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# AGAWAM

## ADVERTISER NEWS

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# Robotics team competes at Championship

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Rosie Robotics made it to the New England District Championships at the Big E.

The team placed in the top third in their division, in the district, in the U.S. and in the world.

Their final position in the district was 62 of 186 teams.

The competition itself was three days long, with the matches beginning at 1 p.m. on Thursday, Apr. 4 and continuing through Saturday, Apr. 6.

Thursday and Friday were focused on the qualifying matches and then Saturday was the double elimination playoffs.

To be a part of the playoffs, teams either had to be in the top eight or had to be selected by one of the top eight teams for an alliance.

Unfortunately, Rosie was not in the top eight, nor were they chosen for an alliance, though they were selected as a backup team should any of the competing teams' robots malfunction.

The team was very proud of how they performed in districts, and of the fact that they made it to districts to begin with.

"We performed solidly across the board," Team Member Vincent Barrett said. "We made a couple small mistakes but I think

there were really only a couple small things we could have improved on."

"This was my first time ever going to districts," Team Member Thomas Crouss said. "It was really fun."

The team had not made it to districts in several years and the team had set a goal at the beginning of the year to make it to this level of competition. They were delighted to have gotten the opportunity to experience districts.

"A highlight for me was getting to districts," Team Member Kylie Henry said. "And then we were very good in most of our matches."

"It was a really exciting event and there was so much there from games to the matches," Crouss said. "It was really cool."

Now it is officially off-season for the team, though that does not mean they will be stopping their work. They hope to compete in a few competitions throughout the summer and fall.

"We're really just building up, seeing if there is anything we wanted to change or learn for the next season," Henry said. "There are a

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Above, the pit crew kept the machine running with Faculty Advisor Jack Barry, Bob Fontaine, Owen Elwell and Philip Fini and the Team with AHS Principal Jim Blain at the Western New England University Event. Left, the Rosie Robotics team practiced with their robot, Echo, in preparation for the New England District Championships.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

## Committee gets look at school budget

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – At the school committee meeting on Apr. 9, Superintendent Sheila Hoffman gave an overview of the proposed FY25 school district budget.

The title for this budget is: Cultivating an Environment Where All Students Grow, Learn, and Belong.

The budget was built around key priorities identified for Agawam Public Schools. These priorities are: increased student achievement and increased engagement for all stakeholders.

The goals of these priorities are to decrease learning gaps that exist for certain groups of students and to strengthen the school community and ensure all members feel a sense of belonging within the schools.

"That requires us to transform teaching and learning to allow equitable access to high quality instructional resources, provide

unique learning opportunities for all students and bridge partnerships with families and community stakeholders," Hoffman said.

This proposed budget contains the last of the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds.

"The ESSER funds have helped us over the last few years in hiring additional positions to increase our family engagement, address mental health concerns and provide educators with instructional coaching to meet academic needs," Hoffman said.

These funds have also assisted in updating technology both for instruction and safety in the schools.

Additionally, this budget will continue to support the data collection system that tracks student data. This data is used in instructional and social/emotional interventions.

"The proposed FY25 budget has no elimination of programs," Hoffman said. "In fact, it propos-

es an additional Special Education program at the elementary level."

The total budget increase for FY25 is \$2,009,270, though the actual budget increase works out to be \$1,964,015. This is due to a reduction in the special service tuition budget totalling to \$19,833, as well as a decrease of \$25,423 to cost center based budgets.

"[The reduction in special service tuition] is only because the rest is offset by other funds outside of our local budget," Hoffman said.

This all adds up to a total proposed budget of \$51,924,442. The approved budget for FY24 was \$49,960,427, making the FY25 budget a 3.78% increase from FY24.

To break the proposed FY25 year budget down further, Hoffman explained that there would be a total salary increase of \$1,347,269. This increase includes

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## Blockage and high river responsible for flooding

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Mayor Christopher Johnson clarified concerns about flooding on Leonard St.

The main cause of the issue was the large compensatory flood storage area that stretches from behind Catherine Drive to near the Connecticut River behind Simpson Circle.

That flooding area was filling up with water as one of the outfalls (a culvert that drains under Leonard Street) was blocked.

It was this blockage that was causing water to rise up onto the backyards of some of the properties that border the compensatory flood storage area.

The crews in the area were able to unblock the outfall, but it took some time to locate where the culvert inlet was in order to clear it.

"We were able to unblock it but it took a while because all of this infrastructure predates anyway keeping any plans as to where any of it is," Johnson said. "We had to figure out where the culvert inlet was and being that it was underwater and down a severe slope it took a while."

Now that the blockage is cleared Johnson stated that the water will begin to drain out of the compensatory flood storage area.

"It's going to take a while as we're trying to get the water to flow at a normal pace and not just rush out, as then it would end up flooding the area that it was going to," Johnson said.

The water will travel out of the compensatory flooding area to the other side of Leonard Street where there is a large wetlands area.

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## \$375 million for transportation infrastructure

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Senate unanimously approved \$375 million in bond authorizations for statewide transportation projects, including the state's Chapter 90 program, which would create a reliable funding source for local infrastructure investments like roads, bridges, regional transit equipment and infrastructure, bicycle infrastructure, and electric vehicle infrastructure, among other things.

Projects funded by the annual legislation often improve quality of life for residents in every region of the state, and many play a role in environmental mitigation. Every city and town in the state would receive a share of \$200 million in funding to

be used on maintenance and construction of roads and bridges. \$150 million would be allocated equally to six programs targeting specific transportation infrastructure, and \$25 million would be allocated to cities and towns through the rural roads program. "Getting around our communities is a fundamental part of everyone's day," said Senate President Karen E. Spilka (D-Ashland). "Whether the commute takes you on the sidewalk, through a bike lane, across a small bridge, onto your Regional Transit Authority, or to the T, your journey should be quick and safe. By passing today's legislation, we are empowering our cities and towns with the funding to make improvements to the infrastructure our

residents travel on, regardless of where they go and how." "I am proud to join my colleagues in the legislature to secure this investment for the sustainability of roads, bridges, and regional transit infrastructure for the Hampden district and communities across the Commonwealth," said Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield). "Delegating the implementation of infrastructure funding to municipalities will ensure that improvements at a local level will be addressed appropriately."

A previous version having been passed by the House of Representatives, the legislation now awaits final enactment in each branch, before being sent to the Governor's desk for her signature.

## Thousand Cranes returns to APL

AGAWAM – The Agawam Public Library is proud to welcome back Thousand Cranes Art Studio during the month of April. Across both levels of the library, visitors will also enjoy the colorful and creative artwork of the students from Thousand Cranes Studio. The artwork consists of drawings, sketches, and paintings from students as young as 4 years old. Thousand Cranes Studio is run by Stan and Sheila Coly and is located in Feeding Hills. For more information, please visit [www.thousandcranesstudio.com](http://www.thousandcranesstudio.com). Visitors are welcome at the Agawam Public Library during regular open hours: Monday-Thursday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## YWCA of Western MA awarded \$111K for prevention program

SPRINGFIELD – The YWCA of Western Massachusetts recently received \$111,111.11 from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health for its youth violence prevention program, H.E.R.E. Project. This evidence-based and highly successful project has been embedded in many Springfield middle and high schools for about eighteen months. With this new grant funding, the YWCA intends to hire additional staff to reach more youth within area schools beyond Springfield.

The H.E.R.E. Project's curriculum is specifically developed for teens, is inclusive of all genders, and is designed for applicability across gender, ethnicity, sexual identities, and socio-economic backgrounds.

H.E.R.E. Project specifically targets

Springfield youth ages 12-18 and aims to educate youth at risk for teen dating violence, sex trafficking of minors, and gang violence. During these classes, YWCA employees use varied teaching methods such as games, small and large group work, and role-playing. With this additional funding, the YWCA plans to broaden the project's scope beyond Springfield middle and high schools to reach youth in surrounding communities.

YWCA CEO Elizabeth G. Dineen said "We are over the moon to receive this valuable funding. Our goal is to change the paradigm with education. As Maya Angelou stated, when you know better, do better. If teens learn life-long healthy relationship strategies and skills early on, we can eradicate domestic violence and sexual assault

from our culture."

The H.E.R.E. Project currently partners with 10 Springfield middle and high schools to deliver three evidence-based core curricula: One Love; addresses healthy relationships and teen dating violence. Youth learn how to navigate relationship endings, communicate about boundaries, and how to identify and implement healthy relationship behaviors; Bout That Life; addresses bystander intervention. Youth learn how to collaborate to form strategies to safely intervene as well as the unique challenges faced by BIPOC youth; Not a Number; raises awareness as to what constitutes human trafficking and exploitation. Youth learn about gang violence, how to recognize the recruitment tactics of traffickers, and how

to safely navigate potential and existing exploitative situations. All this information will give youth the tools to make safe and healthy relationship choices.

YWCA staff visit the participating middle and high schools once per week for eight weeks, and since the start of the program over 18 months ago, H.E.R.E. Project has served about 600 students.

Those interested in learning more about H.E.R.E. Project should contact supervisor Ada Diaz-Garcia at (413) 732-3121 extension 127.

Headquartered in Springfield, the YWCA also provides services and offers programming to children and women in crisis in Northampton, Westfield, Belchertown and Holyoke.

## CWC annual banquet on May 14

AGAWAM – The annual banquet of The Catholic Women's Club of Agawam will take place at CASA DI LISA, 801 Springfield St., on Tuesday, May 14. The evening will begin with appetizers from 6 to 6:45 p.m., consisting of bruschetta, fresh fruit, cheese and crackers. At 7 p.m., the buffet of grilled pork chops with applesauce, chicken francese, baked cod, vegetables, roasted potatoes, green beans almandine, salad and bread will be served. Coffee, tea and soda will be served, and dessert will be mini canolies and petit fours. A cash bar will be available.

Price is \$35 and includes tax and tip.

Checks made out to CWC or cash must be sent to Katie Heald, chairperson of the event, at 66 Beekman Drive, Agawam, MA.01001 or left in her mailbox, by May 6, no refunds after this date, as the count is due May 7. Please write with whom you wish to sit. There is 1 table of 8 ladies available and the rest are tables of 6. Any larger tables will be placed close to each other. For questions, or more information call Katie at (413) 786-1287. The club's monthly and annual meetings will follow the dinner. Any Catholic Woman residing in Agawam/Feeding Hills or member of either of the towns Catholic Parishes is welcome to attend this event.

## Senior center announces events

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

### Fraud Seminar

Wednesday, April 24, 1 p.m., at Seminar Hall.

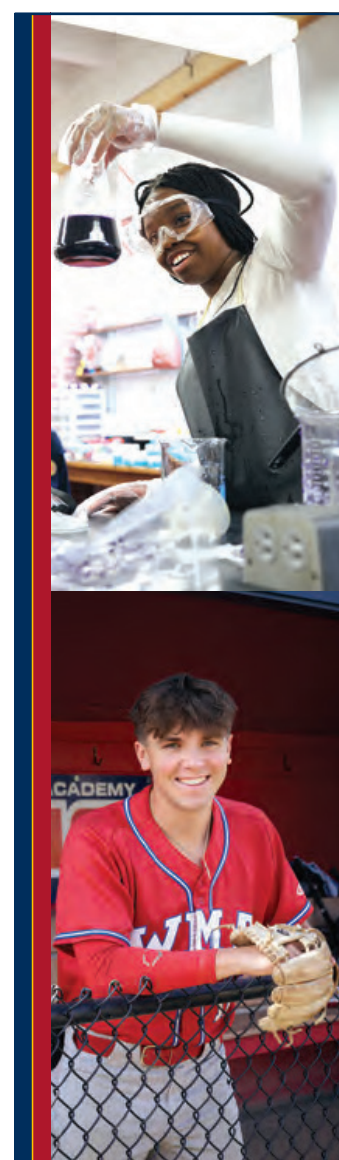
With Tax returns going out, the uptick in scams on seniors has increased dramatically. Join Freedom Credit Union for this informative seminar. Current fraud and how to protect yourself seminar presented by Freedom CU. We will discuss the increase in fraud we have seen in our local area, especially targeting the elderly population. These scams range from grandparents' scams,


check washing, online banking scams and more. Call Kristina at 726-2836 to register.

### Paper Making With Chris Lyons

Thursday, April 25, 1 to 4:30, in the Garden Room

This is a basic introduction to paper making. The paper we create will be somewhat rough and wavy but can have very nice looks for writing, cards and a base for drawing and painting. Come learn this amazing process and have lots of fun making your own paper from recycled materials that is yours to keep. The cost of the class is \$30. Please call Kristina at 726-2836 to register. We need at least 4 people for the class to happen.



  
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## Mosaic kits now available

AGAWAM – The New England Mosaic invites the Western MA creative community to create and display visual art representing a favorite aspect of New England. This year's Mosaic theme is "I love New England". Canvas kits will be available in partner libraries across the Pioneer Valley beginning March 11.

The New England Mosaic was organized in 2022 by the ACAA as a community art project to give individuals in Western MA an opportunity to creatively express their love of New England via painting, photography, fabric art, pouring, or any other media. Professional artists, hobbyist, and any member of our Pioneer Valley creative community are invited to create a canvas tile and see their work become a part of this unique wall of art. Tiles created for the Mosaic are donated to the Mosaic and sold to help fund art scholarships for local students.

The New England Mosaic invites individuals to create a canvas tile, which when displayed with others, becomes part of a 24-foot fine art Mosaic wall that captures the beauty and diversity of New England life. Free tile kits are available at the following libraries: Agawam, Southwick, Westfield, West Springfield and at three Springfield branch libraries, Central, East Forest Park, and East Springfield, by March 11. Completed tiles must be returned to these libraries by May 15. Supplies at each library are limited so stop by and pick a kit up.

The New England Mosaic will be unveiled at a Mosaic grand opening at the Agawam Municipal Golf Course, Club, 128 Southwick St., on July 11.

All Mosaic artists and the public are invited to the unveiling. The Mosaic will also be showcased at the Agawam Community Artists and Artisans' Pioneer Valley Art Festival on Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 24-25, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Polish American Club, 139 Southwick St. The Mosaic will also be on display at the Scantic River Art Exhibit on Sept. 14 and 15. Please visit our website at [www.agawamarts.com](http://www.agawamarts.com) or Scantic River's website at [www.scanticriverartisans.com](http://www.scanticriverartisans.com) for more information.

# Students get experience with Career Connections

SPRINGFIELD – On weekdays, Arianna Hopkins attends classes as a sophomore at West Springfield High School, but every other Saturday this spring she and 15 other students get a hands-on, thrilling experience working with talking patient simulators at Springfield Technical Community College.

The West Springfield High School students are part of the STCC Career Connections Academy, a free state grant-funded program designed to expose high school students to high-demand industry options such as business administration, healthcare and social assistance to help them develop knowledge and skills related to their chosen field of study. This cohort was studying health care.

“I love it. I think that it’s really cool, especially the simulation lab,” said Hopkins, a sophomore. “I think it’s cool that we get to have these kinds of hands-on experiences. We are getting a foot in the door and actual college experience.”

On a recent Saturday, Hopkins, wearing maroon STCC Career Connections Academy scrubs like her fellow students, sat at a patient simulator’s side in a bay in the health science building at STCC. The area is part of the SIMS Medical Center, which uses patient simulation to bridge the gap between education and clinical practice.

Hopkins had a talk with the patient, who told her about his dietary restrictions and other health-related issues. Hopkins learned personal details such as his religion. He said he is a Muslim. Patients are voiced by STCC staff who work from a control room with audio and video equipment.

The high school students are enrolled in the three-credit college level course Communication and Professionalism in Health Care, which places emphasis on learning to communicate effectively in the healthcare environment, complying with regulations and developing a professional presentation. The students are part of Innovation Pathways at West Springfield High School, which exposes students to career options and allows them to complete college-level coursework before graduating from high school.

Wesley Carter, director of the Career Connections Academy, said the Communication and Professionalism class provides students in tenth grade an opportunity to survey the healthcare industry and learn from professionals and professors. Classes are taught by STCC professors in the School of Health and Patient Simulation.

“We want them to get as much information as possible before they make the decision about which area of health science they want to pursue,” Carter said. “It’s a

great first course.”

After this spring, students will move to higher level courses including medical terminology and the hands-on lab safety course.

“Through this initiative, students gain invaluable hands-on experience, preparing them for the demands of the medical field,” Dean of Academic Initiatives Matt Gravel said. “We are excited to launch Career Connections Academy this spring and offer students an opportunity to earn college credits and get necessary experience. The SIMS Medical Center serves as the perfect backdrop for these experiences, providing a simulated healthcare environment where students can apply their knowledge in practical settings.”

The SIMS Medical Center is a nationally recognized patient simulation facility that allows students studying health fields to train in an immersive environment. Patient simulators look, talk and express themselves like real people.

Daniel O’Neill, patient simulation information coordinator at STCC, told the West Springfield students health workers encounter patients from different backgrounds and cultures. The SIMS Center aims to reflect real-life encounters.

“The purpose isn’t necessarily for us to make it the most realistic,” O’Neill said. “The

purpose of the simulation is to give you that practice of getting in and asking some of those questions so that you can have a better understanding of how to support that patient in their journey in health care.”

“Career Connections Academy has elevated the Dual Enrollment opportunities for our students,” Director of Innovation Pathways at West Springfield High School Elizabeth Marsian-Boucher said. “Those in the ‘CCA’ take more than just general college requirements; they immerse themselves in coursework that aligns with their passion.”

Hopkins said she may attend STCC after high school to pursue a nursing degree.

“I want to get my associate in nursing first, and I was thinking of going to STCC,” Hopkins said.

If she does enroll at STCC as a nursing student, she may get to go to college for free. In the fall of 2023, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education announced a Community College Nursing Scholarship Program to cover tuition, fees and books after other forms of financial aid have been exhausted.

If businesses or organizations are looking to partner with STCC Career Connections Academy, contact Wesley Carter, director of the Career Connections Academy, at whcarter2301@stcc.edu.

## Grange holding bake, tag sales

FEEDING HILLS – Community Grange #382 of Feeding Hills located at 47 North West Street will hold an indoor Tag and Bake Sale on Saturday, April 20 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The tag sale will include furniture, bakeware, craft supplies, household items, etc. Proceeds will benefit upcoming Grange activities.

## Stanley Park wedding reunion

AGAWAM – As part of the 75 anniversary celebration this year there will be a Stanley Park wedding reunion on Sunday, May 5, at 10:30 a.m. Please join in front of the Carillon Tower for a group picture and to share wedding stories and pictures. Feel free to wear a wedding dress or tuxedo and relive your special day as we celebrate 75 years of love and weddings in Stanley Park.

## Lions Club spring breakfast on April 28

AGAWAM – Agawam Lions Club will be holding their annual spring Breakfast on April 28, from 8 to 11 a.m., at the Agawam Lions Den located at the Big E Fair Ground. Adult price is \$7 and children 10 and younger \$5. Tickets can be purchased from a club member or at the door.

## Train show to be held next weekend

WEST SPRINGFIELD – On Saturday, April 27 and Sunday, April 28, children 15 and under will have an opportunity to be part of two make-and-take model railroad programs.

The first is Build a Flatcar Load. Which gives kids an opportunity to take a G-scale flatcar and build a load for the car using a variety of materials provided by the Amherst Railway Society. The program runs for about an hour, after which all the flat cars are run together as a train on one of the G-Scale railroads at the show. The flatcars and the loads the children build are theirs to keep.

The second program is Decorate a Building. Which gives kids an opportunity to decorate a G-scale building using paints and other materials provided by the Amherst Railway Society. The program runs for about an hour and a half, and the buildings the children decorate are theirs

## Smith House open for season

AGAWAM – The Agawam Historical Association’s Thomas Smith House, 251 North West St., will open for the season on Saturday, April 27, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., with several local community organizations and historical societies on site with informational displays.

Groups confirmed as of press time include the Feeding Hills Community Grange, Agawam Community Artists & Artisans, Agawam Garden Club, Longmeadow Historical Society, Southwick Historical Society, and West Springfield’s Ramapogue Historical Society.

A community tag sale will take place and the Agawam Historical Association will offer deaccessioned and surplus

items for sale, including an 1860 topographical wall map of Massachusetts and a wide range of town reports from the 1890s – 1970s,

Tag sale space is still available, 12’ x 12’ spaces are \$25 and vendors must provide their own tables and/or tents. All proceeds from the space rental will benefit the Agawam Historical Association’s efforts to preserve the town’s history at the Agawam Historical and Fire House Museum and the Thomas Smith House. Please contact David at 786-3236 before Friday, April 26 to confirm space.

In case of inclement weather, the event will take place on, Sunday, April 28, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

## Yard waste collection starts in April

AGAWAM – On Monday, April 15, Spring Yard Waste Collection will begin. Yard Waste Collection will take place on recycling weeks as identified on the 2024 Waste Collection Schedule.

A Week Streets will be collected on their recycling collection day on the following weeks: April 15-19; May 13-17; June 10-14; August 19-23;

B Week Streets will be collected on their recycling collection day on the following weeks: April 22-26; May 20-24; June 17-21; August 12-16;

Residents must have their yard waste out by 7 a.m. of their scheduled collection day.

Yard Waste is defined as grass clippings, leaves, weeds, shrub trimmings,

and brush or limbs under 3” in diameter.

Acceptable Yard Waste preparation: 30-gallon biodegradable brown bags. (Bags left out all winter will not be picked up and will need to be re-bagged by the resident); Bundled branches and brush up to 3 inches in diameter and up to 3’ in length, no heavier than 40 lbs bundled with organic twine; Barrels no heavier than 40 lbs marked as Yard Waste; please be sure containers are empty of any rainwater.

Not acceptable: Bundles tied with wire, nylon or plastic (these items harm grinding equipment); Bundles heavier than 40 lbs; Brush and limbs greater than 3” in diameter; Yard waste bags contaminated with rocks, soil, or wood chips.

## Golf outing fundraiser in June

WEST SPRINGFIELD – The Parish Cupboard, a food pantry and hot lunch program located in West Springfield will be holding a fundraiser on Saturday June 1 with it’s annual golf outing.

This event brings together golfers of all levels to raise money for the Cupboards mission. The tournament is a noon shot gun start Scramble event. Registration begins at 11 a.m. Lunch, dinner, a swag bag, contests, prizes and raffles are all part of the event.

Golf is \$125 per person. To attend the dinner only is \$30. Sponsors and prize donors are also needed to make the event successful.

A tournament sponsor is available for \$1500, which includes a foursome. Silver Tee sponsors are available for \$125 and Gold Tee sponsors are available for \$250.

For more information contact Bob at the Parish Cupboard at 413-794-7969 or email parish-cupboard@aol.com.



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# Opinion

## Guest Column



### When should my wife claim her Social Security benefit?

Dear Rusty

I just saw an article which said that certain spousal options were going away, but there are still good options for when a spouse can claim. I am filing for my Social Security to start in October when I turn 70. My wife's Full Retirement Age is in December, and she now plans to file then for half of what my FRA benefit would have been (our original plan was for both to file in August). My wife's main reason for delaying until her FRA is to lock her into my maximum benefit if she has to someday change to Survivor's Benefit. Will this be gone for us? Neither of us was born before Jan. 1, 1954. Please advise.

Signed: Planning for Both

Dear Planning

I expect that the article you refer to was speaking of the option to claim only a spousal benefit first and allow one's personal SS retirement benefit to grow. That option was available only to those who were born before 1954 and had reached full retirement age. As you now know that option is not available to you.

Assuming your wife's highest benefit entitlement will be as your spouse, your current strategy - you claim your maximum benefit to start in October at age 70 and your wife starts her benefit in December at her FRA is a good one which will yield the maximum possible monthly benefit for both of you. But for clarity, your wife's survivor benefit as your widow has nothing to do with when she claims her spouse benefits now.

The only thing which will affect your wife's benefit as your surviving spouse is her age when she claims the survivor benefit. If she has already reached her FRA of 66 years and 8 months when you pass, she will get 100% of the amount you were receiving when you died, instead of the smaller spousal amount she was receiving while you were living. Her survivor benefit would only be less than 100% of yours if she claimed it before reaching her full retirement age (which, of course, we hope would not be the case).

Just so you have the complete picture, your wife could, if desired, claim her Social Security to start at the same time as you in October but, since that would be earlier than her FRA, the amount she would get would be less than 50% of your FRA entitlement. Her spouse benefit would be reduced by 0.694% for each month earlier than her FRA it starts.

For example, if your wife starts her spousal benefit in October when your benefit starts, she will get about 98.6% of the amount she would get if she waited until December to start her benefits. That's a permanent reduction, so if your

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DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

## Letters to the Editor

### High school is outdated

Dear Editor:

I strongly advocate for constructing a new Agawam High School. Despite not having children in the district, the deteriorating state of our current high school concerns me. It is disheartening for both the staff and students to operate in such outdated and crumbling conditions.

The absence of a new high school risks our town's accreditation, potentially limiting our graduates' university options and decreasing district funding. Moreover, families might leave Agawam in search of better educational opportunities, eroding our tax base and diminishing property values.

Opponents may cite tax increases, but the alternative is hardly better. Without a new AHS, we face a \$73 million bill for essential repairs, which merely puts a "band-aid" on significant issues without en-

hancing the school's facilities. This short-term saving amounts to a false economy, while it seems like we are saving money in the short term, it ultimately leads to greater costs or lost opportunities in the long term, especially compared to neighboring towns like West Springfield and East Longmeadow, where students benefit from modern schools.

Investing in a new high school is not just a financial decision-it is a commitment to our community's future, signaling a belief in the potential of our students and the value of our town. A better school infrastructure can uplift our entire community. Let us not compromise our children's future for the sake of minor tax savings. A rising tide lifts all boats, and a new AHS promises to be that tide.

Sean Wandrei

### Attend presentations to be informed about project

Dear Editor:

As a member of the first class to go through four full years at the current Agawam High School building, graduating in 1959, it is very clear to me that the new high school is our best choice.

When voting on the June 11 ballot question, it is important to understand what a yes or no vote means. A "no" vote means the new high school will not be built and we will be stuck with the alternative of repairs with no state reimbursement and a much higher cost to taxpayers in the long run.

Voting "yes" on June 11 allows a proposition 2 1/2 debt exclusion, approving the new high school and allowing us to maintain reserves, and thus the town's good financial standing and high bond rating. It means the town can borrow money at

a lower rate when needed and that the town will have resources available for unexpected or emergency expenses.

I highly recommend that people attend at least one of Mayor Johnson's presentations to ask questions and understand the facts. Two key questions to ask to get the facts: 1) what will happen if the debt exclusion ballot question does not pass, and 2) what is the planning for Town Hall and Police Station and how will this effect taxes.

Mayor Johnson's presentations are on: April 18, from 6 to 7 p.m., at St. David's Church; April 24, at 6 p.m., at the Phelps School Library; April 25, at 12:15 p.m., at the Senior Center, and May 1, at 6:30 p.m., at Sapelli School Cafeteria.

Corinne M. Wingard



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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

must include a name, address, and daytime telephone number for author verification purposes. We do not publish anonymous letters. All letters are subject to editing for content and length. The deadline is Monday at noon. Please send letters to Agawam Advertiser News, care of Turley Publications Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, or e-mail aan@turley.com.

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## Election letters to the editor welcome

The Agawam Advertiser News welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to The Agawam Advertiser News, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to aan@turley.com. Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered

for that Friday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election. For more information, call 413-283-8393.

### 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



By Ellenor Downer

**A** Blandford resident saw a male northern flicker during the April 4 snowstorm among other birds at her snowbound feeding station.

I saw a male northern flicker before the snow storm last week near the Barre line. The day after the snow, I saw one by the edge of the road at the ball-field in the center of Oakham, the only bare spot.

The northern flicker is about 13 inches long. Distinguishing marks include a black band or necklace under its throat, black spots on its breast, gray head and long beak. The male has a black line at the base of its bill, which the female lacks. Both have a red patch on the neck and a white rump, clearly visible in flight.

The flicker is the only ground feeding



Northern Flicker

woodpecker. Ants make up almost half of its diet. It also catches insects in the air and eats fruit, berries and seeds. It will come to feeders like the one in Blandford.

Flickers are cavity nesters and excavate a hole in a tree, fence post or cactus. They will use a nest box. The female lays seven to nine white eggs. They make a loud "kekekeke" for territorial display and a "woikawoikawoka" during courtship. They also do muffled volleys of drumming.

### Flocks of robins

The Blandford resident also had a flock of about 25 robins in her yard. She said they departed before she could shovel clear strip of grass for them and put out mealworms. I saw many robins along the side of the after last Thursdays snowstorm and the day after as there was no other area clear of snow.

### Pileated woodpecker holes

I received a photo from a Charlton resident showing a tree with numerous holes made by a pileated woodpecker. It was impressive.

I usually hear the pileated woodpecker more than I see them. Recently, I heard one and looked for it in the area of its hammering. I saw this one and it kept up its excavating as I watched it.

### More snowstorm bird

A Brimfield resident, who sends me frequent bird sightings, said, "During the snow storm last week in addition to the usual suspects we had a field sparrow, a Carolina wren and about 36 goldfinch visit the yard. Some of the male goldfinch were beginning to show some yellow plumage."

### Black vultures

The Brimfield resident said his wife saw two black vultures in the center of Brimfield feeding on a dead opossum. He said, "They are showing up in western Massachusetts more often recently."

### Turkey vultures

A favorite roost for turkey vultures is near the transfer station in Barre on Depot Road. I saw several vultures circling over the area, several perched on lamp posts and a shed at the transfer station. One on the lamp post had its wings spread out. It was quite a sight to see.

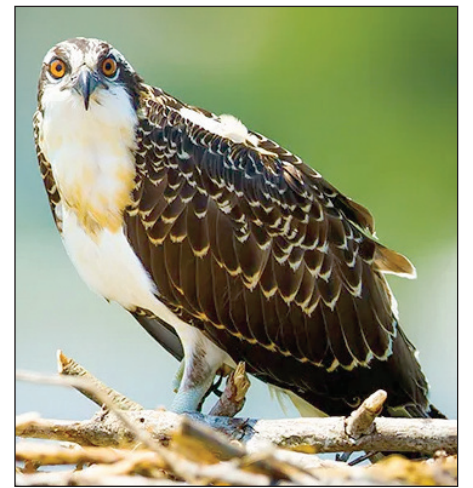
I saw a turkey vulture spreading its wings like that several years ago on one of the high tension line poles in Oakham. It almost looked like it flew into the post.

### Ospreys and herons

This Brimfield resident makes regular trips to several ponds. He said in his most recent email, "In Warren at the pond on South Street the osprey pair that have nested there the past three years have returned. Last year there were three great blue heron nests there that produced young. This year only one pair of herons has returned so far. At my last visit it looked like a heron was incubating eggs or maybe just sitting down?"

He also said, "At the great blue heron rookery at Conant Brook Dam in Monson there are four nest this year. On a visit last week the four nests had birds incubating eggs. There were six nest here last year but one of the trees with a nest looked like it was in danger of falling over, guess it did. And another nest has disappeared." He said there is an osprey pair at the playing fields in Wilbraham by the YMCA/Spec Pond. He saw one of osprey bring sticks to the nest and at another visit one was sitting on the nest.

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by calling me at 413-967-3505, leaving a message at extension 100, emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.

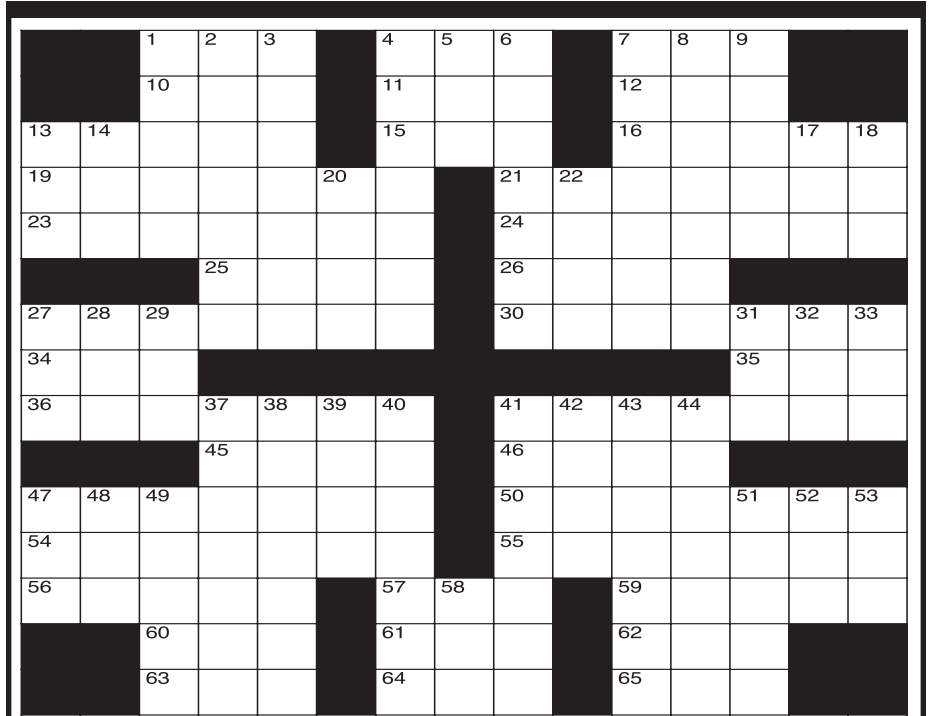


Osprey

### SECURITY | from page 4

wife's life expectancy is at least average about 87, it's likely still wisest for her to wait until her FRA to start benefits. But in any case, when your wife claims her spousal benefit now will have no effect on the survivor benefit she will get as your future widow.

*The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.*



#### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Midway between south and southeast
- 4. For each
- 7. Airborne (abbr.)
- 10. Photographs
- 11. They \_\_\_
- 12. It's important in respiration (abbr.)
- 13. Monetary unit
- 15. Cool!
- 16. A son of Jacob
- 19. Cut off
- 21. Devour
- 23. Agent of one's downfall
- 24. Best
- 25. Network of nerves
- 26. Partner to "oohs"
- 27. Origins
- 30. Sewing utensil
- 34. Alias
- 35. Swiss river
- 36. Greek mythological figure
- 41. Type of whiskey

- 45. Lay to rest
- 46. "Rule, Britannia" composer
- 47. Select jury
- 50. Feeling
- 54. Action regarded as morally wrong
- 55. Makes angry
- 56. Act incorrectly
- 57. Defensive nuclear weapon
- 59. Class of escort aircraft carrier
- 60. To what degree
- 61. Buzzing insect
- 62. The human foot
- 63. "The Leftovers" actress Dowd
- 64. A place to stay
- 65. Sun up in New York

#### CLUES DOWN

- 1. An involuntary muscular contraction
- 2. Earnest

- 3. Cuts out surgically
- 4. Can't move
- 5. Baseball stat
- 6. British soldier
- 7. Traditional medicine plants
- 8. Political party controlled by managers
- 9. Hebrew prophet
- 13. Supporter
- 14. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- 17. Liberty Mutual mascot
- 18. Georgia rockers
- 20. A place where building is done
- 22. Large, deep-bodied fish
- 27. Clothing retailer
- 28. Supplement with difficulty
- 29. Annoy constantly
- 31. Founder of Babism
- 32. Indigenous person in parts of Asia
- 33. Sea eagle
- 37. Leave behind
- 38. Time of day
- 39. Colorless crystalline compound
- 40. They lay out course requirements
- 41. A diamond has three
- 42. Algerian coastal city
- 43. Remove cover
- 44. Rechristened
- 47. Distinctive practice
- 48. Defunct phone company
- 49. Turkish officer of high rank
- 51. Eliminate from the body
- 52. Witness
- 53. Soviet Socialist Republic
- 58. Founding Father Franklin

CROSSWORD SOLUTION ON PAGE 6

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# Opinion

## Transplanting your homegrown seedlings



I bet there are a few garden enthusiasts out there with seedlings up and growing indoors.

My tomatoes are just poking through, but my peppers are ready for transplanting. Why transplant you ask? It's important that we give our young plants room to spread out!

If seeds were sown in rows, chances are that several seedlings have sprouted and are now growing within a close proximity to one another. They are competing for nutrients and moisture.

Even if two seeds were sown in a single cell of a six-pack and both germinated, they too are competing with one another in that tiny of a space. So, if we want garden center quality seedlings, we must transplant them to their own cell or small pot.

You know a seedling is ready for transplant when it has its "true leaves," not the cotyledon leaves that were first to sprout from the seed, but those that come right after. At this point in growth plant roots aren't tangled up and therefore transplant shock can be kept to a minimum.

Although the seedlings may be tiny and appear fragile, transplanting them is quite simple.

First, take a wooden plant label or



dull butter knife and "cut" into the row of seedlings. Then, use your implement "spatula-style" to remove a small cluster of plants from the bottom up.

I always tell folks to "think brownies!" Be careful to get as many roots as you can.

Once you've done this it is time to separate them from one another. Gently pull on a leaf, not the stem, to pry them apart.

Think of it this way: the plant has two leaves but only one stem. If it should snap, that's it! Leaves on the other hand, can and will be replaced if accidentally torn off.

Individual seedlings can be planted in small containers or cell packs filled with soilless growing medium. We steer clear of garden soil because of the pathogens and weed seeds it may contain as well as its tendency not to drain very well.

Soilless mix is sterile, and has the ability to retain moisture yet drain free-

ly- just what the young seedling needs as it grows additional roots and top growth.

Make a hole in the moistened growing medium with your finger, a pencil or wooden dibble. Insert the seedling to the correct depth then firm around it with your fingers.

Most are transplanted to the same depth they were growing in the pack.

One exception is tomatoes; they can be buried deeper than they started out. This is because tomatoes have the ability to make roots along the length of their stem.

Another exception are marigolds. More roots mean healthier shoots!

Water the transplants well with a gentle spray. They can now be put back under the artificial lights you've rigged up.

Continue to keep the lights within inches of the plants for the stockiest growth. Or, if you're lucky enough to have

a sunroom or hobby greenhouse, the seedlings will thrive there!

Shade them from direct sun for a few days after transplant to prevent wilting. Soon the roots will recover from the shock of transplant and will again be able to sustain the plant.

Night time temperatures can dip as low as 50 degrees for most plants. In fact, lower night temps will help to ensure the stocky specimen we desire.

Fertilize with half-strength liquid plant food every 10 days to two weeks. Begin to "harden-off" your transplants a couple of weeks prior to putting in the ground.

Thus far they have been kept in a carefully controlled environment. Planting them without a period of acclimatization may mean disaster!

Place them outdoors in a shady spot protected from the wind for only a few hours each day. As the days progress keep them out longer and increase their exposure to bright sun and wind.

Don't forget to water during this process, but forgo all fertilizer.

With less than two months to go until the danger of frost is officially passed, our home grown seedlings won't have long to wait, and neither will we!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 31 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.

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# SPORTS



Brayden Federico throws on the run.



Liam Grealis circles the goal in the offensive zone for Agawam.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY  
WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Jaden Holloway winds up for a shot on goal.



Justin Lareau makes a catch.

## Jorgenson nets OT game-winner

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

AGAWAM – The Agawam boys' varsity lacrosse team hasn't had very much success against Tantasqua Regional during the past decade. That all changed in the only meeting of the regular season between the two squads.

After battling back from a three-goal

deficit to tie the score late in the fourth period, Agawam junior Riley Jorgensen netted the game-winning goal with 1:54 remaining in overtime. It gave his team a thrilling 8-7 victory over the Warriors at Harmon A Smith Field, last Tuesday afternoon.

"We lost to Tantasqua twice last year and we held a 5-0 lead in one of those games," said Jorgensen, who joined the var-

sity lacrosse team as a freshman. "It feels amazing to finally beat them in overtime."

The last time that Agawam defeated Tantasqua in a boys' lacrosse match was

during the 2014 regular season when they celebrated a 10-6 win.

BOYS LACROSSE | page 9

## Falcons third quarter rally hurts Brownies

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

WILBRAHAM – Less than a minute into the second half, the Agawam girls' lacrosse team was only trailing Valley Wheel League rival Minnechaug Regional by a goal.



Emiley Bussiere-Sykes takes her shot.

It didn't remain a close game for very long. The Lady Falcons scored the final five goals of the third period and added three more goals during the final period enroute to a 16-9 home win over the Brownies, last Thursday afternoon.

"This is a very good win for us," said Minnechaug head coach Maggie Kennedy. "I thought we played very well as a team, and this victory moves us a little bit closer to the .500 mark."



Finnola Mahoney looks for an open teammate.

Entering the school vacation week, the Lady Falcons had a 2-3 overall record and a 1-1 league record.

After losing to Agawam three times in 2022, Minnechaug swept the season series a year ago.

Junior Rylee Welch and senior captain Kaliana Gagnon each scored five goals for the Lady Falcons in the first meeting of the 2024 regular season against the Brownies (1-2, 0-1). Five other Lady Falcons players scored at least one goal.

"Having several different goals scorers is huge for us," Kennedy added. "Kaliana and Rylee have been our leading scorers so far this season."

Gagnon entered the school vacation week with a team-leading 20 goals, while Welch scored 13 goals in the first five games of the regular season.

The other two Lady Falcons senior captains are Brenna Slatery and Ainsley Sheehan.

The Brownies' leading scorer was senior captain Emma Murray with six goals. She scored three goals in each half.

"We rely on Emma to be one of our leading goal scorers in every game," said Agawam head coach Carla Lemnah-Warner.

GIRLS LACROSSE | page 8



Angelina Kozhenevsky sprints up the field with the ball.



Gabby Cosentini balances the ball as she makes a catch.



Emma Murray fires a shot on goal.  
TURLEY PHOTOS BY SOFIA DIGRANDE

## Ludlow defeats Agawam

AGAWAM – Last Tuesday afternoon, Ludlow girls tennis picked up the win at Agawam High School 4-1. All of the winners in the contest won in straight sets. Malina Dinis took the top victory in first singles. Ludlow also got wins by Gabriella Pereira in second singles, and Isabella Cyr in third singles. Sophia Alvaro and Ashlyn Mortimer got the win in second doubles. Winning for Agawam was the doubles combination of Autumn Vincze and Lydian Phommachanh. Ludlow is 2-0 to start the season while Agawam is out to a 2-3 start.



Autumn Vincze returns the ball. Left, Olivia Gryszowka goes for a point in first singles.



Lydian Phommachanh squares up a nice return hit.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY

# Sports

## HoopHall announces unique new exhibit

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame announced another brand new exhibit coming to the museum this summer titled The Vault: Boston Celtics Unlocked. This innovative and immersive experience will be unlike anything the Basketball Hall of Fame has previously produced. The Hall of Fame has collaborated with the NBA's most storied franchise to present this inaugural installation of The Vault.

"We are excited to launch another state-of-the-art space in the world's finest sports museum," said John L. Doleva, President and CEO of the Basketball Hall of Fame. "The Vault: Boston Celtics Unlocked is a limited engagement that will feature a



finely crafted experience that will capture the imagination of sports fans and speak to the heart of what makes basketball the world's most popular game."

Matt Zeysing, Vice President of Curatorial for the museum, began working on The Vault concept more than a year ago. "We knew we wanted to create something spectacular, something that basketball fans had never seen before. The Boston Celtics represent a winning tradition that is second to none and that tradition still continues today. To that end, our team has

carefully curated and brought together the most sought-after Celtic memorabilia in the world."

Set in an immersive bank vault, Celtics legends from the past and present will take visitors on an epic journey to discover the true meaning of Celtic Pride. The Vault will feature authentic game-worn jerseys, championship rings, the original '81 NBA championship trophy, long-lost footage, and much more.

"The Boston Celtics are honored to bring their history and tradition to life with The Vault: Boston Celtics Unlocked," said Boston Celtics Team President Rich Gotham. "We hope fans enjoy this immersive experience, which will showcase unique memorabilia and celebrate the Celtics' storied legacy."

Visitors will enjoy an exclusive display of Celtics memorabilia for a limited period. Tickets for the museum can be purchased online at etix.com or at the door.

## Roster spots still open in Quabbin Valley Over-28 Baseball League

Rosters spots are dwindling, but there are still some spots available as the Quabbin Valley Over-28 Baseball League prepares for its season opener on Sunday, April 28 featuring three games.

Registration for the 2024 season is now open and any interested players can go to [www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org](http://www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org) to get registered, or to seek more information or make inquiries about the league. The league website will also be updated over the next month with information about the upcoming season.

The league plays most Sunday from late April through late August with playoffs following that. The league plays a 15-game schedule and typically fields six teams each year. Games are usually played at 10 a.m. with fields in Easthampton and South Hadley used as well some expansion to the surrounding area this season. The league does not play on Mother's Day or Memorial Day weekends.

The Quabbin Valley league is an all-abilities league and all are welcome to join. Eligibility is players who are age 28 and over. You must be 30 to be eligible to pitch in the league. Your age for eligibility is whatever age you will turn in 2024. The league is also able to entertaining taking in an entire group as a team to add to the league. Please email the league board for to inquire about entering a team.



## Registration now open for Bay State Games

WOBURN – Registration for the 42nd annual Bay State Summer Games is now open. The 2024 Summer Games will include thirty sports with competitions from May 11 – July 27 at venues throughout eastern and central Massachusetts including Game On in Fitchburg, Boston Sports Institute in Wellesley, Union Point Sports Complex in Weymouth, and North Star Ice Sports in Westborough. Bay State Games participants range in age from 5 to over age 75 and represent more than 300 Massachusetts communities as well as surrounding New England States in some sports. From grassroots participants to accomplished amateur athletes, the Bay State Games provide opportunities for the athlete in all of us.

Seven high school showcase sports will

take place for a variety of sports, including baseball, basketball, field hockey, ice hockey, soccer, softball, and volleyball. Athletes currently in grade 8-11 who live or go to school in Massachusetts are eligible to attend regional tryouts during the month of June. These tryouts will determine teams representing the various regions of the Commonwealth that will compete against each other in July. Check each sport page for specific eligibility requirements.

The Summer Games include a wide variety of individual sports including swimming, track & field, figure skating, pickleball, wrestling, weightlifting, badminton, and more. These sports are open to a wide range of ages and skill levels from youth participants to masters-aged athletes. Adaptive sport divisions in archery, swim-

ming, and track & field are offered, as well. Bay State Games also organizes tournaments for pre-existing teams in rugby, and 6v6 field hockey.

Returning in 2024, Table Tennis will take place on June 1 at PingPod in Boston after a 5-year hiatus from the Summer Games sport lineup. New venues include Babson College, which will host the Girls Basketball Showcase, and NorthStar Ice Sports, which will host Figure Skating and the Girls Ice Hockey Showcase. Game On in Fitchburg will serve as a hub venue for eight sports. Bay State Games expects 1,500 athletes and their families to attend competitions at Game On during the second week of July.

For questions, email [info@baystate-games.org](mailto:info@baystate-games.org) or call 781-932-6555.

### GIRLS LACROSSE ■ from page 7

"She's also one of our captains. Our captains are our leaders, but the younger players are starting to step up."

Alexis Hurley and Angelina Kozhenevsky are the other two Agawam senior captains.

The first 24 minutes of last Thursday's match was a very close affair.

Both Agawam sophomore goalie Kilee Barna and Minnechaug junior goalie Nhi Nguyen finished the contest with eight saves.

Gagnon and freshman Sophia Kozub combined to score the first two goals of the opening period, which were both unassisted, for the home team.

An unassisted goal by Murray put her team on the scoreboard for the first time with 3:35 remaining in the opening period.

With less than three minutes remaining in the period, a goal by Sheehan gave the Lady Falcons a two-goal lead again (3-1).

Agawam tied the score for the first time at 3-3 in the middle of the second period following back-to-back free position goals from Murray.

The Lady Falcons responded with three unanswered goals from junior Ella Sarno, Gagnon, and Welch.

With 0.4 seconds remaining on the scoreboard clock, Agawam sophomore Sarah Kriebel closed out the first half with another free position goal.

The Brownies, who were trailing, 6-4, at

the break, got a little bit closer 33 seconds into the third period when Murray scored her fourth goal, which was unassisted.

After stealing a pass, Gagnon scored the Lady Falcons first goal of the second half.

A couple of minutes later, an Agawam player received a yellow card and was sent to the box for two minutes.

The Lady Falcons took full advantage of the man-up situation, as they built a 10-5 lead following two goals from Welch and another one by Sarno.

"Scoring man-up goals are always very important," Kennedy said. "It just helped us keep the lead."

Minnechaug other two goals in the third period were scored by senior Mack Donahue and Gagnon.

Holding a 12-5 advantage entering the final twelve minutes of the match, Minnechaug senior Jenna Scatolini added her name to the scoring column a minute into the fourth period.

Agawam tried to make a comeback with back-to-back goals from Kriebel and Murray, which closed the gap to 13-7.

The home team answered back with three more goals, which sealed their victory. Gagnon scored one of those goals and Welch scored the other two.

Junior Isabella Spaulding and Murray scored the final two goals of the match for the visiting team.

The Brownies will look to even the season series when they host the Lady Falcons on April 29.

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# Sports

## Win keeps playoff hopes alive for Thunderbirds

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (30-35-3-2) snapped their six-game slide with a 4-2 comeback win over the Providence Bruins (40-20-6-3) on Sunday afternoon inside a sold-out MassMutual Center, the 19th such crowd this season.

The afternoon started rocky, as Patrick Brown connected on a forehand from the slot area on the day's first shot to give Providence a 1-0 lead 46 seconds into the contest.

T-Birds starting goaltender Colten Ellis put himself into a pickle at 9:24 of the first when he mishandled a puck to the side of his net. After a pair of Bruins dislodged it, the third man on the attack, rookie Jaxon

Nelson, deked to the backhand to beat Ellis and give Providence a 2-0 advantage. It was Nelson's first professional goal.

Brandon Bussi drew the net for the Bruins, and after shutting out the T-Birds on March 10, he had his sights on duplicating the feat on Sunday, holding the T-Birds off the board past the midpoint of regulation.

With their backs against the wall, the T-Birds leaned on their Man of the Year to jumpstart the squad. Off a draw at 13:08 of the middle stanza, Drew Callin pushed past his opponent to hack a shot toward Bussi's crease. The normally stout net-minder sprung a leak this time as the puck sneaked under his legs to get Springfield on

the board, cutting the lead to 2-1.

Following matching minors and another penalty to the Bruins, Springfield's man advantage earned a 4-on-3 opportunity, and the AHL's leading goal scorer made his presence known as Adam Gaudette rifled a one-time snapper over Bussi's glove at 14:40, tying the score off a perfect cross-ice setup by Jakub Vrana.

Special teams proved paramount for Springfield, as the penalty kill went a perfect 5-for-5, including two clutch successes in the final period. Gaudette provided more heroics at 10:32 of the third when he skated in on the right wing on a 2-on-1 and blistered a wrist shot over Bussi's

blocker to give the T-Birds a 3-2 lead on his 44th goal of the season. The two-goal day for Gaudette was his 12th such game this season.

With Providence clamoring for an equalizer in the final minute, Callin, rookie Dylan Peterson, and Kean Washkurak gutted out a defensive zone sequence to clear their end. Washkurak capped things off with an empty-netter from the red line to give the T-Birds the victory.

The T-Birds look to earn a second straight win over the Bruins when they travel to Providence for a rematch on Friday night at the Amica Mutual Pavilion at 7:05 p.m.

### BOYS LACROSSE ■ from page 7

"Today's game was very exciting," said Agawam head coach Joe Heney. "It was nice to see the kids battle back in the fourth period. No matter what the score is we're always going to play as hard as we can. That's something that we take tremendous pride in."

Jorgensen, who netted a game-high five goals in the non-league match, scored a game-winning goal for the first time in a varsity game. The five goals was also a career high for him. He scored five goals in a pair of victories against Chicopee Comp and Northampton a year ago.

The Brownies (2-1) won the face-off at the start of the four-minute sudden-victory overtime period, and they were able to keep possession of the ball.

About 30 seconds before Jorgensen ended the match, Agawam had a very good scoring opportunity. Senior captain Nicholas Ugolini fired a shot at Tantasqua senior

goalie Sam Panek (13 saves), who was able to deflect it away. The Brownies quickly regained possession of the ball and that's when Jorgensen scored the game-winning goal.

"We were able to recover the ball first before it got to the end line," said Jorgensen, who was also a member of the Brownies boys' varsity basketball team this past winter. "Then I received a pass from one of my teammates before firing a shot into the net. It just felt great because my whole team was counting on me to score a goal."

The Warriors, who made the trip to Western Mass. with a 2-0 record, suffered their first loss of the regular season.

"Agawam played a little bit better than we did today," said Tantasqua head coach James Putney. "We like to play fast and score a lot of goals, but they slowed the game down and controlled possession more. We do have a lot of potential and we're still trying to put the pieces together."

The visitors from Fiskdale took a 1-0 lead 22 seconds into the opening period following a goal by senior Aiden Way. Sophomore Michalak Fenton was credited with the assist.

Then back-to-back goals by sophomore Brayden Federico and Jorgensen gave the home team the lead for the first time.

Way scored another goal with 3:05 remaining in the first period tying the score at 2-2.

Less than two minutes into the second period, Jorgensen scored his second goal which gave the lead back to the Brownies.

Following an unassisted goal by sophomore Zach Godek, the Warriors retook lead when senior Trevor Harris fired a shot into the net past Agawam sophomore goalie Jordin Agosto (12 saves) with 6:40 left in the second period.

Neither team scored during the final six minutes of the first half and the Warriors held a slim 4-3 halftime advantage.

With 7:53 left in the third period, Godek scored his second goal, which was unassisted.

A little more than a minute later, the Brownies cut their deficit to 5-4 following a Jorgenson goal. That goal was assisted by Federico, who entered the match with a team leading with five goals and four assists.

Two more goals by seniors Pat Dunn and Landon Rice helped the Warriors build a 7-4 lead during the first six minutes of the final period.

The Brownies battled back with goals from sophomore Casey Thomas, sophomore Jaden Holloway, and Jorgensen, which sent the contest into overtime.

Jorgensen, who had scored a total of four goals in the Brownies first two games of the regular season, became the hero a little more than two minutes later.

"Riley is a great kid," Heney said. "I'm very happy that he scored the game-winning goal in overtime."

## Public Notices

### LEGAL NOTICE PUBLIC HEARING AGAWAM CITY COUNCIL

The Agawam City Council will conduct a public hearing on **Monday, May 6, 2024, at 7:00pm** on TR-2024-29 the Capital Improvement Program for Fiscal Year 2025 to Fiscal Year 2029 as submitted to the City Council by the Mayor on April 11, 2024.

The Capital Improvement Program is a prioritized plan of proposed capital improvements over the next five fiscal years. A capital improvement is a project or undertaking which provides for the planning, design, construction, reconstruction, renovation or replacement of a public building or facility; an addition to a public building or facility; the purchase of land, buildings or facilities for a public purpose; or a long range development study.

TR-2024-29 which is the Capital Improvement Program for Fiscal Year 2025 to Fiscal Year 2029 is available for public inspection on the Town of Agawam website ([www.agawam.ma.us](http://www.agawam.ma.us)) or by emailing the office of the City Clerk for an electronic copy at [vgioscia@agawam.ma.us](mailto:vgioscia@agawam.ma.us).

BY ORDER OF:

Rosemary Sandlin,  
President

Agawam City Council  
04/18, 04/25/2024

Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Hampden Probate and  
Family Court  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103

Docket No. HD24P0733GD

In the matter of:  
**Barbara Jean Mitchell**  
Of: **Feeding Hills, MA**  
**RESPONDENT**

**Alleged Incapacitated  
Person**

**CITATION GIVING  
NOTICE OF PETITION  
FOR APPOINTMENT OF  
GUARDIAN FOR  
INCAPACITATED  
PERSON PURSUANT TO  
G.L. c. 190B, §5-304**

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by **Department Of Developmental Serv of Springfield, MA** in the above captioned matter alleging that **Barbara Jean Mitchell** is in need of a Guardian and requesting that

**Jimmie F. Mitchell of Springfield, MA**  
**Penny Mitchell of Springfield, MA**

(or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve **Without Surety** on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court and may contain a request for certain specific authority.

**You have the right to object to this proceeding.** If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 a.m. on the return date of **04/30/2024**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the

written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

**The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.**

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M. Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: April 03, 2024

**Rosemary A. Saccomani**  
Register of Probate  
04/18/2024

Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Probate and Family Court  
Hampden Probate and  
Family Court  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
(413)748-7758  
Docket No. HD24C0105CA  
In the matter of:  
**Mackenzie Elizabeth  
Surreira**  
CITATION ON PETITION  
TO CHANGE NAME

**A Petition to Change Name of Minor** has been filed by **Mackenzie Elizabeth of Agawam, MA** requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:

**Corey David Surreira**

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: **Hampden Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 05/10/2024.**

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: April 12, 2024

**Rosemary A Saccomani**  
Register of Probate  
04/18/2024

**Legal Notice of Private Sale**

Notice is hereby given by USA Towing, 71 Garden St., Feeding Hills, MA 01030, sale of a motor vehicle pursuant to the provisions of M.G.L. C. 255, Section 39A, that on April 22, 2024 at 8:00 a.m., at USA Towing, said motor vehicle will be sold at a private sale to satisfy the garage keeper's lien for towing, storage and costs of sale.

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Agawam Advertiser News

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## REAL ESTATE

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## FLOODING | from page 1

Compensatory flood storage areas are areas set aside to give water a place to go when a river floods.

"If you were to look at a map of that area of the floodplain you would see that there are large areas that are lower than the surrounding areas and they're designated by the army corp as compensatory flood areas," Johnson said.

Additionally, Johnson mentioned that some residents have reported issues of flooding in their basements.

He claimed that the problem is caused by the current high levels of groundwater in the area.

"Right now the Connecticut River is at or near flood stage," Johnson said. "When that happens, property that is within the flood plain of the river when the river level goes up, ground water goes up with it."

Holyoke and Northampton have already declared their areas of the river at flood stage, Johnson imagines that Agawam is not far behind.

"If you go down and take a look at [the river], it's as high as it's been in a very long time," Johnson said.

This high water level has been caused by the amount of rain the area has had

recently. Additionally, the conditions are worse due to the warmer winter the area had this year.

"We had an extremely wet year last year and over the winter, instead of getting snow, we got mostly rain storms and I think since the beginning of March we've had at least five or six inches of rain," Johnson said. "So we have soil conditions that are extraordinarily saturated and then you combine that with the river being up...unfortunately water is going to end up seeping into basements."

Johnson warns that people with a history of flooding in their basement should be on the lookout and should check that all of their systems are working properly for drainage, as he anticipates flooding will be a common issue this year.

The town has several drainage areas and currently some of the drainage pipes are partially underwater.

If these outfalls or drain areas get entirely covered by the river, which would mean the river has exceeded flood stage, then water will go backwards. It will drain from the river into the compensatory flood storage areas.

"The river is about as high as I have seen it in years," Johnson said. "The outfalls, some are close to being completely covered."

## BUDGET | from page 1

the cost-of-living adjustment, longevity, lane changes and steps.

Additionally, there is an increase in transportation of \$175,619, an increase in vocation education tuition of \$387,461 and an increase in information technology of \$98,921.

This budget will be voted on at the next school committee meeting, which will be on April 23 following the public hearing.

The budget will then go to Mayor Christopher Johnson, where he will incorporate it with the town operating budget for the next year.

Following this, the total budget will go to the city council sometime in May. The public hearing for the council will likely be at their June 3 meeting, according to Johnson.

The city council is expected to vote on the final budget at their meeting on June 17.

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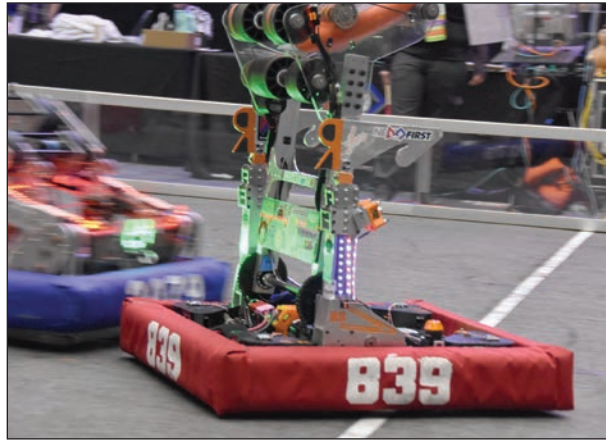
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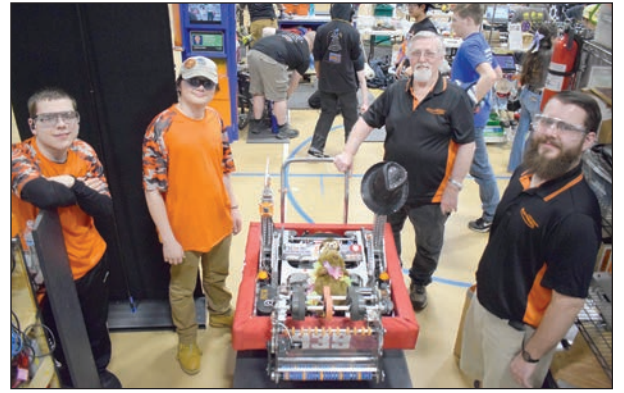


The Rosie Robotics team made it to the New England District Championships, where their robot, Echo, competed against dozens of other teams.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS



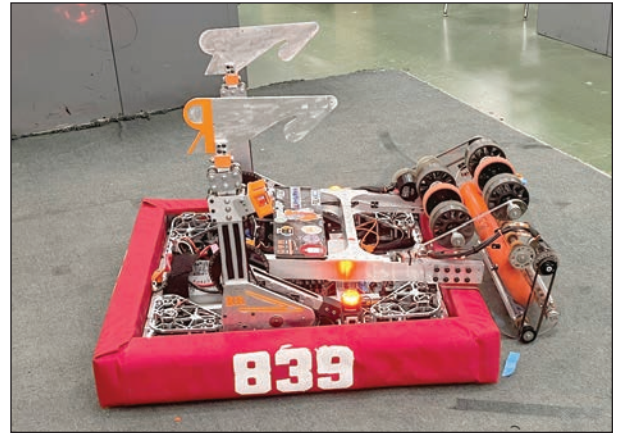
The Rosie Robotics team was excited to make it to the New England District Championships.



The Rosie Robotics team posed around their robot, Echo, at the qualifying competition they won which got them into the New England District Championships.



Rosie Robotics focused on strategizing for the New England District Championships.



The robot works during the competition.



A group of Rosie Robotics alumni came to support the team as they competed at New England District Championships.

**ROBOTICS** ■ from page 1

couple events for off-season coming up in the summer and fall that we're looking into going to."

Already the team is planning how they can improve for next year and perhaps even make it to Worlds.

"One thing I learned was that we can set the goals and we can really achieve them and we have to be prepared to over achieve our goals," Barrett said. "We definitely could have potentially gone to Worlds, but I think we weren't expecting that we were going to do as well as we did and that hindered us a little."

In the next few weeks they will be reviewing how their season went and breaking down what areas they felt were their strong suits and which ones they would like to improve upon.

In addition to this goal setting, they hope to recruit more members to the team, both in the form of adult mentors and student participants. They are also open to any person, group or organization that is willing to sponsor their program.

"There's a place for any mentor or student who wants to participate," Crouss said.

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