding Hills resident inducted into Psychology Honor Society

SPRINGFIELD – Juliet Burbank of Feeding Hills is among eighteen American International College students who have been inducted into Psi Chi, the International Honor Society of Psychology. The induction ceremony was held in the AIC Campus Center on Nov. 30, 2023.

The College recently reinstated its chapter of one of the largest honor societ-

ies in the country.

Psi Chi was founded in 1929 with a mission to recognize and promote excellence in the science and application of psychology. To be inducted into Psi Chi is an esteemed honor. Students must be in the top 35% of their class, have a major or minor in psychology, and have excelled in their psychology courses.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. A way to injure
- 5. Mutual savings bank
- 8. Rock TV channel
- 11. Large number of fish swimming together
- 13. Military mailbox
- 14. Female of a horse
- 15. Category
- 16. City
- 17. Breezed through
- 18. Officer who bears a mace
- 20. Tax collector
- 21. "Cheers" actress Perlman
- 22. Pauses before acting
- 25. Extracted information from a wave
- 30. Tendency to revert to something ancestral
- 31. No seats available
- 32. Nocturnal rodents
- 33. Moves gently to

and fro

- 38. Not good
- 41. A way to ready
- 43. One who makes something better
- 45. Things associated with American history
- 48. Ancient Phoenician fertility god
- 49. A continuous portion of a circle
- 50. Volcanic craters
- 55. Units of electrical resistance
- 56. Gamble on
- 57. Ethiopian town
- 59. One point east of northeast
- 60. Polynesian garland of flowers
- 61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- 62. State of fuss
- 63. Keyboard key
- 64. Partner to relaxation

CLUES DOWN

- 1. "The world's most famous arena"
- 2. Polite interruption sound
- 3. Private school in New York
- 4. Refuse of grapes
- 5. __ Tomei, actress
- 6. Adult beverages
- 7. Supporter
- 8. Papier-__, art material
- 9. Forests have them
- 10. Most ancient Hindu scriptures
- 12. Downwind
- 14. Marketplace
- 19. Flowering plant genus
- 23. Street where nightmares happen
- 24. Admirer
- 25. Dip lightly into water
- 26. When you hope to get there
- 27. Partner to cheese

- 28. Egg
- 29. A way to disqualify
- 34. South American plant
- 35. Fold-away bed
- 36. Debbie Harry album " __ Koo"
- 37. Swedish krona
- 39. Displaying warmth and friendliness
- 40. Official orders
- 41. Bowling alley necessity
- 42. Stray
- 44. About milk
- 45. Expressed pleasure
- 46. Caribbean dance
- 47. If not
- 48. __ fide (Latin)
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Hebrew calendar month
- 53. One easily swindled
- 54. Point that is one point south of southwest
- 58. Small island (British)

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HENS ■ from page 1

that is to know they were fresh and highly nutritious because they were from our chickens.”

Many residents raised concerns over the potential disturbances that chickens could cause.

“Will house values drop because there’s a chicken coup next door?” Linda Gilarno asked.

Gilarno told a story about her sister-in-law whose neighbors have chickens. These chickens have reportedly gotten loose and caused disturbances. Gilarno does not want to see the same happen in Agawam.

“No resident should have to go through the aggravation that my sister-in-law has had to go through,” she said.

Ehle claimed that his family has been working to ensure that their chicken coup is “something that adds beauty and charm” to their surrounding area. He also emphasized that chicken owners would be sure to follow the regulations, as they did not want any trouble.

“Chicken owners, including myself, have plenty of motivation to keep these requirements,” Ehle said. “People don’t want trouble, I certainly don’t. We want to quietly enjoy the keeping of a few chickens for our tables, families, childrens’ education and companionship.”

Rossi was concerned that they would be unable to properly enforce the laws around raising chickens, as it is a civil matter.

“Nuisance problems are a civil problem, they’re not a criminal problem, they’re very difficult to enforce,” Rossi said. “Right now, we have nothing in our exhib-

its here that allows anybody to go in there and take any kind of actions whatsoever.”

However, Councilor President Christopher Johnson pointed out that as this was a zoning ordinance, rules of enforcement were implemented within, even though they were not explicitly stated within this specific ordinance.

“What’s proposed is a zoning ordinance, there’s an entire section of our zoning ordinances that deals with enforcement, which allow for the levying of fines and in certain circumstances the bringing of criminal charges,” Johnson said. “So it doesn’t need to be restated here.”

While Johnson himself was not particularly enthused about allowing chickens within Agawam, he felt setting these laws would be the best way to go about the issue.

“I agree with the concerns that were raised...but the reality is this at least provides some order to the chaos,” he said.

Johnson also believes that residents with chickens will also be subjected to two annual inspections by the animal control and the health department in order to ensure that they are following all the established regulations.

Councilor Anthony Russo also pointed out that the process of obtaining a special permit would allow residents to express their concerns over their neighbors having chickens.

“There’s a special permit for a reason, when you do a special permit and you go in front of the DBA...they’re going to have a right to come and express their opinion and express their concerns,” Russo said. “And with the DBA it has to be a 3-0 vote, doesn’t have to be 2-1, so there’s no guar-

antee they’re going to get the special permit. There are safeguards put into place.”

Moreover, many surrounding communities of Agawam have either already established laws permitting chickens or are working toward creating some.

Agawam did not want to fall behind surrounding communities on this issue.

“This is becoming a very popular thing,” Russo said. “We’re one of the few communities in the area that doesn’t have something on the books for this.”

This ordinance also amended how Agawam defines a farm, which is now a property that is five acres or greater. Anything less than five acres is not considered a farm, even if it is agriculturally zoned.

Rossi, citing a lack of enforcement ability, cast the lone dissenting vote.



COUNCIL ■ from page 1

“I’m honored to have been [Johnson’s] vice president for the past year,” Council Vice President Dino Mercadante said. “He’s taught me a lot of everything that goes on here. He’s a gentleman, he works extremely hard, losing him on the council but the town is going to be in great shape as he is our next mayor.”

Johnson received an extra gift of gratitude from the council in the form of a gavel, presented to him by Council Administrative Assistant Barbra Bard. This gavel was engraved with the words “breaking bread together”, Johnson’s common refrain.

“One of the things Chris has instilled while being council president is a sense of family,” Bard said. “He has always said breaking bread together creates camaraderie and cohesiveness.”

Johnson appreciated the kind words from his fellow councilors and from Bard. He thanked Cavallo and Calabrese for their work together over the past several years.

“I’m going to miss Cece and Paul...it’s been great to work with both of you on the council,” he said. “To all of the existing councilors, you make my job easier, you really do...you’ve really abided by the notion that we can disagree about an item and then get coffee afterwards.”

Johnson also wished the best of luck to the new councilors coming in.

“To the three new councilors...I’ve known Ed forever and a day and I’ve gotten to know Maria and Peter and I think they’re going to do a phenomenal job,” he said.

DPW announces 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 - 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.

Scholarship applications for Polish heritage students

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

Brownies wrestling picks up league win

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent



Chase Rising grapples in the 113-pound match.



James Cascio tries to maintain leverage.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY SCIBELLI



Jordin Agosto goes for a leg takedown.



Nicholas Ugolini starts his match at 138.

LUDLOW – Ludlow High School was a busy place last Wednesday evening.

While a holiday concert was being held in the Wrinn Auditorium, the Lion's wrestling team was battling undefeated Agawam in a non-league dual meet down the hall inside Mullins Gymnasium.

After falling behind by 33 points, the Lions clawed back by winning three consecutive matches, which closed the gap to 15 points. The Brownies, who pulled away again by winning the final three matches, remained undefeated with a 57-24 victory before a large crowd.

"Ludlow is an underrated team, and they have a lot of tough kids," said Agawam head coach Armando Ramos. "The final score really doesn't show it, but they gave us all that we good handle tonight. A lot of our guys had to dig deep to win their matches. This is probably our best win so far this season."

The Brownies (4-0), who are members of the Valley League, first three dual meets victories came against Southwick, Holyoke, and Monument Mountain.

WRESTLING | page 9

Agawam wins big over Belchertown

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

AGAWAM – The last time that the Agawam girls' varsity basketball team began the regular season with a 3-0 record was six years ago.

The Brownies opened the 2017-18 regular season with victories against Westfield, East Longmeadow, and West Springfield before suffering a home loss to Springfield Central.

BASKETBALL | page 9

Brownies offense pours on McCann

PITTSFIELD – Last Wednesday night, Agawam had no shortage of offense in a 12-2 drubbing of McCann Technical. Nine different players scored for the Brownies, including Peyton Buffum, Anthony Buoniconti, and Drew Scherban, all who had two goals each. Scherban had three assists to go with his pair of goals. The Brownies improved to 2-2 on the season.

Agawam was scheduled to face Chicopee last week and then participate in Chicopee's Holiday Classic on Wednesday and Thursday at Fitzpatrick Rink.



Katelyn Cleavall makes a pass as she crosses midcourt.



Isabella Laprise makes a pass around the perimeter.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY SCIBELLI



Mia Canavan tries to bring in the rebound.



Sophia Laprise passes the ball away she takes on pressure.



Hannah Solitario makes a pass to the outside of the arc.

Sports

Olympic team among eligible Hall of Fame candidates

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame announced the list of eligible candidates for the Class of 2024, including several high-profile, first-time nominees, including the 2008 U.S. Olympic Men's Basketball Team ("Redeem Team"), Vince Carter, Seimone Augustus, Bill Laimbeer, Rick Barnes, Mike Fratello and Penny Taylor.

A first look at the list of eligible nominees will be provided by "NBA Today" on ESPN, hosted by Malika Andrews, with Class of 2023 Hall of Famer Becky Hammon, Kendrick Perkins, Chiney Ogumike, and Brian Windhorst. A complete list of eligible candidates can be found below.

Finalists from the Honor's Committee for the Class of 2024 will be announced on Friday, February 16, in Indianapolis, Indiana, during NBA All-Star Weekend.

The entire Class of 2024 will be unveiled during the NCAA Final Four in Phoenix, Arizona, on Saturday, April 6, in a nationally televised broadcast.

The announcement time and broadcast network for both the Finalist and the Class Announcement will be announced in the near future.

Enshrinement weekend will begin at the Mohegan Sun on Friday, August 16, with the Tip-Off Celebration and Awards Gala, followed by the Enshrine-

ment ceremony on Saturday, August 17, at Springfield's historic Symphony Hall.

VIP Packages for the Hall of Fame Enshrinement Weekend will go on sale on Friday, February 16. All single-event tickets to the Ceremony, Tip Off Celebration, and Awards Gala, as well as other ancillary events, will go on sale on Saturday, April 6, at 12:00 p.m. EST. All packages and tickets will be available for purchase at hoophall.com.

The complete listing of events and pricing will be released by Feb. 1.

The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame also announced changes to its election process that will more carefully examine candidates from the International,

Men's Veteran's, Women's Veteran's, and Contributor Committees. Since 2011, the Hall of Fame has allowed these categories to be stand-alone 'direct-elect' committees with the objective of ensuring candidates who may have 'fallen through the cracks' received focused and specialized consideration in these various categories. The Election Process Committee has determined that this objective of more acute consideration has been met during this 12-year period, and now candidates put forth from these categories will revert back to the previous and traditional process of being presented for final consideration to the Honors Committee for election.

T-birds coach gets call to NHL, named interim coach of Blues

Daniel Tkaczuk will take over as interim head coach

SPRINGFIELD – On Dec. 13, St. Louis Blues President of Hockey Operations and General Manager Doug Armstrong announced the team has relieved Craig Berube of his coaching duties and named Springfield Thunderbirds head coach Drew Bannister interim head coach. Bannister will travel to St. Louis on Wednesday and serve his first game behind the bench on Thursday when the Blues host the Ottawa Senators.

Bannister, 49, has spent the past three seasons with the Blues' AHL affiliate in Springfield, leading the team to a 93-58-19 regular-season record. The Belleville, Ontario, native has also guided the Thunderbirds to consecutive playoff appearances, including 2021-22, when they won the Eastern Conference and reached the Calder Cup Final.

Bannister began his coaching career in the Ontario Hockey League (OHL), where he spent three seasons as an assistant with Owen Sound and three as head coach with the Soo Greyhounds. He also served as head coach of the AHL's San Antonio Rampage and as an associate coach with the Utica Comets. As a player, Bannister's career spanned over 20 years and included 164 NHL regular-season games between the Tampa Bay Lightning, Edmonton Oilers, Anaheim Mighty Ducks, and New York Rangers.

In addition, Thunderbirds general manager Kevin Maxwell has announced

that Daniel Tkaczuk will take over the head coaching duties in Springfield on an interim basis.

Tkaczuk, 44, joined the St. Louis Blues organization in 2016 as an assistant coach with the club's AHL affiliate, the Chicago Wolves. After spending the 2017-18 season as a Skills Coach with the Blues, he rejoined the AHL affiliate as an assistant coach under Bannister in 2018, a role he has held ever since, including a promotion to Associate Head Coach in 2022.

The Toronto, Ontario native began his coaching career in the OHL as an assistant coach with the Owen Sound Attack from 2011-15 before spending the 2015-16 season with the Kitchener Rangers. Tkaczuk and Bannister were co-assistant coaches with Owen Sound from 2012-15.

Tkaczuk was the sixth overall draft pick in the 1997 NHL Draft by the Calgary Flames and played 12 professional seasons in both North America and Europe. As a member of the Saint John Flames, Tkaczuk captured a Calder Cup championship in 2000-01. He was tied for second among Flames skaters with 10 goals in the Calder Cup Playoffs that season.

In 286 AHL games with Saint John, the Worcester IceCats, Bridgeport Sound Tigers, Charlotte, Syracuse, Rochester, and Hartford, Tkaczuk posted 59 goals and 109 assists for 168 points. He was a career point-per-game performer in the playoffs, scoring 14 goals and adding 17 assists in 29 career Calder Cup playoff contests. Tkaczuk also skated in 19 NHL games with Calgary, putting up 11 points (four goals, seven assists) in the 2000-01 season.

Granite State announces Pro Stock Series 2024 schedule

WALPOLE, N.H. – Granite State Pro Stock Series officials announced Friday the schedule of events for the 2024 racing season. The series slate includes a nine-race championship battle spread from May to October, with the championship event taking place at Lee USA Speedway's Octoberfest weekend.

The Granite State Pro Stock Series will visit five different tracks in 2024: Lee, Star Speedway, Claremont Motorsports Park, Riverside Speedway and Speedway 95. The schedule begins with the annual 100-lap spring event at Star Speedway in Epping, New Hampshire, this year on Saturday, May 4 with a Friday night practice on May 3. From there, teams will roll to Claremont Motorsports Park for the Memorial Day weekend, with a main event set for Sunday, May 26.

On Saturday, June 8, the series will make the first of two visits to Lee USA Speedway. That will be followed by the first of two races at Hermon, Maine's Speedway 95 on Saturday, June 16. After a few weeks off, the schedule continues with a return to Claremont for Independence Day weekend on Friday, July 5 with a special event.

The high-banks of Hudson International Speedway will host the series again on Sunday, July 14, while Riverside Speedway returns to the schedule with an event on Saturday, August 10. The final two events of the year will take place at Speedway 95 on Sunday, September 15 and Lee's Octoberfest weekend, where the champion will be decided, on Saturday and Sunday, October 5-6.

"Our 2024 schedule is shaping up to be

one of the best in our history," Mike Parks, President of the Granite State Pro Stock Series, said. "Return trips to places like Star, Speedway 95, Lee USA and Riverside, mixed with us getting back on the high-banks of Hudson, will produce an exciting championship battle for fans to follow during the summer of 2024."

Additional information regarding the 2024 Granite State Pro Stock Series schedule including event registrations, rules and more will be available soon. For the latest news, fans and teams are encouraged to visit gsps.net and follow the series on social media.

- 2024 Granite State Pro Stock Series Schedule**
- Saturday, May 4
Star Speedway - Epping, N.H.
 - Sunday, May 26
Claremont Motorsports Park - Claremont, N.H.
 - Saturday, June 8
Lee USA Speedway - Lee, N.H.
 - Sunday, June 16
Speedway 95 - Hermon, Maine
 - Friday, July 5
Claremont Motorsports Park - Claremont, N.H.
 - Sunday, July 14
Hudson International Speedway - Hudson, N.H.
 - Saturday, August 10
Riverside Speedway - Groveton, N.H.
 - Sunday, September 15
Speedway 95 - Hermon, Maine
 - Saturday/Sunday October 5-6
Lee USA Speedway, Lee, N.H.

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The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$225, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph.

Death Notices & Paid Obituaries should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

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

Public Notices

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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 garage-keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicle.
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Gary Croteau
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12/14, 12/21, 12/28/2023

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Sports

BASKETBALL ■ from page 7

A year ago, Agawam won its first two games of the season versus Ludlow and Westfield before losing to Central Division rival Belchertown by ten points on the road.

After kicking off the 2023-24 regular season with a pair of wins against Drury (45-37) and Pope Francis (40-39), the Brownies once again faced Belchertown in their third game.

Unlike a year ago, the Brownies improved to a perfect 3-0 following a 62-36 victory over the Orioles at Cliff P. Kibbe Gymnasium, last Tuesday night.

"We've played very well so far this season and I'm hoping that it continues," said Agawam head coach Tim Murphy. "Because our first two games were very close, we couldn't play very many players. We were able to play everyone in tonight's game, which was very nice. A couple of players scored their first career points in a varsity game."

It has been more than 15 years since the Agawam girls' basketball team, who also had a 3-0 league record, won its first four games of the regular season.

A total of eleven players scored at least two points for the home team in the first meeting of the season against the Orioles (1-2, 0-2).

The trio of junior Marlee Montagna, junior Mia Canavan, and sophomore Bella Laprise, who are starters, led the way offensively for the Brownies.

Laprise scored nine of her game-high 15 points during the second half. She also scored a team-leading 17 points in the Brownies 40-39 win at Pope Francis four days earlier.

Montagna and Canavan chipped in with 11 points apiece against Belchertown. Canavan recorded a double-double with 15 rebounds.

Agawam's other two starters were junior Kate Cleavall (8 points) and sophomore Sophia Laprise (4 points).

"Everybody shot the ball very well in tonight's game," Murphy said. "I don't have very many complaints offensively."

Sophomore Carly Calabrese (3 points) and senior Amber Bates (2 points) scored their first varsity points in the fourth quarter.

Bates is the only senior listed on the Agawam varsity roster.

"Amber is a great kid, and she knows her role on the team," Murphy said. "She's a very good softball player and enjoys playing basketball. She's one of our leaders."

The Orioles, who had won the previous three games in the series, didn't play very well in their third road game.

"You just have to give Agawam a lot of credit. They played very well, and we didn't," said Belchertown head coach Jason Woodcock. "There are eleven players on our team and only two of them have any experience at the varsity level. We made a lot of mistakes, but this was a good learning experience for us. We do have a couple of weeks off now and it'll give us some extra practice time."

Junior Chloe LaRoche, who scored seven of her team-high 11 points after halftime, and senior Laura Cote (5 points) are the only experienced varsity players for the Orioles.

LaRoche, who didn't play in the Orioles season opening loss at Pope Francis because of an injury, scored 18 points in a blowout win at Mount Greylock on Dec. 15.

One of the five freshmen listed on the Orioles varsity roster is Morghan Litz, who scored eight points against the Brownies. Sophomore Alexa Karabetsos added six points.

The Orioles, who held the lead a couple of times early in the contest, were trailing 12-8 with a little more than a minute remaining in the first quarter following a Litz lay-up.

In the closing seconds of the opening quarter, Montagna buried a 3-pointer from the left side.

Cleavall made another 3-pointer from the top of the key less than a minute into the second quarter pushing the Brownies lead into double digits (18-8) for the first time.

With less than two minutes remaining in the first half, Agawam, who forced more than 25 turnovers, built a 30-12 lead following a lay-up by Bella Laprise.

Field goals by Karabetsos and freshman Isabella Vozzella (2 points) did close the gap to 30-16 at halftime.

The Brownies, who led by as many as 19 points in the third quarter, entered the final eight minutes of the contest holding a 41-23 advantage.

The Orioles managed to slice their deficit down to 48-35 with 3:40 remaining in regulation following a Karabetsos lay-up and a made free throw from LaRoche.

"I think the next time that we play Belchertown, it'll probably be a much closer game," Murphy said. "They're a young team, but they never stopped playing hard. Coach Woodcock is also a very good basketball coach."

The Brownies closed out the game with a 14-1 run with the help of eight free throws.

The second meeting of the regular season between the Central Division rivals is scheduled to take place on Jan. 18 at Belchertown High School.

WRESTLING ■ from page 7

Ramos is looking forward to his team's first dual meet of 2024 at league rival Minnechaug Regional on January 4.

"Minnechaug is the team to beat in our league once again this year," he said. "We'll be competing against them on January 4, and that match is circled on our calendars. They're a fantastic team and we'll have to wrestle our best that night to beat them. We can't make very many mistakes like we did in tonight's match."

Ludlow, who finished at the top of the Valley Wheel league standings a year ago, had a 3-2 record following the home loss. They defeated South Hadley, Smith Vocational, and Northampton and lost to West Springfield.

"I'm glad that we had this opportunity to wrestle against a very good Agawam team tonight," said Ludlow head coach John Archambeau. "We didn't get the outcome that we wanted, but my kids worked very hard. We're hoping to win another league title this year."

It was the only meeting of the regular season between the two squads.

The Lions took a 6-0 lead in last Wednesday dual meet when sophomore Samantha Bertini posted a pin with 1:04 remaining in the third period of the 106 lb. match.

Neither wrestler earned any points in the opening period of the match, which is two minutes long.

Bertini held a 3-0 lead at the end of the second period.

"Samantha is one of our captains," Archambeau said. "She did a very good job of winning the first match of the night."

A pin by Agawam junior Chase Rising with 1:16 remaining in the first period of the 113lb match tied the score at 6-6.

It took Agawam sophomore Jordin Agosto 21 seconds longer to record a pin in the 120lb contest, which gave the Brownies the lead.

The 126lb match between Agawam freshman Lincoln Despard and Ludlow junior Ryan Gomes went the entire six minutes.

Gomes was leading 2-1 after the first period and 4-3 at the end of the second.

Despard took control of the match during the final twenty seconds of the third period, and he managed to pull out

an 8-6 decision.

"I thought Lincoln wrestled hard in his match," Ramos said. "He was down by three points with about 15 seconds left in third period. He managed to make a reverse move and squeaked out the win. That was a huge win for us because it kept the momentum on our side. If they would've won, the overall match could've gone either way. It was a momentum changer."

The Brownies then recorded pins by freshman Tyler Callahan (132lb), senior Nick Ugolini (138 lb), senior Rhein Ingram (144lb), and senior Ilya Shelmanov (150lb), which increased their lead to 39-6.

It was a memorable night for Callahan, who won his first career varsity match.

"Tyler is a freshman, but he's been wrestling for us since the seventh grade. It was nice to see him get his first varsity win in tonight's match," Ramos said. "We no longer need the wavier, so we don't have any seventh graders on this year's team."

Ugolini and Shelmanov also joined the Brownies wrestling team as seventh graders.

The Lions began their comeback with junior Brady Trahan recording a pin in the

157lb match with five seconds left on the scoreboard clock in the first period.

Then junior Lucas Alvan (165lb) gave the Lions six more points by pinning his opponent with two seconds remaining in the first period.

Alvan's older brother, Cesar, won a bronze medal for Team Brazil at the 2022 Pan American Games.

The Lions closed the gap to 39-24 with another pin by sophomore Noah Simard (175lb) with 16 seconds left in the first period.

"We dug ourselves a big hole, but we did have a lot more favorable matchups in the higher weight classes," said Ludlow head coach John Archambeau. "Some of our experienced guys wrestled against some of their younger guys."

The Brownies locked up their fifth dual meet win of the season following pins by sophomore Tyler Gervais (190lb), senior Max Holloway (215lb), and Domenic Tourigny (285lb).

Both teams competed in the 56th annual George Bossi Lowell Holiday Classic, which was held on the UMass Lowell campus, last weekend.



Lincoln Despard holds a headlock in the 126-pound match.



Tyler Callahan goes for the pin at 132.t

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Penguin Plunge to be held at Hampton Ponds State Park Jan. 27

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.

Photography submissions needed at APL

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

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

SCHOOL ■ from page 1

scious decision, the smart decision to take a school that didn't already have a name, already have history, and name that school after William Sapelli to honor him?"

Additionally, many community members were attached to the history of Robinson Park, with stories of generations of their families going to the school.

"The way I personally feel is I've had three generations of my family go to that school," Virella said. "That history is now gone...Robinson Park School is now gone so 10 or 15 years from now when my grandson answers questions about where he went to school and he answers Robinson Park, Robinson Park is history at that point, no one remembers anymore."

Dolat also felt that the city council had not given the public enough notice of the change. She believed that the staff, parents and students of the school should have been given further notice so they have offered their opinions.

"So many people in this community had no idea that this was even happening," Dolat said. "I had to inform them, 'it's not that it's happening, it has happened' and most of the community had no idea."

Dolat believed that the community had not been properly notified of this change and, therefore, the council had violated the school name change policy.

A letter from Attorney Dupre, read by Vice Chair Shelly Reed, proved this allegation to be incorrect.

"It is my opinion that the requirements of the policy were followed," Dupre's letter said. "The topic was addressed at three committee meetings and clearly posted for two of those meetings."

Reed agreed with this assessment.

"Our agendas are posted in advance, I think we were very transparent, our meetings are on Channel 15, they're live, they're also replayed on Facebook, they're filmed and open to the public and our meeting minutes are posted to our website," Reed said.

The council overall felt that proper procedure had been followed and that Sapelli was more than deserving of the honor of the school renaming.

"Mr. Sapelli has given over 40 years to Agawam education and he has done more for Agawam than all of us up here," Reed said. "I think he is well-deserving of this."

Committee Member Kerri O'Connor was against keeping the name change. Not because Sapelli was undeserving of the vote, but she felt the council was in violation of procedure.

According to O'Connor an email had been sent out on Dec. 9, prior to the hearing, describing the expected layout of the committee process.

In this email, the sender had expressed that they expected a favorable vote to keep the name change of William P. Sapelli School.

O'Connor felt that this violated the open meeting law and made a motion to table the vote on the name change until they consulted an attorney.

This motion did not pass, as other committee members disagreed that this was a violation as it was not a member of the committee body that had sent the email. "If none of the members of this body express an opinion or view...if nobody on this body expressed a view, I don't know if that's a violation of open meeting law," Committee Member Michael Perry said.

Following this, they took the vote on the name change.

Five of the committee members voted to keep the school as William P. Sapelli school. Only O'Connor voted against, and Sapelli was absent from the meeting.

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- Outside animals should be brought indoors unless evacuation is required.
- Do not wait to evacuate. The longer you wait, the more difficult it will be to get out with your pets.
- If evacuating, please bring your pets with you. If that is not possible, do not keep animals enclosed in a pen or crate and make sure to keep pets on the highest floor or point of your home.
- Make a plan of where to go with your pet(s). Identify pet-friendly emer-

gency shelters that may be open in your area for temporary respite. There are also pet-friendly hotels that you may be able to locate online.

- Put together an emergency go-bag of all your pets' essential items, such as medications, food, bowls, leash, crate, toys, blankets, and identification tags. It's also pertinent to have your animal's vaccination and medical records handy, including their microchip number, together inside a waterproof, sealed bag. Keep the bag as close to the door so that if you need to evacuate immediately, you can grab your pet and the bag and leave.
- Identify a neighbor who has access to your home and can grab your pets and their go bag if you are not home during a flooding event.
- Close all windows and doors.
- Do not attempt to walk through flood-

water. As little as six inches of moving water can knock you and your pet down.

- Do not allow your pet to drink any floodwater. Floodwater is polluted with chemicals, sewage and other harmful debris and foreign materials that are harmful to your pet.
 - Do not assume your pet can swim. Animals can panic if put in a situation that they are too stressed to handle.
 - Do not drive through water or even over bridges that sit above fast-moving water, as they can collapse at a moment's notice.
 - Do dry off a pet as quickly as possible. Wetness can cause bacterial growth and inflammation on their skin.
- Don't have a pet? Now is the perfect time to adopt or foster a pet in need. Shelters across the country are at capacity due to less people choosing the adoption op-

tion. Every time you adopt, you are saving two lives: the life of the pet you are bringing home, as well as opening space for another homeless dog or cat to be taken in by shelters and rescue groups. To learn more, visit bestfriends.org.



BBB Tip: Surveys for money, what to know before signing up

If you want to earn extra cash, taking surveys online is a good side hustle. Survey platforms, such as Survey Junkie and Swagbucks (both BBB Accredited Businesses), connect brands with survey takers in their target demographics. For example, a toy company may want feedback from moms of young children. In return, survey takers earn cash, gift cards, or point rewards from the platform.

However, as with any service, do your homework before signing up. Here's what you should know before using a paid survey platform.

- Know how you will be paid - and how much. Most survey sites use a point system to pay you for surveys. Once points add up, you can redeem them for gift cards or cash

out through PayPal or another digital wallet app. You should expect to make a few dollars an hour. If a site promises you'll get rich by taking surveys, it's probably a scam.

- Check site reviews before signing up. Look at reviews for the mobile app on BBB.org or through an online search. If you notice people reporting scams, inappropriate use of personal information, or a failure to deliver payments, steer clear.
- Review the privacy policy. Make sure the website has a privacy policy and read it carefully. It should be easy to understand how your data will be used. This is especially important since you'll likely share personal information while taking surveys.
- Be cautious with your personal data. Most survey sites will ask you for

your date of birth, ZIP code, living arrangements, medical issues, and more. Make sure you feel comfortable sharing that kind of information. If a survey asks you for your Social Security number, driver's license number, bank account information, or credit card number, leave the survey immediately.

- Think twice before signing up for free trials. Some survey sites will give you bonus points or extra payouts for signing up for free trials or emails. This may mean entering your credit card information. Thoroughly research the company offering the free trial before you sign up or hand over your email address. Understand that the survey site is unlikely to take responsibility for how the third party uses your information.

• Make sure your antivirus is up to date. Should a reputable survey send you to a not-so-reputable third-party site to take a survey, your antivirus can alert you to dangers before it is too late. Run regular scans on your device and always install updates right away.

- Don't pay to take surveys. You should never have to pay to take a survey. If a survey site charges you a fee to sign up, it could be a scam.
- Watch out for survey scams. Fake surveys and surveys that offer valuable gifts for a few minutes of your time are just two scammers' favorite tactics to get their hands on your personal information. Know how each scam works so you can recognize them immediately if you are targeted.

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