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AGAWAM

ADVERTISER NEWS

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Schools adjusting to MCAS decision

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Massachusetts passed the ballot question to get rid of the MCAS assessment as a high school graduation requirement.

In the state, 59% of people vote to get rid of MCAS as a high school graduation requirement. In Agawam 10,008 of 15,808 people, or 63% of people voted to get rid of it as a requirement.

This law will go into effect by the end of this school year, so the class of 2025 will not need to have passed MCAS for them to graduate.

“The current MCAS testing system is not perfect, in my opinion, there is definitely room for improvement on ways to make it better for students, districts and teachers,” Superintendent Sheila Hoffman said.

Hoffman feels that this could be beneficial for students as it may relieve some of the pressure they are under during MCAS season.

“I think any anxiety students might have going into taking the test because it is a graduation requirement may be relieved,” Hoffman said.

Hoffman would like to make it clear that even though students do not need to pass the MCAS in order to graduate high school this does not mean that they don't need to take the test at all.

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CRAFT FAIR benefits animal shelter

TJO Animals hosts annual Pawzaar craft fair

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer



Stephanie Martinelli sold a variety of her crocheted creations from her business Imagination Creation Crafts.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY QUINN SUOMALA

AGAWAM – The Foundation for Thomas J. O'Connor Animals held their annual Pawzaar Craft Fair on Saturday, Nov. 16.

During this craft fair there were 40 different vendors that sold a variety of animal-related products.

Additionally, there was a raffle and a bake sale for people to get additional goods they desired.

“We have lines of tables that are full of 40 different vendors selling all sorts of handmade products,” Interim Executive Director Janna Brown said. “The raffle has items that are holiday in nature or just cat and dog or other pet-related stuff.”

One of the central pieces of the raffle was a large Christmas tree that was decorated with about \$150 worth of gift cards to a variety of different places.

Further tables also had discounted pet merchandise for people to shop and get items at a cheaper price than they normally would.

Also present at this event was the American Kennel Club pet disaster relief trailer. This trailer goes near shelters during disasters so people can keep their pets there while they stay in the shelter, as shelters do not allow pets.

This trailer is stocked with 55 crates as well as a variety of different pet supplies so that the pets will be well taken care of during their stay at the trailer.

There were three different sponsors for this event: Tandem Bagel, The Dog Spot and Country Bank.

“Just getting some of those

partners involved with some of the events is a really nice way to give back,” Brown said.

Brown and the others at the foundation hope that this craft fair can help to get people access to different pet supplies that they may need.

“We're just trying to get people access to cheaper goods for their animals,” Brown said.

One of Brown's favorite parts of the day is when the foundation got ready to announce the raffle winners.

“Once we start getting to the 2 p.m. hour we get ready to call the raffles and it's funny because we're known for raffle prizes,” Brown said. “I'll get on the microphone and start picking these

“These are one of our signature events. We take a lot of pride in it.”

– Janna Brown

names and people are cheering, it's a really good time.”

The foundation's fundraising goal for the day was about \$10,000, though they are grateful for any amount of funds that they acquire.

They have been holding this craft fair for 17 years and every year they have enjoyed improving on it and seeing it grow.

“These are one of our signature events,” Brown said. “We take a lot of pride in it. We always get really great feedback, so many from around the community come.”

Brown and the others at the foundation see this event as a great way to connect with the community and to spread the message of their mission.

“We're kind of spreading the word on how as a community we can work together to help out,” Brown said.

CRAFT FAIR | page 12

Athletic ambassadors spreading good sportsmanship through community

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – Athletics Director Karen Gomez provided an update on athletics to the school committee at their meeting on Nov. 12.

During this presentation Gomez highlighted the core value of Agawam athletics, which is to ensure that everyone on the field or attending a game feels safe.

“Our core focus is making sure our students, athletes, coaches, officials, anyone who is at our

games is feeling safe, feeling valued and feeling connected,” Gomez said.

One initiative that Agawam athletics has undergone in order to encourage these values is “Bench Bad Behavior.” As part of this initiative, there are announcements laying out the expectations for sportsmanship at Agawam games.

Through utilizing these values Gomez hopes that all athletes will feel supported by their community at their games.

“It's about the positives, it's

about cheering on all athletes, not about picking out the bad,” Gomez. “We've had very good success last season with increasing our sportsmanship, having more officials want to come to Agawam and officiate our games, and creating that positive environment.”

Gomez was also proud of the work that has gone into improving game attendance by community members. She truly believes that having more people in the audience encourages athletes to do their best.

Additionally, Gomez took the

time to highlight the student effort to increase audience participation through an Agawam Athletics Instagram page.

“Our @gwamathletics...they received over 1000 followers this year and they are very proud of that,” Gomez said.

This Instagram page gives a weekly recap of athletics and highlights a different player each week.

“It is all student generated and I am so proud of the athletes and students that are volunteering their time to represent our

school and push this forward,” Gomez said.

During this year, athletics has also worked on ensuring that student athletes have opportunities to improve their leadership skills.

“We have three student ambassadors...they are able to work and attend student huddles to work on their leadership skills and see what other students across the state of Massachusetts are doing,” Gomez said.

These ambassadors, Aiden

SPORTSMANSHIP | page 11



Grinspoon Amber award nominations open

AGAWAM – The Harold Grinspoon Foundation proudly announced the launch of the Grinspoon Amber awards at the Jewish Federations of North America 2024 General Assembly gathering in Washington DC. These annual awards will honor five exceptional professionals in the Jewish communal field, celebrating their impact, leadership, and commitment to a vibrant Jewish future.

The Grinspoon Amber Awards were conceived of by Harold Grinspoon, the foundation's founder and a passionate advocate for Jewish communal life.

"The Jewish world benefits tremendously from the most amazing, creative people who work to enhance Judaism around the world," said Grinspoon "This is a small way to show our appreciation, my appreciation and the foundation's appreciation."

Since founding HGF in 1991, Grinspoon has championed initiatives that enrich Jewish life and learning, with a firm belief that strong Jewish communities are essential to a vibrant future. The Grinspoon Amber awards reflect this vision by honoring professionals who have made exceptional contributions to the Jewish communal field.

Whether through remarkable achievements, deep dedication to Jewish values, effective bridge-building across diverse groups, or courage in overcoming challenges, the awards will celebrate professionals for their lasting impact on the Jewish community.

"Outstanding professionals in our community dedicate themselves to the hard work of nurturing Jewish life, often behind the scenes, and they do it with passion, resilience, and a deep commitment to others," said Winnie Sandler Grinspoon, president of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. "When we considered who could be the right partner for this, project, JFNA was the obvious choice. They are deeply committed to supporting Jewish professionals in countless ways, and we are thrilled to partner with them on this one."

The first winners will be announced a year from now at the Jewish Federations of North America General Assembly in 2025. In addition to a \$10,000 prize, each winner will have the chance to "pay it forward" by selecting two other professionals to receive Peer Recognition Grants of \$2,500 each. This reflects Harold Grinspoon's belief that

true leadership is about lifting others, fostering a cycle of growth, inspiration, and excellence within the Jewish community.

"Partnering with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation on this initiative perfectly aligns with our mission to support and uplift the dedicated professionals who sustain and enrich Jewish life," said Eric Fingerhut, president and CEO of the Jewish Federations of North America. "At a time when our communities face unprecedented challenges, these awards not only honor individual excellence but also reinforce a culture of appreciation and shared commitment that strengthens our community as a whole."

Nominations for the 2025 Grinspoon Amber awards are now open and will be accepted until 5 p.m. Jan. 31, 2025. Eligible nominees will receive an invitation to apply for the award. Nominees interested in being considered for the award will be required to complete an application and submit all necessary documents, including two personal letters of recommendation and a personal statement, by 5 p.m. on March 20, 2025.

For more information about the Grinspoon Amber Awards, visit www.amber-awards.org.

DPW collects 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.

Donation drive to benefit DHRI's Closet

FEEDING HILLS – Da'Monique's Homeless Resource Initiative will be hosting a donation drive from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 7, at the Feeding Hills Congregational Church.

Donations will benefit the low income individuals and families in Western MA.

Donations accepted include gently used clothing for adults and children, personal hygiene items, non-perishable food items, menstrual items, books, and baby items such as diapers and wipes.

Monetary donations are accepted in person or checks made payable to Da'Monique's Homeless Resource Initiative.

Please email djacobswilliams for more information or to volunteer.

Russo to assist elder residents with sand, salt

AGAWAM – Again this year, the Hampden County Sheriff's Dept TRIAD Division and City Councilor Anthony Russo announce Sand for Seniors on Wednesday, Dec. 4 from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main St Agawam in the back parking lot.

Sand and buckets will be dispensed on first come first serve basis. Orders will be taken if supplies run out. If you received sand last year and wish to refill, please bring your bucket with you to this event.

Toys now being collected for ninth annual holiday exchange

AGAWAM – The Agawam Zero Waste Club, Agawam High School SAVE Club and National Honor Society are hosting the Ninth Annual Holiday Used Toy Exchange. This event was created to become a source of holiday gifts for residents on tight budgets, as well as increase the lifespan of consumer goods which are discarded long before their usefulness is waned.

Gently used, clean, working toys may be dropped off at the Agawam Public Library on Friday, Dec. 6, from 12 noon to 4:30 p.m. Gently used toys wanted include musical instruments, action figures, dolls, sports equipment, books, bicycles, electronics, video games, DVDs, stuffed animals, model kits, art supplies, building toys, creative learning toys, outdoor toys and structures, games, puzzles and baby toys. No dirty, broken or incomplete toys will be accept-

ed. All donations should be inspected before being dropped off.

General public free shopping of these gently used toys will be on Saturday, Dec. 7, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. In order to share with as many families as possible, families will be limited to an amount they are able to carry in one trip to their vehicle. Shoppers are asked to bring their own reusable shopping bags, as this is a zero-waste event. Any toys remaining will be donated to local charities. Children should not be brought into the shopping area, so that each toy will be an exciting surprise. An activity will be available to children while adults shop.

For more information, visit www.agawam.ma.us under the events column or email Nancy Bobskill at AgawamZeroWaste@gmail.com The Agawam Public Library is located at 750 Cooper St.



THANKSGIVING REVIEW

"Hi Paul, she was great! Lots of plump meat and just enough fat to help prevent her from drying out. We will be having leftovers for a very long time."
— Beth from Belchertown

HAND FED, PASTURE RAISED

On a Ludlow farm, turkeys run freely, hand fed on healthful grains and extra vegetables. Minimally processed, they have more meat, less water, and extra taste found only in tradition. No antibiotics, animal by-products, hormones, or additives are used.
— Jeanette & Paul Johnson
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Ban remains in place, drought conditions continue

AGAWAM – Pursuant to section 10.10.2 of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code, the Agawam Fire Department is issuing an immediate ban on all forms of open burning within the Town of Agawam due to hazardous fire conditions. This action is taken to protect public health and safety and to prevent the potential spread of fire.

Reasons for the Ban The following conditions have been identified as contributing to an elevated fire risk in our area:

- Current and projected drought conditions
- Unseasonably high temperatures
- Wind conditions contributing to fire spread
- Very dry fuel conditions including leaf

litter and dead wood

• Very dry ground surface conditions
Given these conditions, any form of open burning—including, but not limited to, brush burning, bonfires, fire pits, cooking fires and recreational fires—poses a substantial risk of uncontrolled fire spread, endangering life, property, and natural resources.

Scope of the Ban

Effective immediately, and until further notice, all open burning is prohibited within the jurisdiction of Agawam, including:

- Brush burning and debris burning
- Recreational fires, bonfires, and campfires including use of chimineas and out-

door fireplaces

- Cooking fires that do not use enclosed grills or propane appliances
- Any other form of open flame outdoors, regardless of purpose

Duration of the Ban

This temporary ban will remain in effect until further notice. The Fire Department will continually monitor conditions and will issue an official notice when the ban is lifted.

Enforcement and Penalties

Violation of this ban is subject to penalties as provided by Massachusetts General Laws and local ordinances. Enforcement

actions, including fines, will be applied to those who disregard this order.

Alternatives for Cooking and Heating Residents are encouraged to use safe alternatives for outdoor cooking and heating, including:

- Enclosed propane or charcoal grills for cooking purposes only
- Electric outdoor heating appliances, where applicable, safe, and meeting applicable code.

We ask for your cooperation and compliance with this order to ensure the safety of our community. Your attention to this matter and adherence to the ban on open burning are critical to preventing fires during this period of elevated risk.

Holly Wreath Bazaar Nov. 23

AGAWAM – On Saturday, Nov. 23 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Agawam Congregational Church will host its Holly Wreath Bazaar. Our vendors and crafters are in place for a variety of your Christmas shopping needs. Don't forget we have cards for sale (sports and famous people).

Again, we will have our bakery at the country store featuring sumptuous homemade pies, cakes, cookies, bars, and candy. There will be something for everyone at Santa's seconds. Also, you can participate in two raffles (grand raffle and our church raffle with numerous choices). Stay for lunch at our cafe for our deliciously prepared grilled hamburgers, hot dogs, and cheeseburgers. Popcorn will also be available for that festive feeling. We look forward to your visit to our church located in the historic district of Agawam at 745 Main Street on Saturday, Nov. 23.

Addams Family premieres at AHS

AGAWAM – The Agawam High School Performing Arts group will present "The Addams Family."

The production will take place in the Frederick T. Dacey Auditorium with shows on Thursday, Nov. 21, Friday, Nov. 22, and Saturday, Nov. 23 with curtain time of 7 p.m.

Decluttering fundraiser

HOLYOKE – NAMI-WM will be holding a Responsible Decluttering Program fundraiser at our office; 1221 Main Street, Suite 100, in the Catherine Horan Medical Building. Volunteers will be collecting housewares, gently used clothing, towels, small household appliances, books, sporting goods and much more. All clothing should be in kitchen or 30 gal. size trash bags, durable goods should be in manageable size boxes. Anything wet or soiled, in non-working condition, and any baby safety items will not be accepted. Call the office to arrange a time to drop off items or to have them picked up. Visit the website to find a list of items that will be accepted.

'Win a TV' special event helps to support feline sanctuary

FEEDING HILLS – To benefit the Cat Sanctuary in Feeding Hills, Feline Friends Inc. is holding a Win a TV special event. Enter now for a chance to win a 50 inch Insignia Fire TV, donated by MJ in memory of her cat, Keegan. Tickets are \$25 each. There is no limit on how many tickets donors can buy. Tickets on sale, from Nov. 16 through Nov. 30.

Purchase tickets by: Paypal or credit card: enter Feline Friends Inc.

Venmo: enter: @Feline-Friends. Checks: Mail to P.O. Box 174, Feeding Hills, MA 01030. Please include your phone number and/or email address for notification. Winner will be drawn on Dec. 7.

Winner must coordinate with Feline Friends to coordinate pick up by Dec. 15.

Just a reminder, there will be the next monthly donation drive at Smithland Pet

and Garden Center on Saturday, Dec. 14 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Volunteers will be collecting food, litter and monetary donations for our kitties. Opened bags/boxes will be accepted.

Smithland, a valued sponsor, is stocked with Friskies Pate or Shreds canned food (single flavor cases are preferred), many Fancy Feast varieties and unscented, clumping cat litter.

Feline Friends Inc. is a community-based, nonprofit sanctuary that does not discriminate against any cat based on age, gender or disability.

More information about our sanctuary may be found on our website at feline-friendsinc.org or the Facebook page at Feline Friends Cat Sanctuary. Contact Feline Friends Inc. with questions at info@feline-friendsinc.org or by phone at 413-786-5019.

St. John's Annual Christmas bazaar set for Saturday

AGAWAM – The St. John the Evangelist Parish annual Christmas bazaar will be held on Saturday, Nov. 23, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. It will take place in the parish center, directly behind the church at 833 Main St.

For sale will be Christmas treasures, baked goods, assorted candy, handmade knitted goods, jewelry, books and media. Try your luck on the gift basket and gift card items. Santa will be visiting from 9 to 11 a.m. Food will be available at the snack bar. Proceeds from this event will go to the upgrading of furniture in the parish hall.

Admission and parking are free, and the hall is handicap accessible. Come, bring a friend or two and help to support a worthy cause.

Mayor announces new city solicitor appointment

AGAWAM – Christopher C. Johnson announced that he recently appointed Christopher S. Cappucci as the new City Solicitor for Agawam. Cappucci brings with him a solid background in law, policy and government relations. He served as an Assistant District Attorney in the Hampden County DA's Office for the last two years which was preceded by several years with a Massachu-

setts State Representative as his Research and Staff Director. Cappucci received his law degree from the University of Massachusetts School of Law-Dartmouth and was awarded the Public Interest Law Fellowship.

Johnson said "Chris comes highly recommended by Hampden County District Attorney, Anthony Gulluni. He possesses a great combination of legal, as well as gov-

ernmental, experience. I look forward to working with Chris on the legal challenges that face our community."

Cappucci assumes the position vacated by Attorney Stephen Buoniconti who left to work as the Solicitor for the City of Springfield. Mayor Johnson is excited to welcome Attorney Christopher Cappucci to the Town of Agawam.

Call for Hampden County presence on appeals court

WESTFIELD – Earlier this month, Sen. John Velis (D-Westfield) authored and sent a letter to Gov. Maura Healey urging the appointment of a Hampden County resident to the Massachusetts Appeals Court. The letter, which was signed onto by 10 other legislators representing Hampden County in addition to Velis, noted that there has been no representation from Hampden County on the state's appeals court since 2022 and urged Governor Healey to reverse that trend.

"...Different regions of the Commonwealth represent different perspectives of our society, with differing and rich cultures, values, and points of view. Justices bring their personal experiences to the job, and the region in which they grew up most certainly influences their thought process," reads the letter from Legislators. "It would be unthinkable to not have an elected lawmaker from the most populous county in

Western Massachusetts, and we believe that principle holds true for the Justices of the Appeals Court."

Since the Massachusetts Appeals Court was created in 1972, Hampden County has had a tradition of representation on the Court. This includes Chief Justice Armstrong who was one of the original six justices and the longest serving original member. Justice Armstrong was followed by Justice Greaney, Justice Smith, Justice McDonough, and Justice Kinder, all from Hampden County. But since 2022, there has been no representation from the most populous county in the region on the state's Appeals Court.

The letter from legislators to Healey also emphasizes the qualifications of the Hampden County legal community, noting that Hampden County District Court is the busiest in the state and that the County is home to some of the busiest Superior,

Probate and Family, Juvenile and Housing Courts as well.

"At the end of the day, it's critically important that our judiciary has voices and viewpoints on our courts that represent the entire commonwealth," said Velis, who is a lawyer himself and serves on the Legislature's Judiciary Committee. "Our State Appeals Court needs that perspective, and the experiences that come from working in the Hampden County justice system, in order to best serve the individuals who are impacted by the decisions the Court makes."

Velis noted that he hopes that consideration will be given to a Hampden County resident as vacancies and appointments to the State Appeals Court come up. At the end of October, the Governor's Council approved Judge Amy Blake as the next Chief Justice of the Appeals Court following her nomination by Governor Healey in September.

Wistariahurst Museum to hold holiday open house and festive market Dec. 7

HOLYOKE – You better watch out, you better not cry. Better not pout, Wistariahurst is telling you why: our Holiday Open House and Festive Market is comin' to town! On Dec. 7 and 8 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., the mood will be right and the spirits up during this captivating weekend of jubilation. Our beloved museum will be decorated with the splendor of the holiday season and filled with cheer as we welcome guests back into our halls. Visitors will be

able to explore the first floor of the museum, listen to holiday-themed music, and discover the fun of our Wisty Railroad train set on display. But wait, there's myrrh! Our winter wonderland will feature our Festive Market with local vendors selling a variety of products such as art, jewelry, and other amazing items perfect for your gift exchanges this



year. Our Holiday Open House is guaranteed to bring joy to your world with historical fun and holiday cheer.

"There is nothing better than feeling the magic of the holiday season inside of the museum," Rachel Powell, office assistant, muses. "The greatest gift we see at the museum is seeing people of all ages come together to celebrate the

museum and community in the warmth of our halls."

Wistariahurst Museum's 4th Annual Holiday Open House and Festival Market truly offers something for everyone, and we're so excited to welcome the entire community to join us and share in the joy of the season. Our event is a time for celebration and a time to make cherished memories, so we've made sure to make admission to this event free and open to the public.

Opinion

Guest Column



Older Veteran asks about Special Social Security credit for military service

Dear Rusty
I served in the U S Army from January 1958 to February 1961. What increase should I receive for those years and who do I call and at what phone number?

Signed: Proud Veteran

Dear Proud Veteran
First, thank you for your military service. I expect you are referring to the "special extra credits for military service," which are available to some who served in the US Military in earlier years. It is important to note that these "extra credits" take the form of an adjustment to your military pay record while serving and are not an incremental amount added to your monthly Social Security benefit because you served.

Military pay has been subject to deductions for Social Security since 1957. Thus, while serving between 1958 and 1961 you paid SS tax on your military earnings. But, for purposes of determining your Social Security benefit, your military earnings record would be increased by \$300 for each quarter you served on active duty, up to a maximum of \$1,200 increase per year of service.

That means for 1958 - 1960, when calculating your SS benefit, \$1,200 would be added to your military earnings record for each year you served. FYI, for those who served after 1967, this adjustment was automatically made by Social Security. But for service years prior to 1967, as in your case, you would need to inform Social Security of your service when you claimed SS and provide a copy of your military form DD-214, your discharge papers. SS would then make the appropriate adjustment to your military earnings record prior to calculating your benefit amount. And, for clarity, additional credits for military service are not available to those who served after 2001.

A key point to understand is that this adjustment to your military pay may or may not affect the amount of your Social Security benefit. Social Security determines your benefit amount based on your highest earning 35 years over your entire lifetime, adjusted for inflation.

If, after you served in the military, you had at least 35 years of civilian employment where you earned more than your military pay, it is probable that your military pay is not included when calculating your Social Security benefit. If that is the case, it is likely that the "special extra credits for military service" would have no effect on your Social Security payment. If, however, your military pay

SECURITY | page 5



Guest Column

Wrap it up!



I spent this past weekend trying to wrap things up. Before we know it the holidays will be upon us and there will be little time to spend in the garden.

I had, and sadly still have, areas yet to clean up, last minute bulbs to plant and statuary and tools to put into storage. One major concern is how dry it is.

Read on to learn about some chores that should be tackled before the ground freezes.

Honestly, in all my years of gardening I have never felt the need to water in spring bulbs after planting them. This year is the exception.

What about our newly planted perennials, trees and shrubs? Just to be safe, get out the hose and give them a good soaking.

If weather permits, move a slow running hose from shrub to shrub over the course of a few hours. This is especially critical for our broad leaf evergreens such as rhododendrons, azaleas, and Pieris.

Remember the damage on older rhododendrons a few winters back? Some large specimens lost a third or more of their overall size!

Much of that was caused by excessive cold and winter winds that desiccated (removed moisture from) the foliage and left it susceptible to injury. Antidesiccant sprays are available from nurseries and garden centers. These products leave a waxy layer of film over the leaf, locking in its moisture.

Did you purchase any shrubs, roses or otherwise that were so beautiful you couldn't resist, even though they were only marginally hardy in our area (zones 6 or higher)? These need special attention.

Pound some stakes into the ground just outside the drip line of the plant. Wrap the stakes with burlap and stuff it full of straw, salt marsh hay, or

shredded leaves, anything that will insulate yet not pack down and cause rot.

Never use plastic; this material creates a greenhouse of fluctuating temperatures that will surely kill the plant. Climbing plants such as roses or clematis can be removed from their trellises, tied in loose bundles and wrapped in a similar fashion as above.

Many of our evergreen shrubs suffer under the weight of ice and snow. Smaller specimens can be protected by making "A-frame" tents out of plywood and placing them over the susceptible plant. Use hinges rather than nails to construct them; storage during the off-season will be a breeze.

These types of enclosures also provide a great deal of wind protection. Paint them to blend in with the landscape.

Other articles have covered the importance of winter mulch to protect strawberries, fall mums, garlic, and spring flowering bulbs among others. Large evergreen branches do well to cover bigger areas. I have used them successfully to weigh down other light mulches such as straw or chopped leaves for twice the protection.

Remember, this task is best accomplished after the ground freezes, with our goal being to keep it frozen, thereby avoiding thawing spells that heave plants from the ground.

During the winter voles and field mice can wreak havoc on young fruit trees by tunneling through the snow to the bark in search of food. Their gnawing will girdle the tree and if excessive enough will eventually kill it.

Remember, the layer of tissue just below the bark is the tree's "plumbing"! Protect the trunk by wrapping it with one-quarter inch hardware cloth or commercially made trunk protectors. Remove the protectors in the spring.

Unfortunately, I neglected to protect young trees one fall and that was all it took. A poor tree was gnawed almost completely around the trunk. I was surprised it had enough energy to leaf out the following spring, but less surprised to see it wither and die not a month later.

In case you were wondering, yes, my bulbs for Old Sturbridge Village did finally come in. I wish

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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

Guest Column

Boost your mental well-being – Take a vacation!



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

I recently learned about an organization called Wheel the World, which makes vacationing – adventures, really – accessible to people who use wheelchairs.

If they can do it, so you can you! If you haven't had a vacation lately, you're not alone. A 2023 Pew Research Center study found that more than 40 percent of people who receive paid time off from their employers don't use up all of their vacation in a given year. Based on data from 2018, a statistical analysis revealed that Americans wasted some 768 million vacation days.

Admittedly, it's hard for some folks to get time off. If a gig worker or rideshare driver isn't putting in the hours, they aren't getting paid. Many people have jobs that don't provide paid time off.

Still, the Bureau of Labor Statistics tells us that 79 percent of people employed in the private sector get paid vacation. And a growing number of companies are offering the benefit of unlimited paid time off,

in part to stay competitive in a tight hiring market.

"We can't overlook the importance of recreation," says Mary Anne Ehlert, president of Protected Tomorrows, which helps special needs families plan for their financial future. "We sometimes focus on everyday issues and lose sight of the need to have fun." Even those who are handicapped are able to enjoy a vacation. Nowadays, most cruises are wheel chair accessible even if people want to travel alone.

With May being Mental Health Awareness Month (and with Memorial Day and summer being right around the corner), it's a good time to talk about the mental health benefits of travel.

First, though, a note of caution: For all of its benefits, travel is not a substitute for therapy. If you are feeling anxious or depressed, talk to a mental health professional. Online services such as BetterHelp.com are readily available, or you can call or text 988 to reach a listening ear at the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

Now, why take a vacation? Let me count the whys.

Traveling can lift your mood

Feeling like one day is just like the one before, and the one before that? That monotony is not helpful to mental well-being. Travel breaks up the routine, lets you see new places, meet new people and experience new things. Just anticipating a vacation can help you feel lighter and happier.

Traveling refills your emotional and mental reservoir

Sometimes you're just running on empty. A vacation – whether it involves a relaxing cruise or a strenuous hike (I'll take the former!) – can send you back to work feeling like you're up to every challenge.

Traveling can lower the risk of depression

Mental health experts say there's research to support the link between travel and happiness. One study found that women who vacation at least twice a year are less likely to suffer from depression and chronic stress than women who vacation less than once every two years.

Traveling lets your brain reset

What do you do when your computer goes all wonky on you? You reboot! The same goes for your brain, which is just a really sophisticated computing device. If you have chronic stress, your memory and goal-setting abilities are negatively impacted. Taking time to go somewhere and get away from work can help you feel more productive and focused when you get back.

Traveling might let you sleep better

One-third of us don't get enough sleep, which is linked to heart disease, type 2 diabetes and depression. Getting away from your routine at home, even for a weekend, can help reset your sleep pattern by disrupting any habits that negatively affect

sleep quality, like bring your phone to bed with you.

Traveling with family improves feelings of belonging

Isolation is another factor that isn't helpful to mental well-being. Traveling with loved ones and sharing experiences with them enhances connections with them and helps meet the need for love and belonging.

To be beneficial, travel doesn't have to be extensive or all that expensive. Even a short getaway to Wisconsin or a weekend downtown might be enough to recharge your batteries. For ideas on local and regional outings, see www.visitMA.com.

Can travel be stressful itself? You bet. But there are also things you can do to minimize travel stress: Plan ahead for whatever life throws at you, bring all of your medications, pack healthy snacks, stay hydrated and practice mindfulness so you can be "in the moment."

Those memories are the best souvenirs.

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.

GARDEN ■ from page 4

they could talk. What a story they would tell.

I think they have honestly traveled more in the last six weeks than I have in my entire life. Holland to New York to Alabama to the Bahamas to New Jersey and then to a shoe store in New York City. Yes, a shoe store.

A good Samaritan saw my name on the packing slip and called to say she received

them. Regardless, I am happy they finally arrived in Sturbridge. I am hopeful that they will all be planted (and watered in) within the next couple of days!

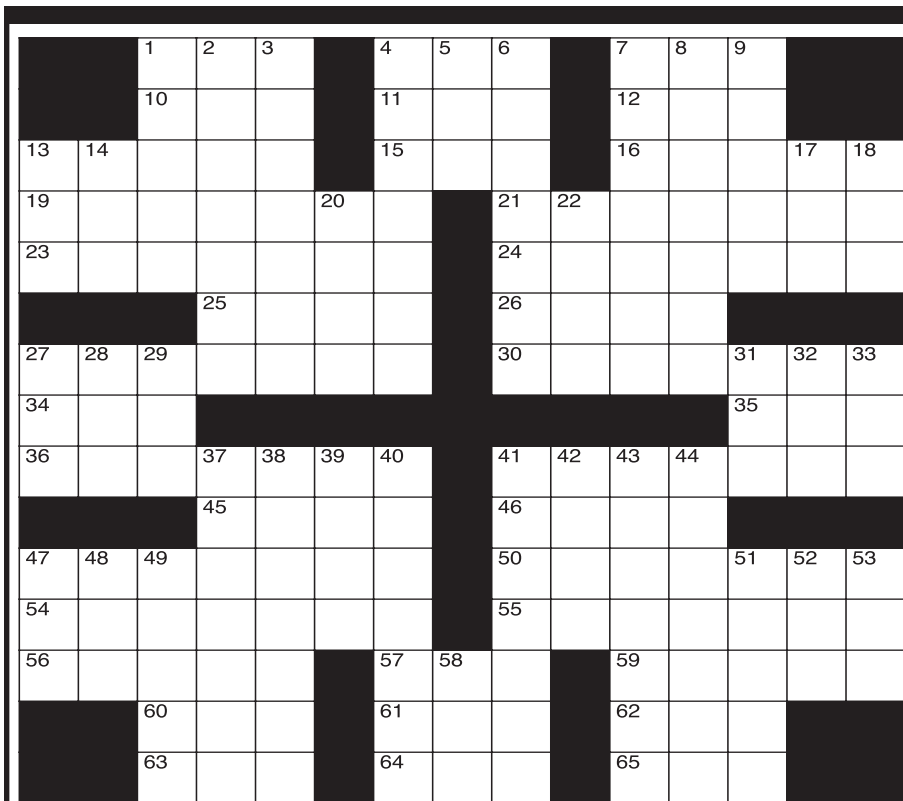
Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 32 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

SECURITY ■ from page 4

including those special extra credits for any year is more than you earned in civilian life, then you can contact Social Security (1-800-772-1213), provide them with a copy of your DD-214, and ask that they recalculate your Social Security benefit to include the extra credits for your years of military service.

Again, thank you for your service to our country, and please do not hesitate to contact us again if you have any further questions. FYI, you may also find the "For Veterans" section of our AMAC Foundation website by visiting www.amacfoundation.org.

amacfoundation.org. 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. Defunct airline
4. Beverage container
7. A team's best pitcher
10. Unit of liquid capacity
11. It comes before two
12. Male child
13. Type of wheat
15. One's mother
16. Upper side of an organism
19. United is one
21. Extraction process
23. A being with lesser divine status
24. People living together in a community
25. Luxury automaker
26. This (Spanish)
27. Semitic language
30. Period for a defined purpose
34. Wander aimlessly in search of pleasure

35. Up in the air (abbr.)
36. American marsupial
41. Decadent dessert
45. Aquatic plant
46. About aviation
47. Summer footwear
50. Rugged mountain ranges
54. With tin
55. Cut on the surface of a hard object
56. Wrapped in cloth
57. Defensive nuclear weapon
59. "American Idol" contestant Clay
60. Midway between east and southeast
61. Court decision "v. Wade"
62. Born of
63. Soviet Socialist Republic
64. Actress __-Margaret
65. Not even

CLUES DOWN

1. Heat unit
2. __ Faulkner, American writer
3. Guatemalan town
4. Of funny things
5. Actress __ de Armas
6. Agents of one's downfall
7. Takes forcibly
8. Body lice
9. Large nest of a bird of prey
13. Unhappy
14. Popular holiday dessert
17. Habitual drunkard
18. Used of a number or amount not specified
20. Complications
22. Fail to win
27. Before the present
28. Musical genre
29. Flurry
31. 007's creator

32. Indiana Pacer Toppin
33. Midway between north and northeast
37. Feeling
38. Damage another's reputation
39. Mottled citrus fruit
40. Beauty product
41. They man first, second and third
42. Harness
43. Herb
44. Expressed concern
47. Mississippi scientific area (abbr.)
48. Consumed
49. Nostrils
51. Gathered fallen leaves
52. Express good wishes
53. Monetary unit of Brunei
58. Japanese Buddhist festival

WE'RE ALL EARS

Questions?
Comments?
Story Ideas?

Let us know how we're doing.
Your opinion is something we always want to hear.

Contact aan@turley.com

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Holyoke Community honored for excellence in marketing

HOLYOKE – Two stories about Holyoke Community College graduates earned awards for the college at the Fall 2024 District 1 Conference of the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations.

HCC won the top two Medallion awards in the category of Excellence in Writing, Short Form, for stories up to 800 words. Taking gold: “Name That Tune,” a short profile of HCC math major Tom Dulac ‘23, now a student at Westfield State University. In 2023, Dulac won a national award for musical composition that he submitted under the pseudonym “Zac Dune.”

Taking silver: “Ready to Go,” a Commencement profile about Tatiana McKnight ‘23, who suffered from agoraphobia as a teenager. Encouraged by her grandmother, the Puerto Rican educator and author Sonia Nieto, McKnight enrolled at HCC, where she excelled and used as a springboard for transfer to Mount Holyoke College.

Both stories were written by HCC Media Relations Manager Chris Yurko. “Name That Tune” was published in the Alumni Out & About section of the Spring 2024 issue of the HCC college magazine, The Connection,



HCC Media Relations Manager Chris Yurko and HCC Multimedia Specialist Louis Burgos hold gold and silver awards the college received from the National Council for Marketing and Public Relations. SUBMITTED PHOTO

and “Ready to Go” in the Spotlight section of the HCC website in July 2023.

“It always feels good to be recognized by one’s colleagues, but it gives me even greater joy to be able to bring attention to the great work being done at the college and the remarkable achievements of our students,” said Yurko, who is also editor-in-chief of the college’s award-winning magazine, The Connection, which received a national Paragon award from NCMPR in 2023.

NCMPR represents marketing and public relations professionals at community and technical colleges in the United States and beyond. The NCMPR Medallion Awards recognize outstanding achievement in design and communication in each of NCMPR’s seven districts. HCC resides in District 1, which includes Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Quebec, and the United Kingdom. The NCMPR District 1 Conference was held Oct. 23-25 in Baltimore, Maryland.

Enrollment still open for home energy assistance

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities today announced that the Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) enrollment period for the 2024-2025 winter heating season will open on Oct. 1. This critical program provides financial relief to eligible households to help them pay their winter heating bills, ensuring they can keep their homes safe and warm during the colder months.

HEAP is a free, statewide resource that assists eligible renters and homeowners by paying a portion of their winter heating bills directly to their heating companies. Starting Oct.1, homeowners and renters can apply online or through local administering agencies across the state. The assistance period runs from Nov. 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025. HEAP offers grants that do not need to be repaid; however, households must meet specific eligibility requirements to qualify.

“No resident should have to worry about heating their home during the winter,” said

Secretary of Housing and Livable Communities Ed Augustus. “With high costs continuing to strain household finances, the Home Energy Assistance Program is more critical than ever. We urge anyone in need of heating assistance to explore their eligibility by applying online or visiting the nearest administering agency. Please share this valuable information with loved ones or neighbors who could benefit from this support during the colder months.”

Eligibility is determined by several factors, including household size and the combined gross annual income of residents 18 and older. Qualifying households, including those with the cost of heat included in the rent, can receive assistance for all heating sources, including oil, electricity, natural gas, propane, kerosene, wood and coal. Households do not need to be on public assistance or have unpaid heating bills to qualify.

For more information find your local HEAP agency at <https://hedfuel.azurewebsites.net/>.

‘Polaroid Stories’ Street Mythology an HCC theater production

HOLYOKE – “Polaroid Stories” written by Naomi Iizuka and directed by Rose Schietz Malla will be showing on Thursday, Nov. 21 at 7:30 p.m. at HCC’s Leslie Phillips Theater. The Friday, Nov. 22, show will be ASL-interpreted.

Tickets are \$5 for HCC students, staff, and faculty; general admission is \$10 and Senior tickets cost \$8. Available one hour before each show at the Leslie Phillips Box Office or call 413-552-2528 to reserve.

For audiences 13 years and older. “Polaroid Stories,” a play by Naomi Iizuka, presents a series of linked vignettes, about homeless youth living on the streets of some unnamed, presumably American city.

Those snapshots capture their struggles, conflicts, hopes, and ambitions, but, like a Polaroid image, a full rendering only becomes clear over time.

But it’s even more complicated than that. The play, while based on interviews with real street kids, is also an adaptation of the ancient, epic poem “Metamorphoses,” writ-

ten by the Roman poet Ovid in A.D. 8.

“What they experience in Polaroid Stories mirrors or somehow distorts the familiar tales we know from Greek mythology,” says Rose Schietz Malla, guest-director of the Holyoke Community College Theater Department’s fall 2024 production of the play. “Metamorphoses is a collection of stories about people and mythical figures experiencing change, transforming in some way, as do the characters in ‘Polaroid Stories.’”

Schietz Malla, a graduate student in the University of Massachusetts Amherst theater program, said she selected Polaroid Stories in part because of the way it elevates marginalized young people to the status of mythological figures.

“It feels like being sunk into the world in which they live,” says Schietz Malla. “Because it’s a play about young people in the voices of young people, it felt like something really fitting for a college environment. There’s a lot of anger in the play, a lot of passion and angst, and that’s exciting for young actors to dig into.”

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USDA INSP. FROZEN 1/2 SPIRAL HAM **\$1²⁹** lb

USDA INSP. FRESH KAYEM BUDABALL WHOLE SMOKED PIT HAM..... **\$3⁶⁶** lb

USDA INSP. FRESH SKINLESS & SHANKLESS HATFIELD OLDTIME WHOLE HAM **\$2⁸⁹** lb

USDA INSP. FRESH LEG LAMB..... **\$5⁹⁹** lb

USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF RIB EYE WHOLE OR HALF CUT FREE **\$8⁹⁹** lb

USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF SIRLOIN SPOON ROAST **\$5⁹⁹** lb

USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF SHOULDER **\$7⁹⁹** lb

USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY DIET LEAN GROUND BEEF **\$4⁹⁹** 5 LB BAG

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USDA INSP. FRESH CHICOPEE PROVISIONS BLUE SEAL KIELBASA **\$4⁹⁹** lb

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USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN RAW SHRIMP 16/20 COUNT 2 LB BAG **\$14⁹⁹** ea

happy thanksgiving

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SPORTS

AGAWAM VS. WEST SPRINGFIELD
Agawam leads series 63-32-3

- 2023: West Side 37-20
- 2022: West Side 29-16
- 2021: West Side 40-19
- 2020: No game - COVID
- 2019: West Side 48-0
- 2018: West Side 19-6
- 2017: West Side 34-0
- 2016: Agawam 40-28
- 2015: Agawam 34-32
- 2014: Agawam 38-36
- 2013: Agawam 19-18
- 2012: Agawam 50-36
- 2011: West Side 17-14
- 2010: West Side 20-0
- 2009: West Side 32-20
- 2008: West Side 39-0
- 2007: Agawam 34-27
- 2006: Agawam 20-12 (OT)
- 2005: Agawam 18-12
- 2004: Agawam 42-6
- 2003: Agawam 30-8
- 2002: Agawam 26-0
- 2001: Agawam 14-6
- 2000: West Side 17-14
- 1999: Agawam 27-6
- 1998: Agawam 21-14
- 1997: Agawam 27-8
- 1996: Agawam 29-21
- 1995: West Side 7-6
- 1994: West Side 14-6
- 1993: Agawam 22-0
- 1992: Agawam 14-7
- 1991: West Side 14-0
- 1990: West Side 16-8
- 1989: West Side 12-7
- 1988: West Side 22-21
- 1987: Agawam 48-6
- 1986: Agawam 21-0
- 1985: Agawam 15-12
- 1984: Agawam 23-6
- 1983: Agawam 18-7
- 1982: West Side 20-3
- 1981: Agawam 13-6
- 1980: West Side 26-0
- 1979: West Side 42-15
- 1978: Agawam 42-6
- 1977: West Side 28-8
- 1976: Agawam 15-14
- 1975: Agawam 15-2
- 1974: West Side 16-6
- 1973: Tie 14-14
- 1972: Agawam 13-12
- 1971: Agawam 28-8
- 1970: Agawam 32-6
- 1969: Agawam 30-28
- 1968: Agawam 14-6
- 1967: Agawam 20-6
- 1966: Agawam 24-0
- 1965: Agawam 32-8
- 1964: Agawam 34-8
- 1963: Agawam 22-2
- 1962: West Side 26-12
- 1961: West Side 12-8
- 1960: West Side 48-8
- 1959: Agawam 41-0
- 1958: West Side 8-0
- 1957: Agawam 54-0
- 1956: West Side 28-13
- 1955: West Side 33-7
- 1954: Agawam 19-12
- 1953: Agawam 34-21
- 1952: West Side 13-7
- 1951: Agawam 34-21
- 1950: Agawam 20-12
- 1948: West Side 18-14
- 1947: Agawam 13-7
- 1946: Agawam 26-0
- 1945: Agawam 65-0
- 1944: Agawam 13-0
- 1943: Tie 7-7
- 1942: Agawam 14-13
- 1941: West Side 13-7
- 1940: Agawam 27-0
- 1939: Agawam 7-0
- 1938: West Side 7-0
- 1937: Agawam 6-0
- 1936: Agawam 33-6
- 1935: Agawam 34-6
- 1934: Agawam 7-0
- 1933: Tie 0-0
- 1932: Agawam 19-13
- 1931: Agawam 34-0
- 1930: Agawam 7-6
- 1929: West Side 6-0
- 1928: Agawam 30-6
- 1927: Agawam 25-0
- 1926: Agawam 7-0
- 1925: Agawam 20-6
- 1924: Agawam 6-0

Brownies, Terriers set for Turkey Day game

AGAWAM – On Thanksgiving morning next Thursday at 10 a.m., the Agawam High School football team will host rival West Springfield in its annual Thanksgiving rivalry matchup. The Brownies have not won on the holiday since 2016, but still hold a commanding lead in the rivalry with 63 wins against 32 losses. There were also three ties throughout the long rivalry.

The year 2024 marks 100 years since the rivalry began in 1924, but it will be the 99th time the teams are playing each on Turkey Day. The two teams did not play in 1949 and did not play in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Agawam heads into this year's game with a 4-6 record. The season started out in a promising fashion for Agawam as they won their first



Domenick Pisano looks to make a handoff during last year's Thanksgiving morning game at West Springfield.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

FOOTBALL | page 9



Nicholas Ugolini goes for the left sideline on a carry.



Benjamin Tokarev kicks an extra point for the Brownies.



Rian Villareal returns a punt.



Joseph Kravetz blocks on the defensive line.



Nicholas Ugolini and Michael Sibilja both go for a fumbled ball.

AGAWAM FOOTBALL (4-6)

- Friday, Sept. 13
- Thursday, Sept. 19
- Friday, Sept. 27
- Friday, Oct. 4
- Friday, Oct. 11
- Thursday, Oct. 17
- Friday, Oct. 25
- Friday, Nov. 1
- Friday, Nov. 8
- Thursday, Nov. 14

- Agawam 30, Chicopee Comprehensive 14
- Agawam 21, Holyoke 14
- Whittier Tech 24, Agawam 21
- West Springfield 44, Agawam 0
- Wahconah 54, Agawam 18
- Agawam 40, Northampton 24
- East Longmeadow 24, Agawam 0
- Agawam 42, Amherst 40
- Longmeadow 40, Agawam 6
- Minnechaug 38, Agawam 7

Thanksgiving Game

Thursday, Nov. 28 vs. West Springfield, 10 a.m.



Sports



Gabriela Cosentini sends a pass away.
TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Katelyn Cleavall tries to separate from the opposing defense.

Ludlow ousts Agawam from tournament

LUDLOW – The Agawam High School girls soccer were able to squeeze into the Division 2 State Tournament and two weeks ago opened up the postseason with a matchup against a local rival, Ludlow. Ludlow would defeated Agawam in a preliminary round game on Nov. 4 3-1. Ludlow would move into the second round and fall in the Round of 32 while Agawam's season finished with an 8-9-2 record.



Keira Murphy sends the goal kick away.



Madalynn Fleury nearly loses the ball.



Megan Fitzgerald makes her way up the field.



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Sports

Late goals get Thunderbirds much-needed win

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (6-8-1-0) got a clutch late-game goal from their captain en route to a 4-2 win over the Charlotte Checkers (7-4-0-1) on Saturday night at the MassMutual Center. Springfield picked up its first set of back-to-back wins this season in the process.

The T-Birds played a stout defensive opening period against the AHL's most potent offense, keeping the Checkers to just nine shot attempts and one unsuccessful power play opportunity. Vadim Zherenko has a stable start to his night, denying each Charlotte shot that reached the blue paint.

At the other end, former T-Birds head coach Gordie Kinnear also had his team locked in defensively. The Checkers also killed off one Springfield power play, and Ken Appleby had answers for each of the T-Birds' seven first-period shots.

2:30 into the second, one of the newcomers to North America got Springfield the night's first tally. Leo Loof brilliantly maneuvered himself down the right wing into the slot, moving the puck to his forehand and rattling a shot off the post. While Loof did not have luck on his side, his fellow Swede Simon Robertsson did, as the rookie arrived in the slot, found the loose puck, and snapped it past a fallen Appleby to give Springfield the 1-0 lead. It was Robertsson's first AHL goal, and it marked the first time in three games that Springfield tallied the first marker.

The Springfield power play, which had not scored since Nov. 2, got into the action next at 5:57, as Aleksanteri Kaskimaki uncorked a one-timer from the right circle off a setup from Samuel Johannesson. Marcus Sylvegard parked himself in front of the net

and deftly tipped the shot past Appleby for his second man-advantage goal of the season, and the T-Birds lead moved to 2-0.

A late penalty and subsequent unsportsmanlike conduct call put Charlotte on the power play for four minutes at the tail end of the middle stanza. With just 1.8 seconds left in the frame, Trevor Carrick held a clearing attempt in and snapped a shot past Zherenko to bring the Checkers to within a goal heading into the third.

The visitors built off that goal at the 2:23 mark of the third when Marek Alschér moved up from the blue line to find a loose puck in a scramble and score his first AHL goal to tie the game, 2-2.

The stalemate carried into the back half of the final frame, and a pair of matching minors set the teams up at 4-on-4 hockey with less than six minutes to play. Almost

immediately, the T-Birds rose to the occasion. Hunter Skinner raced to the right point to hold a puck at the blue line. With no hesitation, he whipped a pass diagonally to a streaking Matthew Peca on the left-wing side. Appleby denied Peca's first attempt with the pad, but the captain corraled the rebound and swept it into an empty net, restoring the T-Birds lead, 3-2, with 5:29 to go.

With Appleby pulled in the closing minutes, Charlotte kept pressing the issue, but Zherenko and the T-Birds defense stiffened. Dylan Peterson blocked a last-ditch effort, cleared the defensive zone, and tapped the puck into the empty cage to wrap up Springfield's win.

Zherenko earned his first win since Oct. 12 with 25 stops on the night, while Appleby had 22 saves for Charlotte.

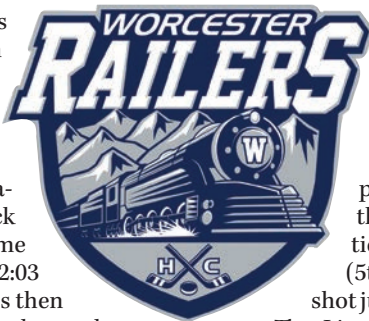
Worcester Railers notch road win in Canada

TROIS-RIVIÈRES, QC – The Worcester Railers HC (6-6-0-0 12pts) beat the Trois-Rivières Lions (5-3-2-0, 12pts), on Saturday by a final score of 5-4 in front of a crowd of 1,936 at the Colisée Videotron. The Railers are back on the ice next at the Colisée Videotron taking on the Trois-Rivières Lions on Sunday, November 17th at 3:00 p.m. EST.

It was Trois-Rivières who scored first when Jakov Novak (2-1-3) scored on the power play at 15:30 in the first making it a 1-0 score going into the second. Jakov Novak found the back of the net for a second time in the second period 12:03 into the frame. The Railers then made it 2-1 with a power play goal from Matthew Kopperud (1-1-2). Under a minute into the third Riley Piercy (2-0-2) scored on the power play to tie the game up at 2-2. The Lions took the lead 3-2 9:41 into the third with a goal from Logan Nijhoff (1-0-1). Jonathan Yantsis (1-0-1) then added another on making it 4-2. Anthony Repaci then got one through (2-2-4) 13:02 into the third. Anthony Repaci struck again making it a tie game at 4-4 17:44 into the third. Riley Piercy got the game winner with 22 seconds remaining in overtime making the final score 5-4.

Trois-Rivières scored a power play goal for the lone first period goal. Jakov Novak (6th) got one by John Muse of Worcester to make it a 1-0 game. The Lions would go back on the power play later in the period following a hooking call on Connor Welsh, but the Railers penalty kill was able to successfully kill the penalty off. Shots favored Trois-Rivières 11-7 in the first period.

The Railers had to start the second period off on the penalty kill following a slashing call on Griffin Loughran late in the first.



Although the Railers successfully killed this penalty off to start the second, the Lions extended their lead to 2-0. It was Jakov Novak (7th) scoring again for the Lions as he ripped one through from the right circle. Matthew Kopperud (4th) cut into the Trois-Rivières lead with his power play goal making it 2-1 Trois-Rivières. Neither team would score through the rest of the second leaving the score at 2-1 headed into the third. Shots favored Worcester 11-9 in the second.

The Railers got another power play opportunity in the second and were able to tie it up at 2-2 as Riley Piercy (5th) tapped in a rebounded shot just 52 seconds into the third.

The Lions went on to take the 3-2 lead with a goal from Logan Nijhoff (2nd). Jonathan Yantsis (1st) went on to make it 4-2 Trois-Rivières with his goal 11:21 into the third. The Railers cut the Lion lead to one with a goal from Anthony Repaci (8th) 13:02 into the third period. Anthony Repaci (9th) was not done there as he scored again on the power play to tie the game at 4-4 with 2:16 remaining in the third. With his goal, Anthony Repaci passed Barry Almeida at 150 for the franchise record in points scored with 151 (74G, 77A). Repaci's goal would be the final score of the third, forcing overtime. Shots were even at 17 for both teams.

It took almost the entire overtime period for a team to win this one. Matthew Kopperud had an opportunity late into the overtime period but his shot hit off the left post. Riley Piercy (6th) then took the puck down all alone and scored the game winner, giving the Railers the 5-4 overtime win. Worcester outshot Trois-Rivières in overtime, and Trois-Rivières outshot Worcester 40-39 in the game.

maintaining in the first half and got two-thirds of the way down the field, but could not score before the break. West Springfield's offense turned it on during the second half.

Now, it's a six-game skid Agawam hopes to break on Thanksgiving morning with the Brownies holding the home field advantage for this matchup.

Agawam did have West Springfield during the regular season due to the fact the two teams are placed in the same conference. West Springfield defeated Agawam 44-0 in the first matchup this year between the two teams.

Though not yet confirmed, Agawam and West Springfield are likely to be placed in difference conferences due to their recent records when the leagues are realigned after this season, bringing the teams back to just their Thanksgiving rivalry each year.

WSU Owls finish football season with .500 record

WESTFIELD – Westfield State senior running back Dylan Disabella (Granby, Conn.) punctuated the Owls' senior day with 241 yards rushing and three TD's to power Westfield to a 22-7 win over Fitchburg State

Westfield closes the season 4-6 overall and 4-5 in the Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference under first-year head coach Lou Conte, Jr. Fitchburg ends its first season under coach Izzy Abraham at 2-8, 1-8 in the MASCAC.

Disabella and the Owls methodically ground out the win, as he finished with 35 carries, and scored on a 7-yard run in the first quarter, and a 21-yard run in the second quarter to grab a 14-0 lead at the half. He added a seven-yard TD run in the third quarter. He finishes the year as the Owls leading rusher with 763 yards and 7 rushing TD's on 143 carries, switching into the primary ball-carrier role for Westfield after a mid-season injury to Sean Willis (450 yards). Disabella also led the Owls in receiving for the season with 14 catches for 240 yards and two more TD's

The Owls tacked on a 28-yard Cooper Harvey (Niskayuna, NY) field goal to take a 22-0 lead in the fourth quarter, before Fitchburg finally got on the board with 31 seconds left in the contest on a 50-yard Devin Lebron (Ledyard, Conn.) to Jeremy Allik (Natick, Mass.) completion.

Westfield dominated in time of possession, 42:42-17:18, and had 342 yards of total offense compared to 216 for the Falcons. The game also featured eight fumbles and two interceptions between the two teams, and a combined 26 flags for 227 yards in penalties.

Ryan Scott (Dalton, Mass./Wahconah) started at QB and finished 4-10 for 72 yards passing. He was relieved by Lucas Pickard (Dalton, Mass./Wahconah) in the second half, who was just 1-1, but that was a 38-yarder to Jordan Lanoue (Belchertown, Mass.). Jacob Swinehart

(Holyoke, Mass.) finished with three catches for 63 yards.

Fitchburg's offense was led by 55 yard rushing from Matthew Aguirre (Laredo, Tex.). Emilo Cabey (Boston, Mass./Dover Sherborn) caught three balls for 48 yards. Starter Rocky Marchitelli (Gunnison, Colo.) was 6-12 for 58 yards passing, but had to leave the game after receiving a second unsportsmanlike conduct foul. Lebron relieved him and completed 3 of 10 passes for 50 yards and a td.

Westfield's Eric Lovell (Barnstable, Mass.) picked off a pair of Lebron's passes, including a 24-yard return to the Falcons' 7-yard line in the third quarter that set up Disabella's third score of the day. Senior DT Cade Nelson (Shrewsbury, Mass.) led the Owls with seven tackles with 1.5 TFL, and Justyn Gardener (East Hartford, Conn.) added six stops and half a sack. Dylan Zuerblis (Wethersfield, Conn.) netted 1.5 sacks.

The Falcons defense was led by 13 tackles and a sack from Sebastian Burmester (Germantown, NY), with John McGarry (Highland Lake, NY) adding eight stops.

Westfield State honored its 27 seniors before the game, and all who were healthy for the game played with the big lead late in the fourth quarter.

Jacob Applebee, Gavin Bullcock, Dylan Clark, Curtis Dion, Dylan Disabella, Sean Ferguson, Gabriel Fernandez, Justyn Gardner, Nikolas Giotsas, Chris Greene, Jordan Lanoue, Adam Legere, Max Margeson, Anthony Messoro, Cade Nelson, Tim O'Connor, Gilberto Rodriguez, Ethan Russell, Connor Schlittler, Blake Simpson, Jake Swinehart, Casey Tang, Matthew Varteresian, Nate Walton, Noah Will, Malachi Wright, and Alvin Yvon comprised the Owls senior class recognized in the pregame ceremonies.

Westfield finished with four wins, one more than the 2023 campaign, and their best total since the fall of 2018 when the Owls finished 5-5.



FOOTBALL ■ from page 7

two games, but Agawam struggled through most of its Suburban Conference scheduled and finished the regular season with a 4-4 record overall. Agawam then was defeated by Longmeadow and Minnechaug, both of the AA Conference, during non-playoff action in Weeks 9 and 10.

Last year, Agawam headed into West Springfield looking to break a five-game losing streak on Thanksgiving. The Brownies got a first-half touchdown from Nicholas Ugolini, who did a lot of rushing for Agawam throughout the game, but West Springfield had a big second half and came away with the 37-20 win. Agawam would lead 7-6 at halftime after stopping a two-point conversion late in the first half. Agawam got the ball with about a minute re-

How to contact the Sports Editor

Have the scoop on a local sports story? Want to submit a team photo, pass along a potential story idea, or just find out how to get a copy of that great photo of your young athlete? Please send all sports-related press releases and information to Sports Editor Greg Scibelli at: sports@turley.com or call, 1-413-283-8393.



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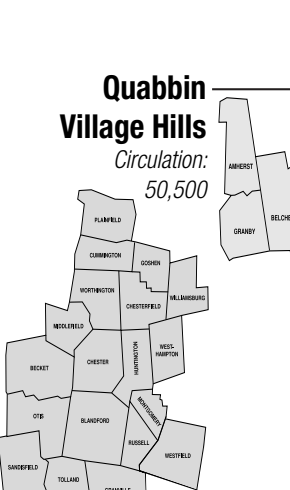
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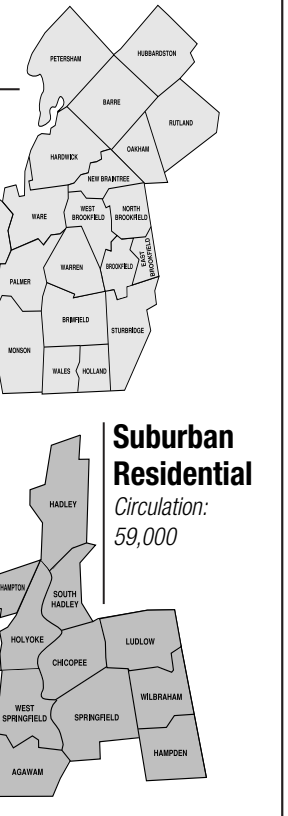
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MCAS ■ from page 1

MCAS is a key exam for districts to see how they are doing in comparison to other districts across the state. Therefore, schools will still need to take this exam so they can ensure that their teaching is comparable to other districts in the state.

However, now that MCAS is not required for schools, Hoffman plans to work to ensure that AHS students truly feel prepared for their futures.

"We are going to have accountability systems in place with the results of the testing to show us where we are doing really well and where we could use some improvement in our instructions," Hoffman said.

According to Hoffman Agawam High School has a set graduation requirements based on credits.

However, these requirements are not consistent across districts across the state, so Hoffman plans for Agawam to look at their high school requirements to ensure that students will truly have what they need when they graduate based on those requirements.

"We will make sure that with those requirements we are getting students college and career ready," Hoffman said.

Hoffman believes that some of the work this may come with is ensuring there is standardization across AHS and the state.

"Every kid's diploma should have the same set of expectations in order to receive it," Hoffman said.

MCAS was helpful in ensuring that every student needed to have the same basic skills in order to graduate. Now, the state will have to do some additional work to ensure that remains to be the case.

"We don't really have that course to course and class to class at the district level and the state level," Hoffman said.

Hoffman feels that Agawam has already made some progress in this field due to the work they have done over the past several years. They have already added common assessments, pacing guides and practicals.

"We have a lot of it in place so if you're in algebra one then you should be around the same topics in every algebra one class," Hoffman said. "So we have things in place but I think we need to set that up more to make sure that there is consistency across all courses."

Before beginning additional work, however, Hoffman plans to first wait and see if schools receive any guidance from the state on what their next steps should be.

"There is still a lot unknown and we are going to continue the work that we know is important regardless of any guidelines," Hoffman said.

For now the plan is to continue work in ensuring that there is consistency across classes and that the requirements work for all students and are updated to reflect the current students in AHS.

Hoffman also promises that any updates to curriculum and plans will be shared with students and families so they know what each student's diploma will look like.

SPORTSMANSHIP ■ from page 1

Therrian, Dawood Anatane and Serenity McMahon, have attended workshops and they have worked on community service initiatives.

They have also learned about diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives across the state in order to collaborate and try to bring ideas back to Agawam.

"It's great that our students at Agawam get to collaborate with these bigger schools all the way across the bay state," Gomez said.

On top of this student leadership work, this year there have also been leadership lessons for captains. Gomez hopes this allows students to learn about leadership.

She also hopes to have these high school students go to Doering and the JR High and lead leadership lessons there.

"It will not only help grow their leadership but also help to grow the fanbase," Gomez said.

Moving forward Gomez hopes to continue work in increasing the turnout at games, specifically the student turnout.

She has found that in recent years the student turnout at games has been low and she wants to see that improve moving forward.

"I'm working with a group of students to try to figure out how we can develop that pride...how we can help the students enjoy these games, be more involved and cheer on their fellow athletes," Gomez said.

Through working with this group she hopes to come up with a variety of strategies to encourage more people to come out for games, such as creating sister teams or bringing pep bands to more games.

Public Notices

**LEGAL NOTICE
PUBLIC HEARING
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CITY COUNCIL**

The Agawam City Council will conduct a Public Hearing on **Monday, December 2, 2024, at 7:00pm**, in the **Veterans' Hall of the Agawam Senior Center,**

954 Main Street, Agawam, MA to consider TR-2024-62 which is the adoption of a Residential Tax Factor pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 56 as submitted to the City Council by the Mayor Christopher C. Johnson on November 6, 2024.

TR-2024-62 is available for public inspection by emailing the office of the City Clerk for an electronic copy at vgioscia@agawam.ma.us

BY ORDER OF:
Rosemary Sandlin
President of the City Council
11/21, 11/28/2024

EARLY DEADLINES FOR PUBLIC NOTICES

Thanksgiving will bring early deadlines for all public notices to run in **TURLEY PUBLICATIONS** the week of November 25-29, 2024.

Wednesday, Nov. 20 at 2 PM for November 27 issue

- Agawam Advertiser News • Sentinel • The Register • Wilbraham-Hampden Times

Thursday, November 21 at 2 PM for November 28 Issue

- Barre Gazette • Country Journal
- The Journal Register • Quaboag Current • Ware River News

Friday, November 22 at 2 PM for November 29 Issue

- Town Reminder • The Holyoke Sun • Chicopee Register

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Deadline for photos and forms is Monday, December 16, 2024

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Include a self addressed/ stamped envelope if you would like the picture returned or email photo to: jamie@turley.com with subject line: **BABY'S FIRST.**
This offer is available to all babies born in 2024. Pictures will be published the week of December 23-27, 2024.

Agawam Advertiser News
OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$225, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

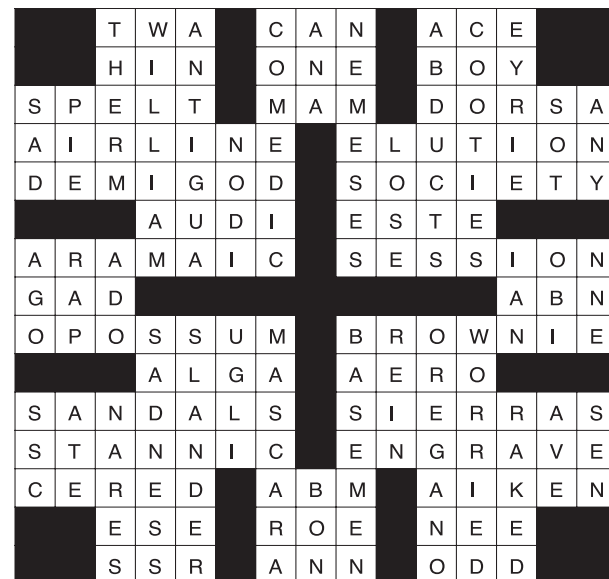
Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

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- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Mondays at noon, Fridays noon for Monday holidays.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com



CRAFT FAIR ■ from page 1

Additionally, the foundation uses this craft fair as a key fundraiser for TJO animals.

The Foundation for TJO Animals helps to pay for any medical needs of animals that are at the TJO Animal Control and Adoption Center.

The TJO center gets around 3,000 animals a year from Springfield, Chicopee and Holyoke. They get their money from the cities and tax dollars, which does limit their budget.

“The foundation’s job is to raise money for the surgeries that happen constantly, medical treatments...and vet visits,” Brown said. “It’s a lot.”

This kind of fundraiser is especially important in the current day, according to Brown.

“The shelters are overrun, there is a veterinary crisis across the company, so it’s a really hard time,” Brown said. “Being able to share this message is super important to us.”



Elizabeth Sosnowich from Paws-a-tively Delectable sold some of her baked pet goods.



Hundreds of community members came in and out of the Polish American Club in Agawam for the Pawzaar Craft Fair.



At the Pawzaar Craft Fair Terry Lamica from Fran and Terry Creations sold some of her jewelry.



Sarah and Jeani Marquesen sold original portraits of different animals at the Pawzaar Craft Fair.



Mary and Brianna Manes ran Brianna’s table: Crocheted by Bri.



Courtney Crosby from Don’t Lose Focus Photography and Crafts sold some of her blankets for pets at the Pawzaar Craft Fair.



Tracy Root sold goods from her business Lovingly Made by T.J.



Inara and Laure Laplante from Laplante Creations ran their booth at the Pawzaar Craft Fair.



Owner of Wreaths and Crafty Creations Lori Palucci sold some of her items at the Pawzaar Craft Fair.



Gale Flood sold jewelry she had made at the Pawzaar Craft Fair.



Members of the TJO Foundation James Martin welcomed people to the Pawzaar Craft Fair.



Volunteers Stacie Cruickshanks, Lisa Smith, Ken Smith and Jeff Gonyer spent their time in the kitchen cooking food for the Pawzaar Craft Fair.



Gail Lafleur and Tina Colucci sold items for their businesses Gail’s Pet Designs and More and Tina’s Crafty Treasures.