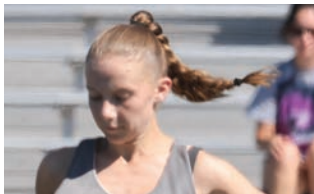




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AGAWAM

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Volunteers Bob Despang, Jill Strain, Shelia Langton with a couple of participants in the Wheelers group. TURLEY PHOTO BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA

Senior Center hosts Wheelers

By Christina Gioscia
Correspondent

AGAWAM – Last Wednesday, the Western Mass Wheelers spent the morning at Agawam Senior Center providing accessible bike rides to seniors. The Western Mass Wheelers group is completely run by

volunteers. The bikes are fully run by the volunteers, and the seniors can simply sit back and enjoy the bike ride outside. The bike includes safety features ensuring a stress-free ride.

Participants are required to fill out a waiver before their ride. Additional safety measures put in place by

the Western Mass Wheelers include additional volunteer bikers going on each trip without a passenger. These extra bikers are there for safety purposes to help out. This group has been coming to Agawam Senior Center for around two weeks now

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History of beer in America

Golf course,
library team up
for presentation

By Christina Gioscia
Correspondent

AGAWAM – On Monday Aug. 24, Agawam Public Library hosted an event in collaboration with the Agawam Municipal Golf Course. The event was free to attend, and it was held at the golf course. Em Sauter, founder of Pints and Panels, award-winning

cartoonist and international beer judge presented on the history of beer in America. This illustrated presentation went in timeline order going into detail about what type of beer people would have been drinking at different points in history, how they made and stored it, and how it influenced life. Sauter's presentation covered events like the Pilgrims landing in Plymouth and the founding of modern popular beer companies by immigrants. During the presentation attendees were offered small tastings of three

beers, the first was an English-style Pale Ale, then an American Lager, and lastly an India Pale Ale.

Sauter is fascinated by beer.

"It's such a great accessible drink, you know," Sauter said. "You can go to a bar; it's not expensive. It's like you can have one or two; it's not going to knock you out. There's so many different flavors and pines and then, beer people also are just the nicest people. It's such a wonderful, inviting community. So, it's really amazing that I can like marry the like art that I loved, I've been, you know, I've been drawing since I was four, to a thing that I really like admire and love and love to learn about in beer."

Sauter talks about how history ties into this.

"So, I was an American History Major in college," she said. "And I also just really like; I just also really love the history aspect. The thing about beer history though, is that there's a lot of like, I mentioned it in the presen-



Em Sauter makes a presentation at APL Aug. 24.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA

BEER | page 10

Annual Sheriff Cocchi Community Cookout brings out huge crowd

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

SPRINGFIELD — A record-breaking turnout marked Hampden County Sheriff Nick Cocchi's ninth annual golf tournament and community cookout, with more than 3,000 people gathering under the Elks Lodge pavilion on Aug. 19.

The annual summer gathering traces its roots to a tradition established more than 40 years ago by Retired Hampden County Sheriff Michael J. Ashe Jr., who served 42 years in the role and was known for his clam bakes back in the day. Cocchi has remained steadfast in pre-

serving the longstanding tradition, hosting a morning golf tournament at various locations across Western Massachusetts before culminating in an afternoon and evening of camaraderie and celebration; serving as one of the region's premier political gatherings of the summer.

Elected officials and political hopefuls across the political spectrum attended and offered their views on how they would positively impact Western Massachusetts in the next couple of years, an element Cocchi highlighted.

"Today is about bringing Western Mass, not just Hampden County, together to show the rest of the com-

monwealth the electoral power and value we hold here, while also granting the opportunity for the public to speak with the individuals who are going to be on the ballot this year," Cocchi said. "And it's clear we have some contested races this year, which include Democrats, Republicans, and unenrolled folks. So this gathering is always special because it creates a moment of allowing the public to figure out where they will throw their support."

Additionally, months before the fundraiser, Cocchi and the HCSO faced significant financial challenges when approximately \$26.5

million was removed from the department's fiscal year 2026 budget allocation, prompting the department to scale back operations, per the request of the OIG (Office of the Inspector General).

"The sheriffs were very comfortable and strong in the services that we're providing our communities, and we're going to continue to fight," Cocchi said. "We're going to fight for our individual counties and the programs that we believe are instrumental in impacting not only jail programs, but also the programs that are on the out-



Agawam City Council President Anthony Russo with Sheriff Nick Cocchi and a supporter.

TURLEY PHOTO BY BRENDAN ROONEY

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SPORTS



Above: Julianna Castro chases down a loose ball
Right: Olivia Izzo tips a pass away.



Girls soccer back on turf

SOUTH HADLEY – It was not their own home turf, but Agawam High School girls soccer was back on the field last Saturday afternoon. The Brownies participated in multiple short scrimmages in a play day at South Hadley High School. The Brownies are getting ready to open the regular season on Tuesday, Sept. 8 at Chicopee Comprehensive at 6 p.m. at Szot Park. The Brownies had scrimmages against Enfield and Granby earlier this week.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPOTOS.COM



Bay State Games inducts three to Hall of Fame

WALTHAM – Representative Patricia Haddad (legislative leadership), Representative John Barrett (legislative leadership), and Ryan McCarthy (baseball coach) have been selected for induction into the 2026 Bay State Games’ Hall of Fame. The inductees will receive their award at a pre-game ceremony at Fenway Park on Sunday, June 14 prior to the Red Sox game against Texas.

The Bay State Games Hall of Fame was created to recognize past participants who have gone on to prestigious and successful athletic careers, as well as former and current coaches, officials, sports organizers, and volunteers who have made significant contributions to the organization throughout its 38-year history. Past inductees among the over 60 previous honorees include the NBA’s Dana Barros (’06), Pat Connaughton (’25) and the late Reggie Lewis (’02); WNBA’s Rebecca Lobo (’03); Major League Baseball’s Rich Hill (’13); Olympians Nancy Kerrigan (’07), Ada Korkhin (’25) and Samantha Livingstone (’18) and US Paralympic Gold Medalist Joe Lemar (’15).

“The Bay State Games is proud of the many athletes who have participated in the program and gone on to achieve success at the collegiate, professional, and Olympic levels. We are equally proud of the coaches, sport organizers, community leaders, and supporters whose dedication, expertise, and generosity have helped make the Bay State Games possible.” Said Kevin Cummings, the Bay State Games Executive Director. “We are honored to recognize this year’s Hall of Fame class and celebrate the significant contributions each inductee has made to the Bay State Games. Their commitment, leadership, and lasting impact have strengthened the

organization and enriched the experience of countless athletes throughout the Commonwealth.”

Rep. Patricia Haddad - Legislative Leadership

Massachusetts State Representative Patricia Haddad championed state support for the Bay State Games for over two decades. She has supported the recreation, health, and education-based programs of the organization that benefit thousands of Massachusetts participants each year. A former teacher for 14 years, Rep. Haddad represented the 5th Bristol District for 25 years and served as Speaker Pro Tempore of the Massachusetts House of Representatives for ten years.

Rep. John Barrett - Legislative Leadership

Massachusetts State Representative John Barrett from Berkshire County has been a strong supporter of the Bay State Games since the mid-1980s. Rep. Barrett was instrumental in bringing the Winter Games to Berkshire County, where they have been held for over 35 years. He has served as State Representative for Berkshire County since 2017 and was formerly Mayor of North Adams for 26 years. Rep. Barrett is also a leading advocate of the statewide Summer Games.

Ryan McCarthy - Baseball Coach

Ryan McCarthy from Portsmouth has served as volunteer baseball coach at the Bay State Games for over two decades. He has led the Northeast team to numerous championship medals. Ryan has devoted more than 25 years to coaching high school student-athletes in both baseball and football at Triton Regional High School, Newburyport High School, and Dighton-Rehoboth High School. He has had a positive impact on countless Massachusetts high school student-athletes.

New event added to Thompson Speedway calendar

THOMPSON, CT – In an exciting addition to the Thompson Speedway calendar, the Monaco Modified Tri-Track Series has been added to the 64th Sunoco World Series of Speedway Racing to headline the Saturday portion of the three-day extravaganza!

2026 will mark the first time in series history that the Monaco Modifieds have visited Thompson Speedway three times, this coming at a crucial point in the championship chase! While the championship will certainly be on the forefront of the driver’s minds, the addition completes three-straight days of Tour-type Modified Racing at the Sunoco World Series.

It all starts Friday, Oct. 9 with the Modified Racing Series headlining the opening night with a 50-lap finale to crown their 2026 champion. The Monaco Modified Tri-Track Series now headlines the Saturday, Oct. 10 showcase while the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour will

crown their 2026 champion following the World Series 150 on Sunday, Oct. 11.

“We are glad we got to add the Monaco Modifieds to this year’s Sunoco World Series,” said American-Canadian Tour managing partner Cris Michaud. “They always put on a great show at Thompson and the fans are sure to get their Modified fix before the snow starts to fall!”

Thompson Speedway roars back to life on Wednesday, September 16 for the Eden Raferty Attorneys Fall Showdown Late Model Special! The Late Models take center stage in their extra-distance showdown alongside the Thompson Sunoco Modifieds, SK Light Modifieds, Street Stocks and Crown Vics with a 6:00pm Post Time.

The North East Short Track Network (NESTN) will stream Wednesday Night Racing at Thompson Speedway all season long, visit www.nestn.tv for more info including Pay-Per-View pricing and ways to subscribe!