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CITY COUNCIL

Frustration builds over golf deficits, roof failure

By Michael J. Ballway
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Bad weather, industry-wide trends and lack of staffing at the town golf course have turned last year's positive balance back to red ink, the City Council heard Monday.

Whatever the cause, the Agawam Municipal Golf Course is failing, City Councilor Robert Rossi said at the June 12 budget workshop.

"Nothing seems to happen except losing money," Rossi said. "I have been a champion of the golf course and I don't want to see it

fail. ... [But] every year is getting increasingly more difficult."

Golf course General Manager Tony Roberto said several weather-related factors over the past 11 months have led to the deficit. Last year's July and August were hotter than usual; the course opened 34 days later in 2017

than in 2016; and in the past four weeks, the region has suffered 12 days of rain. The reduced greens fee revenue means a \$52,000 gap between this year's expenditures and next year's available funds.

The course, off Southwick Street in Feeding Hills, is owned by the town of Agawam and set

up to run as an independent enterprise, funding its expenses through its own business receipts. In practice, the town government — funded by property taxes — has made several payments to the golf course in recent years, both

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AGAWAM HIGH SCHOOL

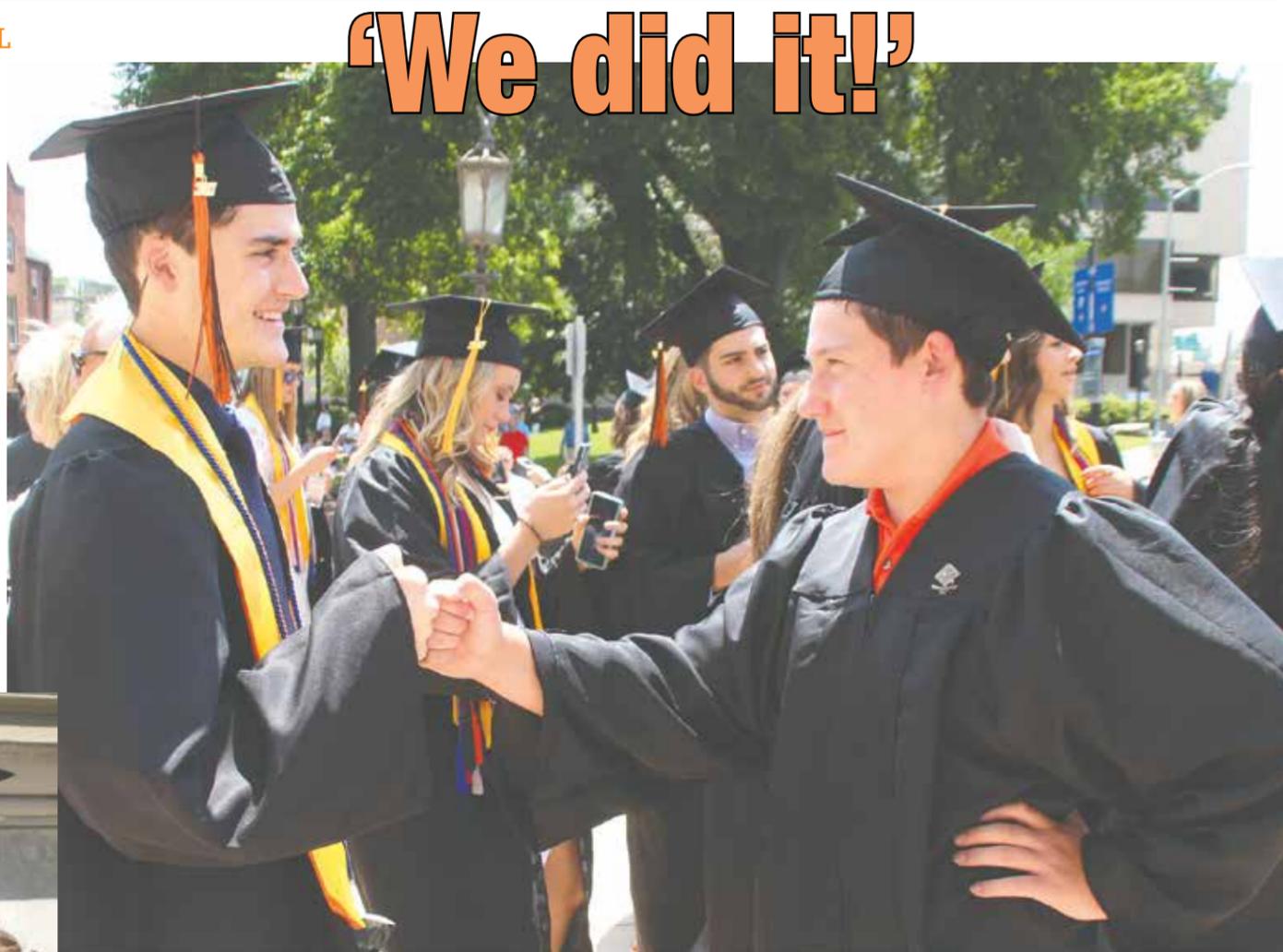
Graduates told to question everything, celebrate difference

By Mike Lydick
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Last Saturday afternoon was "D-Day" for the Class of 2017 — the last class to be born in the 20th century — as 316 seniors received their diplomas during graduation ceremonies at Symphony Hall in Springfield.

It was an emotional day for the graduating seniors, since it marked the end of a 13-year journey that for most of the class began in kindergarten. June 10 marked the end of high school, but the beginning of a new journey known as life.

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Above: Agawam High School's 2017 Class President Jonny Kelley and classmate Patrick Fisk share a congratulatory fist bump as they wait to enter Symphony Hall for their graduation ceremony on Saturday. Inset: Cousins Anna Pirogova, left, and Anastasiya Pirogova were excited about graduating together as part of the AHS Class of 2017. More photos on pages 8-13. TURLEY PUBLICATIONS PHOTOS BY MIKE LYDICK

ROBINSON STATE PARK

BioBlitz leader has curiosity in her nature

By Mike Lydick
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Veronica Bobskill has always loved Robinson State Park, exploring the Feeding Hills reserve ever since she was little.

Now she's 15, and on Saturday she will be sharing her enjoyment of the park and helping document its many different animals, plants, and insects during a day-long "BioBlitz" she has organized.

During the event, which will last into the evening, Bobskill and other volunteers will try to find and document as many species as

More inside Robinson State Park Day schedule, page 6

possible in a given area.

This is the first time that Bobskill, a sophomore at Agawam High School, has organized

a BioBlitz, but it's not the first time a BioBlitz has been held at the park. Bobskill said there was a BioBlitz about 10 years ago, but much of the information was lost.

Although the primary goal of the BioBlitz is to identify species in the park, Bobskill added that it also will help provide a better understanding of the park and "how we can best help keep the park

BLITZ | page 6

PRESCHOOL BUILDING

ECC plans to cut out 'K'

By Michael J. Ballway
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Kindergartners would stay put and construction costs would be cut in half under the latest plan for an Early Childhood Center.

School Superintendent William Sapelli said this week that he continues to believe that Agawam should remove kindergarten classes from its four elementary schools, but the "dire need" to

replace the current preschool at Perry Lane Park takes priority. The School Committee voted 6-0 last June to support a \$26 million proposal that would house both kindergarten and pre-K in a new building, but neither the mayor nor the City Council have taken a public stance or discussed how it could be funded in the year since then. Sapelli said he hoped a less

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SPORTS

VOLLEYBALL

Westfield dominates, sweeps Agawam in volleyball final

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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HOLYOKE – The third-seeded Agawam High School boys volleyball team found a new gear as it powered its way to dominate sweeps of Ludlow and Sabis.

But Westfield had a higher gear.

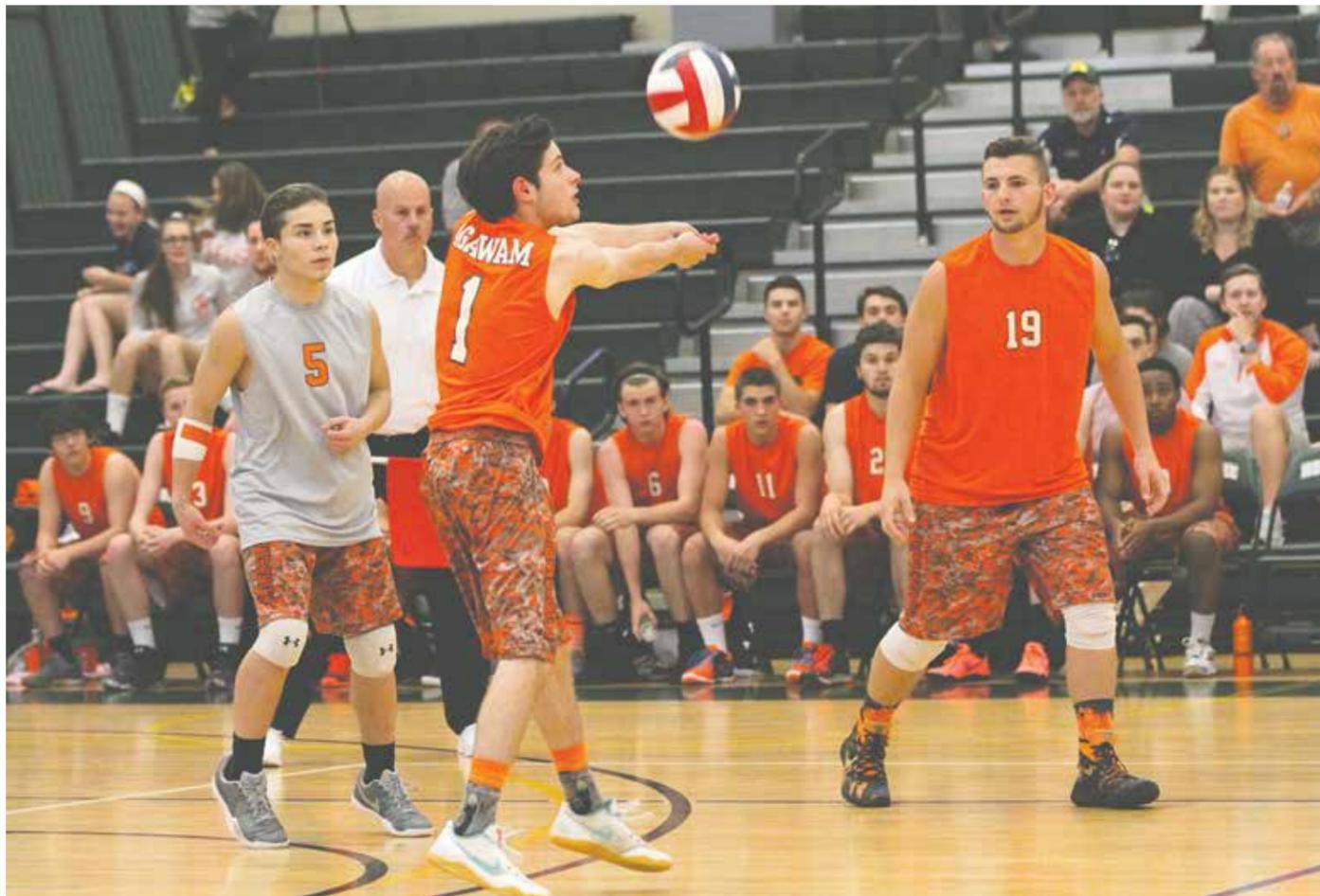
Last Wednesday night, Westfield dominated Agawam in the Western Massachusetts Volleyball finals with a 3-0 sweep that saw Agawam get kept out of the 20's in all three games.

In 21 games this season, including five losses during the regular season, Agawam also scored in the 20's in at least one game. In the finals, Westfield won 25-13, 25-16, and 25-18, keeping Agawam from the 20-point mark for the first time this spring.

Agawam has been a perennial playoff contender, even in so-called rebuilding years.

This season, Agawam was looking to upset Westfield, a team that shut them out 3-0 twice already this year.

The Brownies showed up and made big statements in their first two playoff games. Their sweeps of Ludlow and Sabis including



Ben Vyce makes a bump to his side. PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

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SOFTBALL



Mckenzie Boyle swings and makes contact on a grounder for Agawam. PHOTO BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

Six-run fifth powers Pittsfield past Agawam in semifinals

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AMHERST – After two straight titles and four in five years, the Agawam High School softball bowed out of the playoffs in the semifinal round this year.

Last Wednesday afternoon, the No. 2 Brownies were ousted from the tournament by No. 3 Pittsfield in the semifinals of the Western Massachusetts Division 1 Tournament held at Sortino Field at UMass-Amherst.

Agawam, which had the "home advantage" being the higher seed,

defeated Pittsfield in the semifinals in last year's tournament as well. The Brownies were in this year's matchup until the bottom of the third inning.

Already trailing 2-0, Sam Stratton got the Agawam offense going when she blooped a single on the left field line. After a fielder's choice groundout by Maddie O'Connell, Katie Grasso also blooped a single.

With two outs, Maria Moccio socked a hard single to center to chase Stratton to the plate and make it 1-0.

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LACROSSE

Brownies give up lead late, fall to Algonquin

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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AGAWAM – The Agawam High School girls lacrosse team found itself in the quarterfinals against another unfamiliar opponent from Central Massachusetts.

Despite holding a sizeable lead in the second half, the Algonquin came from behind and defeated the Brownies 12-11 in the quarterfinals of the Central/West Massachusetts Division 1 Tournament on June 1.

Agawam opened the tournament by easily defeating Marlborough, but found itself in a battle against No. 6 Algonquin, one that the visitors took to the Brownies and built a 6-5 lead heading into halftime.

But Agawam was able to come back. Algonquin got the first goal of the second half to make it 7-5.

But the Brownies came back with two straight goals. The second of which came from Izzy Liquori. Liquori was making a run at the goal when she was fouled. On the restart, she had a free shot at the goal and scored to make it 7-7.

Agawam would take the lead at the 14:27 mark. Nina Bruno, who has been good at scoring goals on the run, made another cut across the goal, shooting backwards into the Algonquin goal to make it 8-7.

About a minute later, Emily Oliver got in on the scoring by taking a rebound and shooting

LACROSSE | page 16



Izzy Liquori takes a shot on goal.



Eliza Timms sprints up the field with the ball. PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI