



**LOCAL**  
**Pynchon Point cleanup**  
PAGE 3



**HISTORY**  
**Ulysses S. Grant visit**  
PAGE 3



**SPORTS**  
**Boys lacrosse**  
PAGE 8

# AGAWAM

## ADVERTISER NEWS

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Members of St. Martha's Guild at Sacred Heart Parish, Joanne Cappuccilli, Joyce, Mary Ellen, and Mary.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA

## St. Martha's Thrift Shop becoming hidden gem

By Christina Gioscia  
Correspondent

AGAWAM – Sacred Heart Parish's thrift store, St. Martha's Thrift Shop, has been open for around three-and-a-half years now. This hidden gem located in Feeding Hills has so much to offer the community from vintage glassware to classic records. The shop is primarily run by parish members, Joanne Cappuccilli and Dee Ziegert.

What started off as a simple way for the parish to raise extra money has turned into a staple for the community.

"It was just something that we wanted to see if we could raise some extra money for our parish," said Cappuccilli.

St. Martha's Thrift Shop has grown significantly in the past three-and-a-half years. Cappuccilli shared that the shop initially was just one room in the church office building but due to large quantities of items generously donated by community members, they

have been able to expand to an additional room in the building as well as keeping many of the donated books in the hall, creating a makeshift library set up.

About how the parish distributes proceeds from St. Martha's Thrift Shop Cappuccilli said, "We use them

St. Martha's Thrift Shop accepts a wide variety of items, including but not limited to, small furniture pieces, small appliances, records, glassware, jewelry, books, paintings, picture frames, lamps, clocks, and other trinkets. "Everything but clothing and electronics.

munity as a whole.

"Well number one, we like each other," Cappuccilli says.

"We enjoy working together, and the people who come in, we have regulars who come in. And they get to be like family. You know what they like, what they're looking for. They come in because everyone's cheerful and happy, and we have nice things. I think that's why we like to do it, is because we enjoy it," says Ziegert.

Regarding the donation process and why donating items is so rewarding, Cappuccilli tells us this, "The people who donate, I mean, we come in on Tuesdays and Thursdays, so the two days that we're open, our bench outside in the hall always has boxes and packages. People just come in and they leave things. And that's the really wonderful part about it, because they're doing something too. They may not be

*We enjoy working together, and the people who come in; We have regulars who come in. And, they get to be like family*

– Dee Ziegert

for events. We use from for; a big one is our scholarships that we do each year. And dinners, breakfasts, we have a parish picnic, and the St. Martha's Guild, which is the men and women's group here at the church. St. Martha's Guild has been around for almost twenty years. Mainly because we're very dedicated to our parish. And, as you know, things are expensive."

We don't accept that, mainly because of our room. We advertise in our weekly bulletin donations accepted. We try to keep it a little vintage, as they say," Cappuccilli said.

Ziegert adds, "Clean and gently used."

Cappuccilli and Ziegert enjoy volunteering their time to St. Martha's Thrift Shop and collaborating with each other and other members of the parish and com-

THRIFT | page 12

## Mayor presents capital improvement plan

By Gregory A. Scibelli  
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AGAWAM – Fiscal responsibility is a key theme for many communities during this budget cycle, and that includes capital needs and improvements.

The Agawam High School project is completely underway, but as shown earlier this week, it is not the only need for the town.

Mayor Christopher Johnson presented the city council with the five-year Capital Improvement Plan, which is sometimes called a "wish list" for the subsequent four years of the plan. Typically, the items proposed for the next fiscal year are also part of the mayor's budget request.

As Johnson reported in his presentation, the town has actually made some significant capital improvements in recent years. In addition to the high school project, which will take another three years to complete, the town has recently opened a brand-new police headquarters.

A new early childhood center will be a part of the high school project, addressing another capital need. Johnson also mentions the work completed at Still Brook Park. He said all of these things were accomplished with limited funds.

"Fiscal restraint and careful planning are required to assure long-term financial stability," his presentation states. "And care must be taken in project development and implementation in order that bond sales are timed, so that principal and interest costs occur in the year scheduled."

The town plans to tackle the roofs at its four elementary schools. The town should receive significant help with those projects after applying to the Massachusetts School Building Authority's Accelerated Repair Program.

According to Johnson's proposal, there is more than a half million projected for DPW equipment, \$250,000

CAPITAL | page 12

## AHS students take first place at 2026 Western Mass. Chemistry Olympiad

By Christina Gioscia  
Correspondent

AGAWAM – On March 17 the University of Massachusetts held the 2026 Western Mass Chemistry Olympiad in Amherst. The Western Mass Chemistry Olympiad is held every year; all High Schools throughout Western Mass are eligible to compete. The Agawam High School Chemistry Teams performed outstandingly with both the AP Level team, as well as the first-year chemistry team scoring first place in their re-

spected divisions. The relay team, Quiz Bowl Team, also won first place. The teams are coached by Agawam High Teachers, Dr. Mitchel Chambers, Teresa Buklerewicz, Brian Melloni, and Julie Scannell.

"We are so proud of our students," says Buklerewicz.

This victory follows up their accomplishment in 2025 where the first-year chemistry team scored first place and their victory in 2024 when the AP-Level team scored first place. It

AHS | page 12

## Former State Senator Linda Melconian unveils new book

By Christina Gioscia  
Correspondent

AGAWAM – On April 17, the Agawam Public Library hosted a reading done by Former Massachusetts State Senator Linda Melconian. During Melconian's time as senator, she focused on issues involving anti-discrimination in genetic testing, Route 57, and education.

On Thursday evening, she presented, "Ella Grasso: The First of the Firsts". Grasso was the first female state governor elected on her own. Melconian states Grasso encouraged her to pursue a career in politics, this led to Melconian becoming the first female senate majority leader in Massachusetts. Copies of Melconian's book were sold at the event; and she donated

all proceeds from the event to Friends of the Agawam Public Library.

Melconian shares how Grasso inspired her.

"I try to emulate her in a sense of being everywhere," Melconian said. "She was all things to all people." Melconian called Grasso a "change agent" and "ray of sunshine."

"She was always there for people," Melconian says. "I didn't care about appearance. I want to radiate sunshine. I worked hard for my constituency."

Agawam Public Library Adult Services Library Associate Kristen Frost talked about the organization of the event.

"Linda first contacted me last September to let me know about her new biography of Ella Grasso and to ex-

press her interest in coming to talk about the book," Frost said. "Although I was still fairly new here at the library, I knew from my supervisor, Cher, that Linda had presented here before on a previous book she wrote about Congressman Tip O'Neill. When I met with her, she expressed her desire to not only share information about the book in her presentation but to also donate the full proceeds of any books sold back to the Friends of the Agawam Public Library group. I was certainly touched by her generosity, and I was also excited to have a former state senator appear at our library."

Melconian's book perfectly encapsulates how important strong role models are for women. Grasso and Melconian herself, paved the way for

more women to pursue higher education and work hard in their respected careers.

Frost highlights the role Mount Holyoke College had in the paths of Melconian, Grasso and so many more women, "Reading the book, you immediately understand that Senator Melconian is championing women who have made important changes in our world and who have impacted women in future generations. It is special that the book presents several women who have ties to Mount Holyoke College, demonstrating their connectedness and drive for excellence in their various fields. Each woman profiled in the book, from Mary Lyon to Ella Grasso made some

BOOK | page 12



Former Massachusetts State Senator Linda Melconian presenting her book, "Ella Grasso: The First of the Firsts" last Thursday, April 17 at Agawam Public Library.

TURLEY PHOTO BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA



# SPORTS

## Strong second half leads Brownies over Falcons

WILBRAHAM – After a great start to the regular season, Minnechaug Regional High School boys lacrosse has run into a few tougher opponents. Last Monday afternoon, Agawam outscored the Falcons 6-1 in the second half for a 9-4 win. Both teams battled in the first half hard with Minnechaug scoring

a late goal to make it 3-3 at halftime. But Agawam's offense came alive in the second half with the Falcons not able to answer back. Agawam got three goals from Casey Thomas while Cam Faneuff scored two goals for the Falcons. Agawam is a perfect 5-0 awhile Minnechaug is now 5-3.



Brayden Martin looks to get around a Minnechaug defender.



Grant Gionfriddo sends a pass away.



Casey Thomas circles toward the goal.



Justin Lareau sends a pass away. TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Matthew Chobotaru picks up the ground ball on defense.



Liam Grealis sprints for the goal.

## Roster spots remain open in the Quabbin Valley Baseball League

SOUTH HADLEY – While the new player draft has come and gone in the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, there are still several open roster spots for players age 28-and-up. The regular season is set to get underway in a little more than a week and the six teams in the are still looking to add more players.

Players can go to the league website and fill out the registration form so they can get placed on a team immediate in front of the season opener.

For the 2026 season, the cost will be \$215 and will include a 16th game added to the regular season schedule.

During the 2025 season,

the league experimented with playing on Mother's Day Saturday as well as a weeknight game to allow players an opportunity to play under the lights. While the night games were very successful, the Mother's Day Saturday games were rained out.

Those elements will return along with a 16th game with

an opponent to be determine as the league's board explores possibilities for interleague matchups with another league in the region.

The regular season was scheduled to get underway on Sunday, Apr. 19, but games were postponed due to rain, pushing the start of the season to Sunday, Apr. 26. There-

fore, anyone who is able to sign up before that date will be able to participate in the full season.

The registration is live at [www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org](http://www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org). Players must register and then pay the league dues via Venmo or contact the league leadership if an alternate form of payment is needed.

Aside from the weeknight and Mother's Day games, other games take place Sundays at 10 a.m. outside of Mother's Day, Memorial Day and July 4 weekends. Playoffs will be in August. This is the 30th season for the league and league officials are looking to celebrate the anniversary with a couple of events.