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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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Building project leads busy agenda

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Mayor Christopher Johnson is prepared for the year of 2025, with many projects underway throughout the town.

His main focus will be on the high school project, which is the largest municipal project in Agawam's history.

This project is going to be a long and complicated process, and Johnson is grateful for the community's continued support as they go into it.

As construction begins on the project, the high school will lose many of its parking spaces and people will have to get used to a new flow of traffic.

"The biggest thing at the high school is going to be as construction begins," Johnson said. "There will be changes and while they are not going to impact the operation of the school...it will change the site."

The plan is for the construction to begin after the spring break for students, and it will continue until the first part of the building, the community wing, is complete. This is expected to be in December of 2026.



Mayor Christopher Johnson

Johnson is also concentrating on the police department project, which he hopes will be complete in the spring.

One of the main components in the completion of this project will be transferring everything from

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The Rosie Robotics team was excited to kick off their competition season.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA

Rosie Robotics kicks off the season

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The Agawam High School Rosie Robotics Team held their kick off on Saturday, Jan. 4.

During this kick off they discovered what their challenge would be for this year's robotics competitions.

"I'm excited to know what the game is, it's fun every year to see what the robot is going to be interacting with," Team Member Tim Rua said.

The team's robot will have to be able to retrieve foam balls off the ground and put them in set areas, put cylinders onto a coral reef-like structure and attach their robot to a piece of machinery that can pull it upward.

This whole concept is based around the idea of an ocean dive, where the robot would have to collect algae, seed coral on a reef and then ascend back to the surface.

Now that the team has their competition instructions they will work on building their robot so it can be prepared to compete.

The team has been working over the past few months to prepare for this year's robotics season. They have the goal



At their season kick-off, Rosie Robotics demonstrated some of the skills of their robot from last year.

of advancing beyond districts this year so they can make it to Worlds and have thus been working hard to see how they can improve from their work last year.

"Every time a season ends we do roses, buds and thorns

which is basically the good, bad and ugly of the season," Rua said. "Based on the feedback from that discussion, the whole team figures out what the priorities are for the next season."

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AJHS students make Junior Districts

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Eleven Agawam Junior High School students auditioned and were accepted into the Junior Western District Music Festival.

Choir students Avery Bein, who is in grade seven, and eighth graders McKenzie Favolise, Mia Miliadakis, Aubrey Lamontagne, Ryan Outhuse, Briahna Dupre, Vanessa Kovtun and Tessa Kowarsky were all accepted into the festival.

Band students Max Patterson, who is in grade seven as well as Robert Gamble and Fred Ryzek from eighth grade also made it to the festival.

Ryzek was the highest scoring tuba player in all of Junior Western Districts.

These students each spent several months preparing for their audition with the help of their band and choir directors.

"My choir students and the band student meet once a week after school for an hour or before school for 45 minutes from about mid-September to the first week of September," Choir Director Brett Duchon said.

On top of these rehearsals, the students also practice at home to prepare for their auditions.

The auditions themselves were held in early December at Westfield State. There each student had five to ten minutes to complete their audition in front of a judge.

"Each student, depending on what instrument they play for band, orchestra or jazz band or what vocal range for choir, they have to prepare one piece of music to sing or play in front of a judge," Duchon said. "They also have to do some sight-singing and multiple scales, just to see their technical efficiency on the instruments or with their voice."

After the students completed their audition, they were scored on their performance and then they were informed if they made it to districts or not.

Now they are working hard to

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Agawam Senior Center announces upcoming events

AGAWAM – The Agawam Senior center, 954 Main St., has great events planned for the month of December, the Center is open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, please call 413-821-0605

Important update of the Agawam Senior center hours of operation. The Agawam Senior Center will be closing at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. The Agawam Senior Center will remain open on Tuesday evenings until 7:30 p.m. We hope this will give you a chance to access more of what we have to offer. The Billiards Hall, Computer Room, Fitness Room and more. ZUMBA Gold will offer classes on Tuesday evenings starting at 5:30 p.m.

MICHELLE A. MCCARTHY, RMT - THE HEART TO HEART HEALING CONNECTION

What is Reiki? Reiki is a Japanese stress reduction and relaxation technique. It is based on the idea that a "Life Force Energy" flows through each of us. When your Life Force Energy is low, you are more likely to feel the effects of stress or to feel ill. Reiki is a "hands on" method of reducing stress, promoting relaxation and creating balance in ourselves and our actions. Appointments on Monday, Jan. 13 are available. Call Kristina to reserve a spot. 413-726-2836 Cost is \$20 per 20-minute session in the library.

MANICURES WITH JANE

Monday, Jan. 13 - Seminar Hall

Jane is a licensed nail specialist, who will give your fingernails that extra special atten-

tion and love they deserve. She is offering simple manicures that include clipping, filing, soak, MASSAGE of the hands and your choice of color. These appointments are 15 minutes each. The cost is \$15 per person. Call Kristina at 413.726.2836 to book.

TREATS AND TRIVIA

Tuesday, Jan. 14 at 1 p.m.

At 1 p.m. in the Seminar Hall of the Senior Center. Call Kristina at 726.2836 to reserve a spot.

COFFEE AND CHATS WITH AGAWAM'S FINEST

Tuesday, Jan. 21 9:30 to 10:30 a.m.

Come join members from the Agawam Police Department in the Friends coffee shop. Get to know some of Agawam's finest on a personal level, as well as learn information on future collaborative programs the police department has planned with the Agawam Senior Center.

BEREAVEMENT GROUP - CONFERENCE ROOM

Wednesday, Jan. 15 at 1 p.m.

Feathers of Hope – What is this thing Hope? Where do we find it, particularly if we are grieving a loss, feeling sad during the winter season or weighted down by worldly worry?

Merriam Webster defines Hope as “: to cherish a desire with anticipation : to want something to happen or be true.” A new year is an invitation into a life review. What has been? What needs to be released?

What are the possibilities?

In this session we will hear what some wise voices from several sources offer about Hope and where we might find it or renew it in our own lives.

CAREGIVERS CONNECT DEMENTIA CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Jan. 7 at 6 to 7 p.m. in the conference room

Laurie Cecchi, OT, OTR, CAPS (Certified Aging in Place Specialist), CDCS (Certified Dementia Care Specialist) is a highly respected dementia specialist with 35 years of experience in clinical practice. With a strong passion for improving the quality of life for individuals affected by dementia, Laurie has dedicated her career to advancing knowledge, care practices, and policy changes in this critical area.

Laurie is currently a full time professor at Springfield Technical Community College in the Occupational Therapy Assistant program.

Our mission is to empower caregivers with tools, knowledge, and a strong community network to help them manage stress, navigate difficult moments, and maintain their own well-being while providing the best care possible. Through facilitated discussions, workshops, and peer-led sharing sessions, we aim to foster a sense of belonging and resilience.

In addition to peer support, the group offers resources on coping strategies, self-care practices, and practical caregiving tips. Whether you are new to the caregiving journey or have been on this path for years,

Caregivers Connect is here to provide a welcoming environment where caregivers can build lasting connections, find inspiration, and know that they are not alone.

Join us to feel heard, supported, and uplifted as you navigate the complexities of caregiving and celebrate the moments of joy and connection with your loved ones. Caregivers Connect will meet the first Tuesday of the month from 6 to 7 p.m.

TRIPS ARE COMING BACK TO THE SENIOR CENTER

Kick off on Tuesday, Jan. 28, at 12:45 p.m.

Day Trip Excursions for 2025. Jan. 28 Destinations Reveal Party Join Joanne Locke and Debbie Sorcinelli of the Insider's Travel Group, in collaboration with the Agawam Senior Center, for exclusive day trips tailored for those age 55 and over. Joanne and Debbie have taken popular tour destinations and infused them with their own unique flair. Explore new destinations with our specially crafted trips, offering something for everyone, whether you seek relaxation or excitement. Join us for a private reveal party of our 2025 destinations at the Senior Center on Tuesday, January 28 at 12:45 p.m., right after lunch. Get a sneak peek of our upcoming adventures and connect with fellow travelers. Adventure Awaits ... Let's go find it! We will be accepting a minimum of \$20 initial deposit per trip to secure your place. Contact InsidersTravel2025@gmail.com or Call / Text Joanne (413) 478-4698 or Debbie (413) 478-2834

Parks dept. to host mother-son dance March 6

AGAWAM – Moms and their sons will create memories that will last a lifetime. Boys in grades Kindergarten and up and their "date" will enjoy an evening of fun, games, and dancing on Thursday, March 6 at Oak Ridge Golf Club from 6 to 8:30 p.m. There are 30 couples are needed for this dance to take place. If 30 couples are not registered by Feb. 4, a full refund will be given. Registration begins online and in person on Jan. 7 and will continue through Feb. 4. No registrations will be taken after Feb. 4. For more information, please visit the Parks & Recreation page at www.agawam.ma.us or call 821-0514.

Popular father-daughter dance to have two dates

AGAWAM – Due to the popularity of this event, we are offering two dances. Couples must choose either Feb. 25 or 27. Dances will take place at Oak Ridge Golf Club from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Maximum 60 couples per dance. Contact your friends and choose either the Tuesday or the Thursday dance. Registration begins online and in person on Jan. 7 and will continue through Feb. 4. No Registrations will be taken after Feb. 4. For more information, please visit the Parks & Recreation page at www.agawam.ma.us or call 821-0514.

Health dept. seeks doctor

AGAWAM – The Agawam Health Dept and Mayor's Office are informing Agawam residents of a volunteer opportunity to serve as Medical Doctor (MD) on the Agawam Board of Health. For inquiries please contact health@agawam.ma.us or mayor@agawam.ma.us

Cookie season set to begin for Girl Scouts

AGAWAM – Girl Scout cookie season is nearly upon us. Time for Do-si-dos, Thin Mints, Tagalongs, Samoas and other favorites. The Girl Scout Cookie Program is the largest girl-led entrepreneurial program in the world, with Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts (GSCWM) serving over 5,000 girls from five counties in central and western Massachusetts. And it all gets rolling with the annual Cookie Drop.

Saturday, Jan. 11, hundreds of Girl Scouts, troop leaders, staff and volun-

teers from across central and western Massachusetts will descend on central locations in Springfield, West Springfield, Townsend and Worcester to unload the initial run of 32,629 cases (391,548 packages) of Girl Scout Cookies to bring back home and sell. It's a fun and exciting time for everyone



involved.

The annual Cookie Drop will take place on Saturday, Jan. 11 beginning at 7 a.m. in all locations (save for Townsend) which are listed below, along with the numbers of cases that will be delivered and distributed at each location. The press is invited to attend. Photo opportunities and interviews are available at all locations.

Hosley featured at Historical Association meeting

AGAWAM – Historian and scholar William Hosley will be the featured speaker at the Agawam Historical Association's Winter Meeting on Thursday, Jan. 16 2025 at 6:30 p.m. at the Captain Charles Leonard House, 663 Main St.

Hosley will present "Making History, Celebrating Massachusetts' Local Historical Museums." Hosley said "Massachusetts has 351 towns and as many community-based historical museums. Most are small. Many are run by volunteers. No two are alike. They preserve and present local artifacts and stories. They collect. They offer public programs. They advocate for preservation. They serve schools and greet tourists." Hosley considers them a civic miracle, and he will tell their story and why they matter.

Hosley is an independent scholar, historian, writer, and photographer who retired from a long career as a museum curator and director. He is passionate about art, local history and historic preservation. He was formerly Director of the New Haven Museum and Connecticut Landmarks, where he cared for a chain of historic attractions. Prior to that, as a curator and exhibition developer at the Wadsworth Atheneum, Bill organized major exhibitions including The Great River: Art and Society of the Connecticut Valley, The Japan Idea: Art and Life in Victorian America, and Sam & Elizabeth: Legend and Legacy of Colt's Empire, an exhibition that that spawned the Coltsville National Historical Park in Hartford, Connecticut.

The Agawam Historical Association is a private, non-profit organization working to preserve historic materials, documents, and landmarks pertaining to the Town of Agawam and to provide educational opportunities concerning Agawam's history. The association operates the c. 1757 Thomas Smith House at 251 North West St., in Feeding Hills, and the Agawam Historical and Fire House Museum at 35 Elm Street in Agawam. The Smith House is preserved in largely original, unrestored condition. The museum occupies the former Elm Street Fire Station, and houses artifacts pertaining to the town and the Agawam Fire Department. New members are always welcome. For additional information regarding the Agawam Historical Association.

Free Girl Scout event Jan. 14

AGAWAM – Girls and their guardians are invited to a free Embrace Possibility event on Tuesday, Jan. 14, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Agawam Congregational Church. Girls will sample Girl Scout badge projects, and take home their first Girl Scout patch. Local Girl Scout troops will be selling Girl Scout Cookies and answering any questions. Adults will discuss volunteering to form a new Girl Scout troop.

Girl Scouts of Central and Western

Massachusetts seeks volunteers to form a new leadership team (3-4 volunteers) so that the troop responsibilities are fun and can be shared. No previous Girl Scout experience is necessary. This event is for girls entering grades K and 1, who are not currently Girl Scouts. RSVP by Jan. 10 <https://go.gscwm.org/EmbraceAgawam>.

For information contact Angiee at Arodriquez@gscwm.org or call 413-584-2602 x4028.

Agawam Day to be held in FLA

AGAWAM – The 44nd annual "Agawam Day in Florida" will be held on Wednesday, March 5, 2025 from 10 a.m. to p.m. Former Agawam residents, old friends, classmates and relatives will meet at Fort DeSoto National Park, St. Petersburg, FL. for a reunion, picnic, raffles, hugs and to share old memories. For more information, contact: Hank Drewnowski call/text at 860-462-7273 or email hdrew2452@gmail.com.

Library invites community to join available adult programs

AGAWAM – The Agawam Library welcomes the new year with a busy month for adult programs. Beginning Jan. 21, adults are invited to participate in the 2025 Winter Reading Program. What better way to kick off the new year than by earning prizes for reading and writing reviews? This year has an added bonus of a Community Reading Goal. The library is challenging the Agawam community to read 1,000 hours, and every hour logged during this all-ages reading challenge will help us reach the goal. For more information or to get started, please visit agawamlibrary.beanstack.org to participate online or visit the Agawam Library Information Desk to participate in person. Registration for this challenge will begin on Tuesday, Jan. 21 and the last day to enter your raffle tickets for the end-of-challenge drawing is Saturday, Feb. 22 at 5 p.m.

Join on Jan. 6 for a special presentation by Dr. Steve Sobel and find out “The Real Power of Laughter, Humor and a Daily Positive Attitude.” Sobel is a renowned motivational speaker, educator, author and humorist who considers “boring presentations as slow forms of torture.” Sobel formerly wrote a column focusing on stress relief in the Agawam Advertiser Newspaper. Join for this special evening of fun. This program begins at 6 p.m. and will take

place in the Judith Clini Community Room. Be sure to register early-this event will fill up fast.

Get a new device for the holidays? Curious about eBooks or seeking a free alternative to Audible? Come by the library twice in January to learn about how to use Libby. Join on either Wednesday, Jan. 15 at 6:30 p.m. or Tuesday, Jan. 21 at 10 a.m. in the Clini Community Room. We’ll show you the essentials on how to find and borrow new eBooks and audiobooks, along with some helpful hints and tips. Feel free to bring your smart devices and/or your e-Readers with you to the class. You will need your library card and your PIN/password to set up Libby, so please try to make sure you have those ready to go in advance! Please register for either session.

Join us one of our popular Tea & Trivia programs on Wednesday, Jan. 15 at 2:30 p.m. or Tuesday, Jan. 21 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room. Come by yourself or with a team; prizes will be awarded to the winning players. We will use the same questions for both sessions this month, so register for the time you prefer and join us for some fun! These programs are for patrons ages 18 and older.

Craft Night for Adults returns on Thurs-

day, Jan. 16 at 6:30 p.m. in the Clini Community Room. In honor of January being International Creativity Month, join us for an evening of crafting creativity! Let your imagination go wild as we create mixed media collage artwork detailed with doodling and other enhancements. Let this class inspire the start of your artistic year! Please register for this event. The Agawam Writer’s Group will also meet on Thursday, Jan. 16 at 6 p.m. in the Peirce Conference Room.

The Agawam Library is proud to partner with Baystate Health for a Blood Drive on Tuesday, Jan. 28, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Clini Community Room. Baystate Health will be here to walk you through the blood donation process. The minimum age to donate blood is 18 and all donors are required to have a photo ID with them. Please choose one appointment time when you register for this program. Appointments run every ten minutes between 10 am and 2 pm. Donors can register through our events calendar found on our website, www.agawamlibrary.org or by calling the library (413) 789-1550 X4.

Our virtual author series continues into 2025 with three great authors. Best-selling author TJ Klune will discuss the latest in his *Cerulean Chronicles*, Some-

where *Beyond the Sea* on Wednesday, Jan. 15 at 7 p.m. Amanda Montell will chat with readers about her newest book, *The Age of Magical Overthinking* on Thursday, Jan. 23 at 2 p.m. Looking to write a book in the new year? On Tuesday, Jan. 28 at 1 p.m., Literary Agent Seth Fishman will give readers some insight about the beginning stages of the publishing process. More information and registration for our virtual author series can be found at library.org/agawamlibrary. Please note that the author events take place online and registration is required.

Registration for adult programs is open now. Please visit our online calendar www.agawamlibrary.org to register, or call the Information Desk at (413) 789-1550 X4. A few reminders about January holiday hours this month. The library will be open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on New Year’s Eve, Dec. 31 and remain closed on New Year’s Day. The library will also be closed on Monday, Jan. 20 for the observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. During the winter months, any closings, delays or late openings will be reported to local TV stations 22 & 40, as well as their websites. Inclement weather closings or delays will also be posted on our social media platforms. Please visit the website for more information www.agawamlibrary.org.



Youth Lacrosse registration underway

AGAWAM – Boys and girls will be divided into teams grades 1-2 (Mites), grades 3-4 (Bantam), grades 5-6 (Junior), and grades 7-8 (Senior). Youth lacrosse is designed to teach the basic fundamentals of Lacrosse and introduce players to competitive games against surrounding com-

munities. Practices will begin in April. Registration for Boys and Girls Lacrosse begins online and in person on Jan. 7 and will continue through Feb. 9. For more information, please visit the Parks & Recreation page at www.agawam.ma.us or call 821-0514.

COLLEGE NEWS

HCC fall 2024 dean’s list

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College is proud to recognize the students who earned dean’s list honors for the fall 2024 semester. Each term, HCC recognizes superior scholarship through the dean’s list. The following students are from Agawam.

Jenalyn Rose Broussard, Tyler Hayward,

Eric Andrew Jorgensen, Stephen Joseph Kopinsky Jr., Autumn Skye LaBranche, Crystal O. Lam, Daniel J. Lathrop, Nicholas John Liimatainen, Tatsiana Marcu, Kylie Elisabeth Nooney, Elise Mackenzie Nooney, Kenna Marie Rainville, Nelli Schneider, Emily St. Pierre, Aiden Jeffery Therrien and Alina Jane Zalivchii.

DPW collecting used lights

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

Light strings may be delivered to the Department of Public Works front office through Jan. 31. This program is for light strings only: incandescent, LED and icicle light strings with wires and attached bulbs. Boxes, bags, and packaging must be removed before placing lights in the recycling container. Alternative options for recycling light strings would include mail back programs such as HolidayLEDs.com or Christmas-light-source.com.

Community dinner to be held Jan. 19

WESTFIELD – St. Joseph’s National Catholic Church at 73 Main St., is hosting a Community Dinner on Sunday, Jan. 19 at noon. This community dinner will feature Baked Fish with Crumb Topping, Rice Pilaf, and Glazed Carrots. Dessert served will be Lemon Surprise. Coffee and Bottled Water will also be available. Everyone is welcome.

Tickets are \$18 for adults and \$10 for children 12 and under. To purchase tickets and reserve a place, text or telephone Cliff at (413) 977-2007 and if leaving a message, provide your name and telephone number. Take-Out Meals-To-Go will be available for pick-up at 12:30 p.m.. When ordering tickets, indicate if dinners are To-Go. Deadline for purchasing tickets is Jan. 16. All community members are welcome. Please join for a delicious Sunday dinner and fun raffle.

Scholarship, fellowship funds available for high school seniors

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

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

Last year, \$297,000 was awarded to 24 individuals. Scholarships were given to 16 graduating seniors from 13 Hampden County high schools. Five scholarships were also

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

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

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

Mayoral breakfast set for March 6

AGAWAM – The West of the River Chamber of Commerce is hosting the VIP Mayor Breakfast on Thursday, March 6 from 7:30 to 9 a.m. The event will be held at Partners/Tansey’s Catered Table on Springfield St. in Agawam.

Agawam Mayor Christopher Johnson and West Springfield Mayor Will Reichelt will be on hand to discuss happenings in each town and as well as collaborative efforts going on. The mayors will also take questions from those in attendance. You can also submit questions to robin@westoftheriverchamber.com.

The cost is \$40 for chamber members and \$50 for non-members. To register, go to the West of the River website.

Opinion

Guest Column



I use only VA healthcare; can I get back Medicare taxes paid?

Dear Rusty

I'm 72 years old with 20 years of military service. I am retired collecting Social Security, my military pension and State retirement benefits. According to my SSA statement, over my working lifetime I paid \$14,302 into Medicare, but I never used that medical plan. I only bring in \$33,000 in annual income. Can I get those Medicare taxes back somehow? I've run into dead ends at SSA, Medicare and IRS websites.

Signed Veteran Seeking Answers

Dear Veteran Seeking Answers

First, I want to thank you for your military service to our country. You may find the "For Veterans" section of our www.amacfoundation.org website of interest.

Regarding the contributions you have made over the years to federal Medicare, I'm afraid you cannot get any of those taxes back even though you have never used Medicare healthcare services. That's because Medicare, like Social Security, is a "pay as you go" program where all contributions received from workers are used to pay for benefits for current beneficiaries; contributions aren't put into a separate account to pay for your coverage.

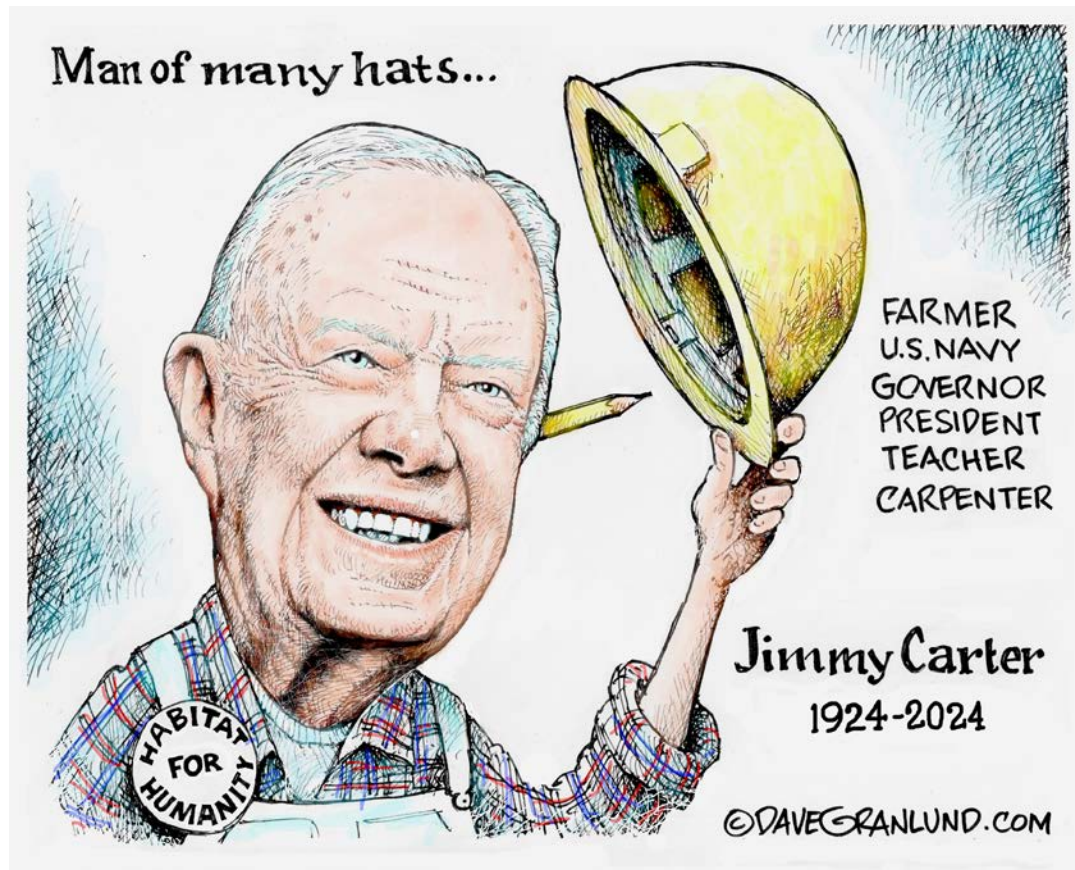
It's also important to know that your Medicare taxes were used only to fund Medicare Part A, which is coverage for inpatient hospitalization services. Those contributions via payroll taxes did not entitle you to outpatient healthcare services, as provided by Medicare Part B, for which there is a monthly premium.

FYI, you must be enrolled in Medicare Part A to collect Social Security benefits after age 65. Medicare Part B isn't mandatory to collect Social Security, but assuming that, as a retired military veteran, you now receive healthcare benefits under the military's TriCare-for-Life program for retired veterans, you must be enrolled in Medicare Part A and Part B to maintain your TriCare-for-Life coverage.

Your military TriCare coverage coordinates with Medicare to pay for your healthcare costs. Thus, even though it may not be transparent to you, you may be benefiting from your current enrollment in Medicare.

Note that some non-career veterans can use VA healthcare services based on their service years instead of TriCare-for-Life for retired military veterans. Non-career recipients of standard VA healthcare services are not required to

SECURITY | page 5



Letter to the Editor

Junior Women's Club helps community

Letter to the Editor

In December, the GFWC Agawam Junior Women's Club delivered grocery and Old Navy gift cards to 20 families (with 44 children), 5 senior citizens, and gift bags of essentials to seniors through our long-standing Holiday Baskets program.

On behalf of our club, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to those who helped us spread this holiday cheer to our less fortunate neighbors this year.

Thank you to Walmart Westfield, Agawam Firefighters, Agawam Police Association and the Agawam Police Supervisors Union who each gave a monetary donation. Those who sponsored the families and seniors were club members along with friends of the AJWC: Pat and Mike Belisle, Stephanie and Dave Bertagnolli, Donna and Mike

Bodurtha, George and Peggy Bitzas, Korbi and Pete Clark, Shannon Farley, Mark Gervais, Danielle Light, Amie and John Miarecki, Ellen and Gary Mantolesky, Anna Mineo, Ashley and Andrew Moore, Dan and Nancy Moraski, Mary and Rich O'Connell, Barbara and Tim O'Connor, Ann and Dennis Pitoniak, Sarah and Greg Sargeant, Liz and John Taylor, Betty and Paul Vershon, Noreen and Tony Vinciguerra, with a special thank you to Agawam Girl Scout Troop 11630.

Many thanks also to Geissler's Supermarket for their generous discount towards the purchase of gift cards for each of the recipients.

We could not have done it without you!

Lynne Merceri, Sue Godfrey, and Donna Shibley
AJWC Holiday Baskets Co-Chairs

Guest Column

Prepping for this years' big garden



Last week I wrote about the desire to go back to my roots, so to speak, and embrace my homesteading self this New Year.

It's funny how when you are young and inexperienced you just "have at it" without much thought or planning. Sure, I had a general idea when it was best to sow my seeds indoors so that my transplants would be a good size come Memorial Day, but beyond that I sort of gardened when and how I felt like it.

These days I find it's good to have a plan of ac-

tion. Here is where I will start in the coming weeks.

The first thing on the agenda is to go through my seed stash and decide what to keep and what to chuck. I usually throw out any seed that is older than three years, except for maybe tomatoes. I have had 5 or even 7-year-old tomato seeds germinate.

The three year rule does not apply to hybrid onions, carrots or parsnips. Those I get rid of at the two year mark.

If you are into growing herbs, I rarely have luck with lovage, dill or valerian after the first year. After I've whittled down my stash based on age, I will then look at what I have left in the envelopes and if I like that particular variety enough to buy more, or if I'd better start off with a new type altogether.

If it didn't work last year, why grow it again? I feel this way especially as I get older.

I used to have a friend who was a bit morbid as he aged, and he'd say, "if I'm lucky I'll get another

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Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the news-

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

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

Opinion

Get your life organized! Here's how



At the risk of sounding like a broken record (only those of us of “a certain age” know what that means!), one of the most important things you can do to protect yourself and your loved ones is compiling all of your important information in one place.

Precious seconds can be saved if a paramedic responding to an emergency has access to all of the patient’s medical information, including health history, medications, surgeries, insurance information and phone number for the primary health care provider.

A good place to put it is on the refrigerator, where a first responder is most likely to look.

But when I got to thinking about it, I realized that our loved ones need a lot more information in an emergency that may result in a hospital or nursing home stay, or even death. I decided to create a booklet that I could use to provide the information my family might need.

Now, I’m offering this valuable new “Emergency Life File” as a free service to my readers. To request one – or two if you’re a couple -- email me at teri@northshorern.com.



This is not the same as the information you keep on the fridge or something you would tuck into a suitcase before a trip. It contains personal identifiable information (PII) that you want to keep in a secured location, one only your family, attorney or financial adviser has access to.

As a patient advocate, I’ve seen families thrown into turmoil, emotional as well logistical, when they realize they have to make some decisions and start taking care of mom’s or dad’s accounts and details. It’s sometimes hard to think about these things, but giving your family peace of mind knowing that they don’t have to figure all of this out on their own is a wonderful, caring gift.

Let’s walk through the Emergency Life File. You might be surprised at the level

of detail it asks for – things you might not even have thought of.

The first few pages are just what you expect: Name, address, date of birth, gender, ethnicity. There’s space for a Social Security number, but if you’re not comfortable including it, you can use the xxx-xx-last 4 digits format.

You may include login information for banks, investment accounts, credit cards and real property so your family can access them if you become incapacitated. As a reminder, keep this information in a secure location, but tell your family how to access it.

The next page provides insurance information, including Medicare and Medicaid ID numbers, and contact info for your doctor and patient advocate. After that comes information on any life insurance policies

or long-term care policies you are carrying. There are pages devoted to your online and social media accounts, including passwords, so these can be disabled or deleted if you become incapacitated. Also a list of friends and relations who should be notified of your hospitalization or death.

As a dog mom to three King Charles spaniels, I would worry more about their care than about myself in an emergency. So there are pages devoted to them: names, feeding and walking schedules, medications, vet’s name and microchip number.

There are also pages where you can list important documents and where to find them, such as advance health-care directive, health-care power of attorney, financial power of attorney, estate plan and will. Also pages where you can note your end-of-life instructions and preferences for a funeral or celebration of life.

One more recommendation: Don’t wait too long. You want to compile this information while you’re cognitively able to do it and ensure family members know where it is and what’s in it.

Again, email me at teri@northshorern.com to request your copy. I hope you will find it to be useful, and that you will let me know what you think.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of Northshore Patient Advocates LLC (NShore). She is also founder and CEO of Nurse Advocate Entrepreneur, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. Teri offers a free phone consultation to newspaper readers as well as to nurses interested in becoming advocates. Reach her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com.

SECURITY ■ from page 4

be enrolled in Medicare but, in any case, cannot receive their past Medicare Part A contributions back if they choose to decline Medicare. You may have interest in this article I previously published on the topic of VA benefits versus Medicare: www.socialsecurityreport.org/ask-rusty-i-have-va-coverage-should-i-get-medicare-part-b/

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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.

GARDEN ■ from page 4

er 10 gardens.” While that used to depress me to hear that, I guess it’s a good point to make.

Once I’ve got the seed package pile figured out, the fun begins. I’ll get my seed orders in early, to beat the rush, especially if I want to grow transplants that take a lot of time to size up.

Onions are best started indoors around Valentine’s Day. For flower lovers among us the fun starts earlier.

Wax begonias can be sown now! Yes, now! Coleus and petunia are not long after.

While many decades of growing have approximate dates burned into my brain on some things, others I will have to look up, especially since I am trying to grow more of our food with vegetables coming in as soon as possible and without gaps.

There are some fantastic resources out there for custom tailoring your growing/sowing schedule. Seed catalogs are just one. I love Johnny’s Selected Seed (www.johnnyseeds.com) for this reason. Because they cater market growers as well as home gardeners, this catalog is packed with useful tips.

Online you will find a treasure trove of topics that will get you excited and well-equipped.

Speaking of equipped, it’s also a great time to take inventory of your supplies. Do I have enough seed starting mix on hand, and did I like it enough to use again?

One year I bought germinating medium that had such little fertility. My plants were on the yellow side and stunted.

I try to grow organically as much as

possible, and this soil nearly made me run for the blue water. I ended up mixing that lousy soil with some good soil, and added some fertilizer to the whole batch before using it in bigger container plantings.

Many soil bags will actually state that supplemental fertilizer is necessary after three-four weeks. And I should say that I do find it worth the investment to buy potting soil that is geared specifically to seed sowing, ie the germinating medium or seed-starting mix I speak of. It is milled finer for tiny seeds and will not stay too damp, or too dry, leading to a higher success rate.

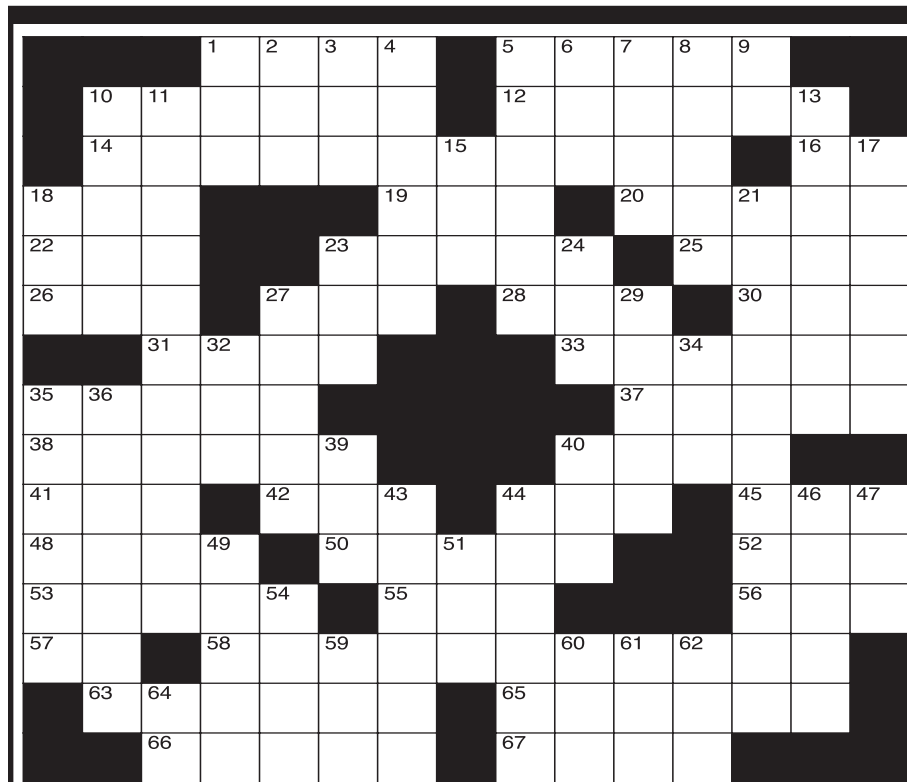
In addition to assessing your soil, take a look at your stash of containers and labels. If you are re-using, make sure to wash both well, so that any diseases or pathogens won’t infect this year’s efforts.

You really don’t need fancy, purchased containers.

The plastic boxes that mushrooms come in work great as sowing packs; just drill holes in the bottom. Cut up yogurt tubs make wonderful labels, and clear lidded salad boxes are perfect to place the seed packs in until germination occurs.

Low budget and earth friendly! Next week we’ll look at the role heat and light play in indoor seed starting.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.



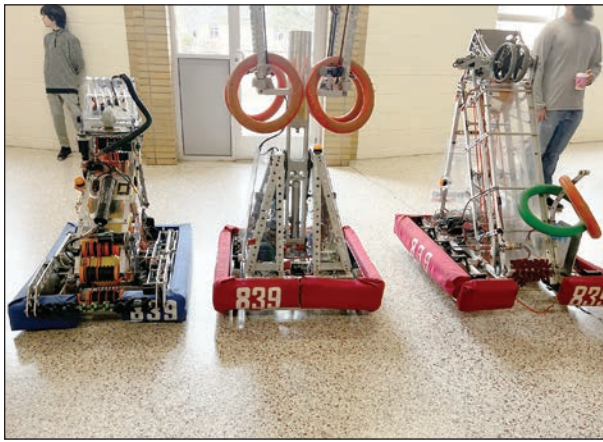
CLUES ACROSS

1. Hand (Spanish)
5. Siskel and __, critics
10. Seaman
12. Chemical weapon
14. One who eliminates
16. They precede C
18. Baseball stat
19. Americans’ “uncle”
20. Cassia tree
22. Surround
23. Crisp and Pebbles are two
25. A sudden very loud sound
26. Affirmative
27. Disadvantage
28. Corpuscle count (abbr.)
30. OJ trial judge
31. New York art district
33. Become more bleak
35. Upstate NY city
37. Clarified butters
38. One who witnesses

CLUES DOWN

1. Variety of Chinese
2. Boxing’s GOAT
3. Japanese classical theater
4. Prayer
5. Inspire with love
6. Ballplayers’ accessory
7. Retailer payment system
8. More raw
9. Atomic #81
10. Fencing sword
11. Hostilities
13. Sea dweller
15. Resinlike substance secreted by certain insects
17. Businessmen
18. Rest here please (abbr.)
21. Loud devices
23. Make a soft murmuring sound
24. One point west of due south
27. Trout
29. Type of grass

32. South American plant
34. Letter of the Greek alphabet
35. Not secure
36. Sweetener
39. Traveler
40. Period after sunrise and before sunset
43. Some are choppy
44. Asian country
46. Genus of mosquitoes
47. Cool!
49. Shriill, wailing sound
51. A baglike structure in a plant or animal
54. Within
59. Unhappy
60. Decorate a cake with frosting
61. Videocassette recorder
62. Largest English dictionary (abbr.)
64. It cools a home



The Rosie Robotics team showed off some of their past robots at their season kick-off.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA



City Councilor Anthony Russo presented Rosie Robotics with a check to help sponsor their robot for this year.



Everyone gathered into the Agawam High School auditorium to watch the stream that would tell them their challenge for this year's robotics season.



The Rosie Robotics team prepared to watch the stream that would tell them their challenge for this year's robotics season.



Community members gathered at Agawam High School to support Rosie Robotics in their season kick-off.

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USDA INSP. FROZEN COUNTRY STYLE PORK RIBS..... \$1.79 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF SIRLOIN SPOON ROAST \$5.99 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH CHICKEN WINGS 10 LB BAG \$2.39 lb
USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS CENTER CUT PORK LOIN . \$1.99 lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN BONELESS & SKINLESS CHICKEN THIGHS TRAY PAK \$1.33 lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN BONELESS & SKINLESS CHICKEN THIGHS TRAY PAK \$1.33 lb
SLICED IN OUR DELI ITALIAN ROAST BEEF \$5.55 lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN BRIOCHE TO GO STRAWBERRY FILLED 7.9 OZ..... 99¢ ea	USDA INSP. FROZEN MAHI MAHI FISH FILLETS..... \$4.99 lb
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ROBOTICS | from page 1

Through that discussion the team made a sheet of their different goals for the next season and how they wanted to improve so they could reach them. Some of their main focuses this season are going to be organization, recruitment and fundraising.

On top of deciding on their priorities and how they would work to improve as a team, the group also worked on reaching out to different sponsors and training up the people who just joined the team.

Additionally, the team has worked on purchasing some new supplies for their robot this year. One main purchase was some new motors called X60s.

"The more successful teams are using them because they're stronger than previous motors so we delved into them and bought a bunch of them this year," Team Member Lucas Fillion said. "They are hopefully going to be used on the wheels of our next robot."

They have also been working on improving their driving and the programming.

"In programming we're doing a lot of modernization of our code base, so we're using newer systems that run a lot better," Team Member Dean Fleagle said.

"We have been doing a lot, between drive practice, cad practice and just working to design and make a better robot," Team Member Matthew Edwatrds said.

The team hopes that all of this planning will help them to truly advance this year.

As the season starts they will be putting in at least 24 hours a week working on their robot, which doesn't include the amount of time they spend at home planning and talking to one another about the robot.

All of this time is put in on top of their schoolwork and their various other extracurriculars. As a result of this, the team feels that being a part of Rosie Robotics has helped them to develop many skills.

"FRC is great for learning not only engineering skills but also a bunch of soft skills like communication, presentation, time management, organization, delegation and a ton of other things that are helpful in any career you go into," Rua said.

Due to this, the team encourages anyone interested in joining to come and check the team out. They all enjoy it and they feel they have grown greatly by being a part of it.

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SPORTS

Brownies take win over Orioles

AGAWAM – Last Monday night, Agawam High School found itself behind as the game reached halftime, but was able to come back and took a win from league rival Belchertown.

Agawam would take an early double-digit lead, but the Orioles erased it before halftime. But in the second half, Agawam would stage a comeback, taking the lead and the important game.

Marlee Montagna had a big game with 16 points for the Brownies.

But Belchertown's Aubrey Klingensmith would lead all scorers with 22 points, including six treys.

Agawam improved to an impressive 6-1 this season. Belchertown is 4-2.



Carlina Calabrese holds the ball looking to make a pass.



Isabella Laprise eyes the hoop as she heads for a layup.



Marlee Montagna surveys the offensive end of the court.



Katelyn Cleavall eyes a transition as she approaches the arc.



Mia Canavan tries to avoid having the ball taken away.



Sophia Laprise takes the side approach to the hoop.



Josh Scobie tries to escape.
TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI



Chase Rising holds an advantage at 132 pounds.

Multi-meet action for Agawam wrestling team

AGAWAM – With the most robust roster in Western Massachusetts, Agawam High School wrestling has multiple touring groups on some weekends this season. With about 60 wrestlers on the roster, coach Armando Ramos is trying to get as many opportunities for his team as possible. The

“B” squad was in action at Southwick Regional School for a multi-team dual meet event. Brownie wrestlers faced four different varsity squads and were competitive in all the matches. Agawam's main starters as well as the girls wrestling squad were at separate events last weekend.



Cooper Hermans goes for a headlock to avoid a takedown.



Jon Lopez starts his match at 150 pounds.



Kyle Ghareeb locks up at 126 pounds.



Greg Sutton starts off a match at 138 pounds.

Hurricanes take early lead, down Brownies

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

AMHERST – After losing to Fay Division rival Amherst three times during the 2023-24 season, the Agawam hockey team was looking for a little bit of revenge when the two squads faced each other for the first time this season.

However, things didn't go the Brownies' way once again. They fell behind early in the opening period, and could never recover, as the Hurricanes began 2025 with a 4-1 victory at Orr Rink located on the Amherst College campus last Thursday night.

“This was probably our most complete game so far this season and I couldn't ask for anything more. Everyone played very well in tonight's game,” said Amherst head coach Michael Rousseau. “Agawam is a very good hockey team, but we played with a lot of heart and the kids are starting to

Sports

Worcester Railers prevail over Reading Royals

WORCESTER – The Railers played, and won, a biblical hockey game Saturday night.

They went fourth and multiplied.

In front of the sixth largest crowd in team history, on IceCats Night, Worcester built a 2-0 lead thanks to goals by fourth line forwards Kolby Johnson and Ryan Mahshie and prevailed for a 3-1 victory over the Reading Royals.

Attendance was 8,056. It was the sixth time ever the team has broken the 8,000 mark and the Railers are a perfect 6-0-0 in those games. The triumph extended Worcester's points streak to three games. That includes two wins and a shootout loss. It is just the second time this season the Railers have picked up points in three straight games, the first time since the last week of November.

The night marked the impressive

Worcester debut of rookie goaltender Hugo Ollas. He stopped 31 shots. The saves were not just quantity, they were quality. Ollas never gave up the lead during several Reading surges after the Royals had reduced their deficit to 2-1 in the second period.

"When we got loose (defensively) in the second period," coach Nick Tuzzolino said, "I thought he bailed us out well. Then we got a little hesitant on the penalty kill and allowed that soft tip, but other than that he was big and reliable.

"We're not a perfect team. We'll have breakdowns, and when we did he was there."

John Muse's retirement left Worcester scrambling for a replacement. The Railers got Ollas on loan from Hartford, an AHL team they have worked well with on occasion through the years. Ollas had been in

Bloomington. Plans are to keep him here, close to Hartford, and work closely on his development.

The game was scoreless after one, but Johnson gave Worcester the lead 21 seconds into the second period. He got his second of the season from in very close. Mahshie made it 2-0 at 6:29 with a power play goal, his first for the Railers.

"To be honest," Tuzzolino confessed, "I was pretty mad at myself last night. The (bench) penalty I took, and my use of the fourth line. Because of the game, because of the penalty, I really gripped it tight and wound up not playing them at all in the third and late in the second.

"So at the pre-game skate this morning I told (Johnson) that it was my fault and you're gonna get a regular shift tonight."

Matt Miller scored the Reading goal at 13:26 of the second period. It came on the

power play, less than two minutes after a huge momentum swing. Griffin Loughran had a breakaway for Worcester that Keith Petruzzelli stopped at 12:52, then Loughran was penalized for slashing.

The Railers had a 26-6 edge in shots on goal going into the penalty and were out-shot by 26-5 the rest of the way.

Worcester's last goal was an empty netter by Anthony Callin, a flip from deep in the defensive zone at 18:12 — cue the overtime.

Potential All-Star Connor Welsh had two assists to extend his points streak to six games. He is 1-8-9 during the streak. Callin is 8-4-12 in his last 12 games.

The victory allowed Worcester to retain sole possession of fourth place in the North Division. If Reading had won, the teams would be tied with 28 points, so the win was a four-point swing.

Thunderbirds suffer loss against Rochester Americans

SPRINGFIELD — The Springfield Thunderbirds (13-15-2-1) felt the brunt of the top team in the North Division as the Rochester Americans (20-9-3-0) skated away 5-2 winners on Friday night inside the MassMutual Center.

The opening minutes would not go auspiciously for the T-Birds, as the North Division's top team flexed their offensive muscle early. Just 3:02 into the action, rookie Riley Fiddler-Schultz used a defender as a screen and ripped a wrister through Vadim Zherenko's blocker arm to give Rochester a 1-0 advantage.

Things got no better for Springfield at 6:13 as Graham Slaggert threw a shot on goal from the right circle, generating a Zherenko rebound and a second-chance finish from Brendan Warren to extend the lead to 2-0.

Unlike Tuesday night, though, the T-Birds offense had a rebuttal, and just 2:45 after Warren's tally, Drew Callin took a feed at the offensive line from Simon Robertsson and bull-rushed the net from the right wing before deking to the backhand and beating Devon Levi to cut the lead in half, 2-1.

Both teams were liberal with their shooting opportunities in the opening 20 minutes, as each club launched 16 attempts at the opposition net.

Rochester's potent offense did not let off the throttle in the middle stanza. On their second power play in the frame, Brett Murray deflected home his league-leading ninth man-advantage tally to make it a 3-1 score at 6:28. Fiddler-Schultz piggybacked that goal with his second of the game at 7:36, which spelled the end of the night for Zherenko. Colten Ellis came on in relief and stopped the next seven Amerks' shots to close the period.

The 4-1 score held into the dying minutes of the third before a Tanner Dickinson power play marker got Springfield back within two, 4-2, with 5:01 remaining. That's as close as the T-Birds would get, though, as Lukas Rousek ended the goal-scoring with an empty-netter just over a minute later.

The T-Birds conclude their five-game homestand next Saturday when they host the Providence Bruins at 7:05 p.m. on Jan. 11 for the annual Throwback Night contest.

Coaching classes available

Coaches hired after Aug. 1, 1998 are required to take a coaching course to be eligible to coach high school sports in Massachusetts.

According to the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Association, all coaches hired prior to Aug. 1, 1998 are exempt from taking the Fundamentals of Coaching Course. Coaches hired after that and before July 1, 2005 must have completed the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course with the exception of Certified MA teachers.

All coaches (stipend or volunteer) first serving as an interscholastic coach after July 1, 2005 must complete the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course, and an approved Sports First Aid course.

- The NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course requirement must be met through attending a MIAA sponsored Fundamentals of Coaching Class with MIAA Certified Instructors. Must be completed and passed prior to coaching a second year.

- The NFHS Sports First Aid may be met by completing on-line courses with the NFHS www.nfhslearn.com. Must be passed prior to coaching a third year.

Additional requirements for all coaches:

- Massachusetts requires coaches to be certified in CPR per Section 1. Section 47A of chapter 71 of the General Laws. Additionally, AED training is required and will most likely be done in conjunction with the existing mandated CPR training.

- All MIAA member school coaches (stipend or volunteer) are required to take annually the on-line National Federation Concussion Course, or other MA Department of Public Health recognized education program, prior to the start of their season. Rugby Coaches must see Rule 76.2 for additional coaches' education information.

Any questions, please call Donna Harrington at 508-541-9804 or email dharrington@miaa.net.

Fundamentals of coaching classes are being offered on Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2025 from 4 to 8 p.m. and Saturday, Feb. 8, 2025 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Classes are open until capacity is reached and then a waiting list is established. There are online components to the course once the classroom portion is completed.

Find us online: www.sports.turley.com

HOCKEY | from page 7

believe in our system."

While the Hurricanes received key contributions from several players, the difference maker was senior goalie Spencer McDonald, who's the team captain. He was credited with a total of 27 saves.

"The Amherst goalie was just unbelievable. We had plenty of shots, but he was the star of tonight's game," said Agawam head coach Todd Rowley. "We also gave up an early goal and things snowballed from there."

The Hurricanes head coach is very glad that McDonald is his starting goalie this winter.

"Spencer has been our backbone so far this season. I don't normally name a goalie as a captain, but he really deserves to have that honor," Rousseau said. "He made a couple of big saves in tonight's match."

When the two league rivals faced each other last February, McDonald made 38 saves in posting a 5-0 shutout win.

While last Thursday's game was the

Hurricanes fifth match of the regular season, the Brownies (5-3 overall record, 5-2 Fay Div.) are approaching the halfway point of their schedule.

"We were playing very well coming into tonight's game," Rowley added. "We thought we had a good chance of beating Amherst, but we just ran into a hot goalie. We were unable to score a goal against him until the third period."

Amherst (2-2-1, 1-0-1), who closed out 2024 with a 3-2 win against Minnechaug Regional at the MassMutual Center in Springfield, played very well from start to finish against the Brownies.

A little more than two minutes into the first period, senior Nate Ziornek stole a pass at the center ice before putting a shot into the net past Agawam senior goalie Frankie Disanti (20 saves) for an unassisted goal.

A minute later, Amherst had their first power-play, but the Brownies managed to kill it without allowing any shot attempts.

With five minutes left in the period, the Brownies had their first power-play opportunity.

They had a couple of shots on goal before one of the Agawam players was sent to the penalty box by the referee. Neither team scored a goal during that span.

Agawam sophomore Camden Saltmarsh had a couple of shots on goal during the first five minutes of the second period. Seniors A.J. Robbins and Cole Buffum also had scoring chances for the visiting team.

The score was still 1-0 when Amherst junior Ethan Mooney scored a breakaway goal with 6:23 remaining in the second period.

Mooney, who's an assistant captain, is one of the four Amherst hockey players who attends Pathfinder Tech. The other three Pathfinder Tech players listed on the Amherst roster are freshmen Noah Latulippe, Landon Lukasik, and Nolan Mactavish.

The Hurricanes second goal was assisted by senior Brach Applegate.

Four minutes later, junior Ben Remensnyder, who a defenseman, netted an unassisted goal giving the home team a 3-0 lead entering the final 15 minutes of the contest.

Agawam had a man advantage for the

first minute of the third period, but they failed to capitalize on their second power-play.

Mooney assisted on a power-play goal, which was scored by Ziornek on a rebound shot with 12:14 left in regulation.

Holding a 4-0 lead, the only remaining question for the Hurricanes was if McDonald would be able to post another shutout victory against Agawam.

Those dreams came to an end when senior Aiden Pisano scored an unassisted goal with 7:29 remaining on the scoreboard clock.

The Brownies also had a chance to cut the deficit in half with two minutes left in regulation, but McDonald made an outstanding save on a shot attempt from senior Vinny Montagna.

"If we scored that goal, it would've given us a chance to make a late comeback," Rowley said. "Their goalie just made an outstanding save."

Agawam is looking forward to playing Amherst for the second time at the Olympic Ice Center in West Springfield on Feb. 11. Faceoff is scheduled for 8:40 p.m.



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Sports

Basketball Hall of Fame 2025 candidates announced

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame announced the list of eligible candidates for the Class of 2025, featuring several high-profile first-time nominees.

Candidates for the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame Class of 2025 include Carmelo Anthony, Sue Bird, Maya Moore, Dwight Howard, Doc Rivers, Billy Donovan, Sylvia Fowles, Chamique Holdsclaw, Mark Few, Lisa Bluder, Marc Gasol, and Micky Arison.

“The nominees on the official ballot for the Class of 2025 represent a broad cross-section of our game,” said John L. Doleva, Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame President and CEO. “From Olympic Gold Medals to NBA and WNBA titles to collegiate championships, these nominees epitomize the career of a Hall of Famer.”

The first look at the list of eligible nominees was provided by “NBA Today” on ESPN, hosted by Malika Andrews, with Brian Windhorst, Chiney Ogwumike, and Tim MacMahon. A complete list of eligible candidates can be found below.

Finalists chosen from the applicable Category Screening Committees for the Class of 2025 will be announced on Friday, Feb. 14, in San Francisco as part of NBA All-Star Weekend.

The entire Class of 2025 will be unveiled during a nationally televised broadcast at the NCAA Final Four in San Antonio on Saturday, April 5.

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

The Hall also unveiled an update to its eligibility requirements, reducing the waiting period for Player candidates from three full seasons out of the game to two seasons. The change was unanimously approved by the Hall of Fame’s Board of Governors.

“Previously, our Guidelines for Nomination and Election required an individual to be retired from the game for three full seasons, which effectively equated to a four-year wait due to our internal process,” said Jerry Colangelo, Chairman of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. “To better recognize the distinguished careers of potential first-ballot nominees in a more timely manner, the Board has appropriately shortened the waiting period. We are excited about this change and believe that

honoring individuals while their contributions are still fresh in people’s minds is both meaningful and impactful.”

Enshrinement Weekend will begin at the Mohegan Sun on Friday, Sept. 5, with the Tip-Off Celebration and Awards Gala, followed by the Enshrinement Ceremony the next day at Springfield’s historic Symphony Hall.

VIP Packages for the Hall of Fame Enshrinement Weekend will go on sale on Friday, Feb. 14. 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 5, at 12 noon. All packages and tickets will be available for purchase at hoophall.com.

The complete listing of events and pricing will be released on Monday, Feb. 3.

AGENDA ■ from page 1

the old police station to the new one. “It is going to be a complicated process to not only move operations from the existing building, but also to move all the evidence,” Johnson said.

The police will have to ensure that all evidence stored in the old police station is carefully transported to the new one without breaking any protocol or rules of possession.

Johnson and the police department are working to plan out a schedule so this transfer will go smoothly without disrupting the operations of the police.

On top of that project, Johnson is also working on improving the day to day administrative processes in the town. He hopes to streamline different processes to allow the town to move more efficiently.

In the lines of improving the processes of the town, Johnson is also looking into improving or eliminating different positions.

As people retire or new people come into positions, Johnson is working to examine the position they are leaving or moving into so he can see how it functions and how he can work to improve it.

“We reimagine or potentially eliminate positions as they become vacant to try to get more of what we need,” Johnson said.

Additionally, he is looking at the infrastructure of the town. This is important to him and the residents of the town, so he wants to ensure it is done correctly.

Already the town employees and Johnson have been taking steps so they can better plan out the infrastructure plans in the coming year.

“We just signed a contract with a new company that is going to give us more detailed pavement analysis reports so we can update our pavement management program,” Johnson said.

According to Johnson, Agawam grew a lot in the 1950s through the 1980s and thus that is when a lot of the infrastructure was put in place.

Now, much of that is growing old and the town is working hard to replace it and keep everything up to date.

Working on the infrastructure also includes the progress on water and sewer.

“We are trying to come up with a realistic way to be able to meet those demands,” Johnson said.

As Johnson goes into this new year he is hopeful that Agawam will see many much needed improvements and that he and his office will continue to look for further opportunities to keep moving the town forward.

More plow operators needed

AGAWAM – The Town of Agawam, Chief Procurement Officer in consultation with the Department of Public Works Department hereby requests written applications and bids from qualified contractors and/or individuals that wish to be considered for hire for snow plowing services.

Bids can still be made to the Town of Agawam to serve as a contract plow operator for the winter season, which has already begun.

The Town will make one or more awards for contracts sufficient to cover the Town’s requirements. The Town of Agawam also reserves the right: (1) to reject any or all bids, or any part thereof; (2) to waive any informality in the bids; and (3) to accept the bid that is in the best interest of the Town (4) to negotiate a price on Item 1, and (5) to add additional vendors after the deadline if necessary. Consideration will first be given to the contractor/individual who has successfully and responsibly provided snow removal services to the Town in the past, and whose primary place of

residence or business is in the Town of Agawam.

Item 1: The contract will be awarded to the responsible, responsive and qualified bidder who offers the low price for each location meeting minimum equipment specification cited in Section II, with consideration given to the contractor/individual who has successfully and responsibly provided snow removal service to the Town in the past and whose primary place of residence or business is in the Town of Agawam

Item 2: The contract shall be awarded within the categories specified in Section II, with consideration given to the contractor/individual who has successfully and responsibly provided snow removal service to the Town in the past and whose primary place of residence or business is in the Town of Agawam.

The snow and ice season shall commence on November 15, 2024 and expire on April 30, 2025. All successful contractors/individuals are expected to have their equipment ready at the beginning of each season.

DISTRICTS ■ from page 1

prepare for the festival itself. Duchon feels that this festival provides students many opportunities. It builds both their personal and musical skills in a new way.

“It builds a lot of self-confidence to be able to sing or play their instrument in front of someone solo,” Duchon said. “Should they make it to the festival then they have the opportunity to perform with world renown musicians who will be directing their specific ensembles.”

When at districts each group (band, orchestra, jazz band or choir) is asked to play or sing four to six pieces for the final performance, which Duchon feels also builds skills.

“It covers a variety of cultures and languages,” Duchon said. “It really gives them a far more advanced music education...

they’re gaining a tremendous amount of music knowledge and this is stuff that can help them as they move on in life.”

The districts themselves will take place on Mar. 8 and 15 at Minnechaug Regional High School. The students will have their final performance in the afternoon of the 15.

During these days, before the performance, all the kids across Western Massachusetts who were accepted into the Junior Districts will be coming together for the first time to practice their pieces so they can be prepared to perform.

“The kids will rehearse from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m the first week and then from 8:30 a.m. until about 2 p.m. the second week, followed immediately by all of the performing ensembles giving a concert to families and directors,” Duchon said.

Duchon looks forward to hearing all of the kids’ hard work come together for this performance.

Public Notices

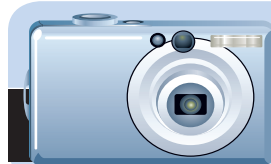
LEGAL NOTICE PUBLIC HEARING

The Agawam City Council Administrative Committee will conduct a Public Hearing on **TUESDAY, JANUARY 21, 2025 at 6:30PM**, at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA, on a Verizon petition for permission to lay and maintain underground conduits,

with the wires and cables to be placed therein, under the surface of North Westfield Street, Feeding Hills, MA. with permission to lay and maintain underground conduits, manholes, cables, and wires in the above way for the purpose of making connections with such poles and buildings as it may desire for distributing purposes. Public Hearings will also be con-

ducted on Eversource petitions to install poles on Barn Road, Agawam and also on Barry Street, Feeding Hills. These petitions are available by contacting the City Council Office, 36 Main Street, Agawam, MA or by emailing bbard@agawam.ma.us.

Robert E. Rossi, Chair Administrative Committee 01/02, 01/09/2025



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Agawam Library's winter reading program opens up on Jan. 21.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA

Winter reading program set to begin Jan. 21

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The library is hosting a winter reading program open to everyone in the community.

The program will begin on Jan. 21 and will go through Feb. 22. Kids and teens can register beginning on Jan. 6 while adults can begin on Jan. 21.

Anyone is welcome to join, they do not have to be from Agawam or Feeding Hills.

The library is also issuing a challenge to the community. They want everyone's hourly reading totals to add up to at least 1,000 hours.

"People can log up to 20 hours of reading per person," Children's Librarian Pamela Weingart said.

Weingart and the other librarians think this will be a great way to encourage people to read.

"I think by having the community goal it will encourage participation because parents will model the reading and logging for the kids and help encourage the kids to do it and it's a goal that the whole family can work on together," Weingart said.

Entering the contest also allows community members to earn raffle tickets that they can enter to get prizes.

Adults get one raffle ticket for every



The library will also be offering many activities for children during the cold months.

hour of reading they do. Kids and teens get a raffle ticket for every half hour of reading.

There are a variety of prizes available to those who enter the challenge. Adults can get a cozy reading basket or a make-your-own reading nook kit.

Kids and teens have their prizes split into age categories, ages one through four, kindergarten through second grade, third and fourth grade, fifth and sixth grade,

seventh and eighth grade, and ninth through 12th grade.

Each age group has three prizes. All age groups can get a \$10 Barnes and Nobles gift card. All the kids up through those in sixth grade can get a \$10 gift card to a toy store called Play Now in Westfield.

The teens in seventh through 12th grade can get a \$10 Starbucks gift card. Each age group also has a toy prize, such as an acrylic marker set, a marble track or

a kit to grow crystals.

The librarians feel that having a winter reading challenge is a great way to get more people to read. Weingart also feels that winter is the perfect time to cozy up with a good book, given how cold and dark it can be outside.

Throughout the period of the reading challenge, the library will also have a variety of activities available for kids and adults to participate in.

"We also have lots of activities like scavenger hunts and riddles each of the weeks during winter reading," Weingart said. "We will have teen trivia on Thursdays and kids trivia on Tuesdays as well as joke days on Wednesdays and Fridays, amongst other fun activities."

People can sign up for winter reading through the website <https://agawamlibrary.beanstack.org/>. They can also go to the library website (<https://www.agawamlibrary.org/>) to keep updated on this program as well as the other events the library does throughout the year.

One upcoming event for kids is a galaxy jar craft program for kids in fifth and sixth grade. This will be on Wednesday, Jan. 22 from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

There are also various author talks available for adults, such as a virtual one with TJ Klune on Wednesday, Jan. 15 at 7 p.m.

Tips offered to remain fraud-free

The Better Business Bureau has some ideas for how you can get through 2025 fraud free with your financial goals intact.

BBB recommends adding a few precautionary steps to the New Year's resolution list and the weight loss and financial goals to help make the upcoming days and months fraud-free.

- I resolve to be cautious with email. Be wary of unsolicited emails from a person or a company. Remember, scammers can make emails look like they are from a legitimate business, government agency, or reputable organization (even BBB!). Never click on links or open attachments in unsolicited emails.

- I resolve never to send money to strangers. If you haven't met a person face-to-face, don't send them money. This is especially true if the person asks you to transfer funds using a pre-paid debit card or CashApp. Money sent to strangers in this way is untraceable, and once it is sent, there's no getting it back. Scammers will try to trick you into panicking – so before making a move, think the situation through. Don't fall for it!

- I resolve to do research before making online payments and purchases. Research the retailer before entering payment information when shopping online, or if asked to pay online, research the retailer before entering payment information. Ask: Is this a person or business I know and trust? Do they have a working customer service number? Where is the company physically located? Would I be making payments through a secure server (<https://...com>)? Have I checked to see if others have complained?

- I resolve to use my best judgment when sharing my personal information. Sharing sensitive personal information with scammers opens the door to identity theft. Never share financial information, birthdate, address, Social Security/Social Insurance number, or Medicare number with an unsolicited caller.

- I resolve to create strong, unique passwords for each account. Using strong, varied passwords across accounts makes it harder for fraudsters to access multiple accounts if one is compromised.

- I resolve to enable two-factor authentication. Adding this layer of security to accounts, especially those involving finances or personal data, greatly reduces the risk of unauthorized access.

- I resolve to be social media smart. Use privacy settings on social media and only connect with people you know. Be careful about including personal information in your profile, and never reveal your address and other sensitive information – even in a "fun" quiz. Scammers may use this information to make themselves pass as friends or relatives and earn your trust. Also, be careful when buying products you see on social media. BBB Scam Tracker has received thousands of complaints about misleading Facebook and Instagram ads.

- I resolve to regularly check my financial statements. Committing to review bank and credit card statements can help catch unauthorized transactions early.

- I resolve to educate myself about the latest scams. Staying informed on emerging scams helps you recognize and avoid new fraud tactics.

Westfield State announces new graduate program

WESTFIELD – Westfield State University proudly announces its new Law Enforcement and Mental Health Co-Response Graduate Program. The program is designed to address the growing need for collaboration between law enforcement and mental health professionals. This degree-granting program, the first of its kind in the nation, is a concentration within the University's Master of Arts in Mental Health Counseling program or available as a standalone post-baccalaureate certificate.

Dr. Joseph Camilleri, Professor of Psychology; Dr. Kimberly Tobin, Professor of Criminal Justice; and Dr. Lisa Barao, Visiting Lecturer of Criminal Justice, were instrumental in developing this program. They worked closely with law enforcement agencies across Massachusetts and Connecticut to create a curriculum that meets workforce needs and equips participants with tools for success in this emerging field.

"This groundbreaking program builds on Westfield State University's strong legacy in Criminal Justice and Psychology education," said Dr. Nora Padykula, Interim Dean of the Division of Graduate and Continuing Education. "By being the first in the nation to offer this within a degree, we are not only addressing critical community needs but also demonstrating our leadership in innovative, interdisciplinary education that bridges the gap between mental health and public safety."

This comprehensive program covers

essential topics such as the intersection of mental disorders and crime, relevant legal frameworks, and strategies for conducting rapid mental health and risk assessments in the field. Students will gain in-depth knowledge and skills to understand mental health disorders and their relationship to criminal behavior, as well as the broader criminal justice system. Ultimately, this strengthens relationships between public safety professionals and the communities they serve.

Emphasizing practical application, the co-response program includes research opportunities and culminates in a capstone project where students apply their learning in real-world scenarios. This hands-on approach highlights the University's commitment to academic excellence and ensures graduates are prepared to meet the challenges of this critical field.

Furthermore, the program is designed to reduce strain on emergency services, connect individuals to appropriate care and resources, and foster trust between community members and public safety professionals. By bridging the gap between law enforcement and mental health professionals, the program equips graduates to address critical public safety challenges while supporting the mental health needs of communities.

For more information about the Law Enforcement and Mental Health Co-Response Program, contact jcamilleri@westfield.ma.edu.

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Tickets available to for Colleen Coronation Ball

AGAWAM – The Agawam St. Patrick’s Committee is excited to begin its Irish Season at St. Anne Country Club.

This year’s event will crown the 2025 Agawam Colleen and court. They will participate in the Holyoke St. Patrick’s Parade as well as many other activities throughout the year. This year’s coronation will be held on Saturday, Feb. 8 beginning at 5:30 p.m. The ceremony will begin at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$55 for adults and \$30 for children under 12. To reserve tickets, please email Abbie at agawamstpatricks317@gmail.com.



HCC to hold Registration Express event Saturday, Jan. 11

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College will hold a special “Registration Express” event for the spring 2025 semester on Saturday, Jan. 11, when prospective students can apply for admission, take the college placement test, meet with an academic adviser, register for classes, and set up financial aid – all in one day.

HCC’s Saturday Registration Express event will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and takes place on the first floor of the Campus Center on the main campus at 303 Homestead Ave. and virtually over Zoom.

The spring 2025 semester begins Tuesday, Jan 21. HCC also has Flex Start dates on Feb. 3 (Spring Start II) and March 24 (Spring Start III). Full-term spring classes run for 14 weeks. Spring Start II classes run for 12 weeks. Spring Start III classes run for seven.

Registration Express will also be an opportunity for prospective students to learn about the state’s new program for free community college, MassEducate.

“Registration Express at Holyoke Com-

munity College provides an opportunity for students to complete the admissions and registration process all in one day and all in one place,” said Mark Hudgik, dean of strategic recruitment initiatives, admissions, and financial aid. “Admissions, Financial Aid, and Advising counselors will be available to help students get ready for the spring semester.”

Those who can’t make it in person on Jan. 11 can still participate on those days virtually over Zoom.

The Registration Express Zoom link can be accessed through a link on the Registration Express page on the HCC website: hcc.edu/regexpress

Also, HCC offices will be open for extended hours, according to the following schedule: Jan. 6-9, 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Jan. 10, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Jan. 13-14, 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; (College offices closed Jan. 15 for Professional Day); Jan. 16, 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Jan. 17, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Jan. 21-23, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Friday, Jan. 24, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Todd McGee appointed to Holyoke Community College Board of Trustees

HOLYOKE – Former Holyoke city councilor and one-time acting mayor Todd McGee has been appointed to the Holyoke Community College Board of Trustees by Gov. Maura Healey.

McGee is a tax attorney and director of estate and business planning for Mass-Mutual Insurance, as well as a 1992 graduate of Holyoke Community College.

His term runs through March 1, 2029.

“I loved Holyoke Community College,” said McGee. “It has been part of my life for a very long time. I felt like an adopted son to President David Bartley. He always guided me along my career. I’m excited to be on



Todd McGee

this board. Anything I can do to help out, I will, because Holyoke Community College is really a family to me.”

After graduating from HCC with an associate degree in liberal arts, McGee went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in history from Northeastern University, a juris doctor from Western New England School of Law, and a master’s degree in taxation from Boston University School of Law.

McGee served as a Holyoke city councilor for 18 years until 2023, his last three terms as city council president. He briefly served as acting mayor in 2021 after the resignation of Mayor Alex Morse.

He attended his first HCC board meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 26.

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