

## Rossi gets to work in first year at DPW helm

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – Department of Public Works Director Carl Rossi was chosen as the first DPW director of Holyoke in January 2023.

Since then, he has done a lot of work in Holyoke to try to improve the DPW for Holyoke. In one of the city's most important roles, Rossi was clearly a key newcomer in 2023 for Holyoke.

He has hired a new office manager, a recycling coordinator, a construction supervisor and made a big push on advertising for CDL drivers.

"We had issues with the backlog of trees...so we pictured a contract for forestry services, which took care of the backlog," Rossi said. "Now we're going to use the contractor until I bolster up the forestry division."

One accomplishment he felt stood out in particular was the trash roll out back in September. The city issued 96 gallon totes

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## Residents ask city council members to improve their recent behavior

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – Several Holyoke citizens came out to share their displeasure with the recent behavior of the city council at the most recent meeting on Dec. 19.

In recent council meetings, citizens have noticed a rise in disagreements between council members, ones that go against proper etiquette. The council's dissension has been a newsmaker all of 2023.

Newly elected city councilor Patty Divine pointed out several instances in which councilors had violated decorum.

"I can't even imagine that the council would allow one of their own to say things particularly publicly such as accusing the city solicitor of backdoor deals 'gutless, still licking her wounds, total debacle' and, I quote, 'she can go jump in the Connecticut River,'" Divine said. "That same councilor stated that one ward councilor 'always plays the victim. He is the king of victimhood.'"

Councilor David Bartley was the one to make such comments regarding the city solicitor.



Residents are calling on city councilors to be more civil to one another. The 2023 council meetings were full of name-calling and contentious debate throughout the year. *File photo*

itor. He admitted that he "lost his cool" at that moment.

"I've admitted that, but that's just a small example of how sometimes when people make an argument...towards somebody, you should anticipate a response and that response can be emotional," Bartley said.

Divine also described an instance in which during a public

service meeting that she was not in attendance of, but watched later, one councilor in attendance made comments regarding her.

"He said, and again I'm paraphrasing, the city councilor-elect has the nerve to come in here making low class comments by a low-class person," Divine said. "When I merely asked 'whomever is the ordi-

nance chair.'"

Additionally, in recent meetings there have been councilors calling other councilors "ignorant," "stupid" or asking them to "get help."

Holyoke citizens want their councilors to improve upon this behavior.

Divine asked the coun-

See COUNCIL, page 10

## 2023 Year in Review

HOLYOKE – It was a year of celebration in the City of Holyoke during 2023. The central event was the 150th anniversary of Holyoke being incorporated as a city. Activities were held throughout the year. But there was also much controversy and in-fighting among city officials and politicians, and a continued uptick in violence that resulted in tragic killings. Here is a look back at the past year. See more photos on page 6.



Oyedemi Myra, Sabrina Cohen, Eileen Martinez and Rebecca Leahy from McMahon Elementary School enjoy the back-to-school event in early September.



Mayor Joshua Garcia leads the dedication of Holyoke City Hall on Thursday, April 6.

File photos

## Public safety issues plagued city in 2023

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – Public safety has always been a concern for the city of Holyoke, but this year a tragedy in the city brought it to a focal point.

On Wednesday, Oct. 4 at 12:38 p.m., a stray gunshot pierced a passing PVTA bus and hit a pregnant 29-year-old woman. The woman's child, who was to be named Ezekiel, was killed in the encounter.

This instance sparked a public push for improved safety in Holyoke. Public safety issues was the Story of the Year in the city. City officials are promising to take steps to improve safety for all.

One of the first steps to improving public safety was the city council vote to approve new surveillance cameras in the city.

While these cameras had been planned long before the tragedy, that instance brought a

new fervor to many in the council for approving these cameras.

The council voted 10-2 to approve the appropriation of \$256,000 from the capital stabilization fund for these cameras, with only Councilors Israel Rivera and Jose Maldonado Velez voting against.

"I'm strongly in support of this for obvious reasons," Councilor Kevin Jourdain had said. "This city has a crime problem...we need to do everything humanly possible to run these criminals the hell out of Holyoke. We are going to watch you, we're going to bring you to justice, every single one of them, and this provides evidence in order to prosecute these people and put them right where the hell they belong, which is in jail."

Rivera and Maldonado Velez had agreed that something needed to be done to improve public safety, but they

See SAFETY, page 10

## In The News

# Multiple organizations assist families this season

HOLYOKE – Employees across 46 teams of Valley Health Systems, which includes Holyoke Medical Center, Holyoke Medical Group, Holyoke Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice Life Care, and River Valley Counseling Center, joined together to help support 48 families in need of assistance this holiday season. The families consist of 123 children and their parents/guardians affiliated with the Boys & Girls Club of

Greater Holyoke.

“The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke is very grateful to have the support of community partners like the Holyoke Medical Center. For several years now, the ‘Adopt a Family Program’ has made it possible for children who need us most to receive new toys during the holiday season. Words cannot describe the joy this program has brought to hundreds of local children during this

holiday season,” said Ann Mann, director of operations for the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Holyoke.

In addition to the employee donations, Holyoke Medical Center made a direct contribution of over 100 new toys to the Holyoke Police Department for distribution to children experiencing homelessness on Christmas morning. The donation provided by Holyoke Medical Center was valued at more than \$2,500.

“Holyoke Medical Center and Valley Health Systems are committed to giving back to our community. We are incredibly appreciative and proud of our team joining us each year with their generosity. Since 2016 our staff have supported over 800 children and their families at the Holyoke Boys & Girls Club,” said Lisa Wray Schechterle, director of community benefits at Holyoke Medical Center.

## Harmony House holds open house for volunteers

CHICOPEE – Harmony House of Western Mass. is continuing to invite potential volunteers to stop in at a Volunteer Recruitment event to learn more about who we are and to tour the new home at 66 View St. There are two open houses scheduled. The first is Saturday, Jan. 13 from 10 a.m. to Noon; the second will be on Wednesday, Jan. 31 from 10 a.m. to Noon. Current volunteers and members of the Board of Directors will be available to answer questions. Please stop by either days at your convenience; it is not necessary to confirm your attendance.

Harmony House of Western Massachusetts is a home for the terminally ill. After closing our original home in 2019 and purchasing a house in the Aldenville section of Chicopee for renovation, Covid struck and the plans were on hold for a time. After a massive reconstruction, Harmony House is planning on reopening in the near future

in the beautiful new home.

Opportunities exist for direct health care professionals, home health aides, people who enjoy visiting with others, cooking, cleaning, yard work, administrative help, fundraising, and more. Whether it’s a few hours a week or a few hours a month, Harmony House is a welcoming place for people looking to help people.

Harmony House is a local, non-profit organization whose mission is to provide a loving home providing compassionate care for the terminally ill who have limited or no resources for special care in their final stages of life. Harmony House is primarily staffed by trained volunteers including licensed nurses, caregivers, companions, and others. If interested in learning more or becoming a volunteer, please contact Harmony House at 413-315-9784 or by email at harmonyhousewma@gmail.com.

## Resident Maeve Norton completes research project

WORCESTER – Maeve Norton, resident of Holyoke, a member of the class of 2025 majoring in Computer Science at Worcester Polytechnic Institute, was a member of a student team that recently completed an intense research project titled Social Media Outreach for Zoo Praha.

At WPI, all undergraduates are required to complete a research-driven, professional-level project that applies science and technology that addresses an important societal need or issue. About two-thirds of students complete a project at one of the university’s 50-plus off-campus project centers, which are located around the world.

A signature element of the innovative undergraduate experience at WPI, the project-based curriculum offers students the opportunity to apply their scientific and technical knowledge to develop thoughtful solutions to real prob-

lems that affect the quality of people’s lives-and make a difference before they graduate.

“The WPI project-based curriculum’s focus on global studies brings students out of the classroom and their comfort zones and into the global community to apply their knowledge and to solve problems,” said Professor Kent Rissmiller, professor of Integrative and Global Studies and associate dean of The Global School. “Students are immersed in all aspects of a different culture, from the way people live and work to the values they hold to the foods they eat - all valuable perspectives for surviving and thriving in today’s global marketplace. They also learn the meaning and magic of teamwork; make a real and meaningful difference in their host community; and gain a competitive edge for any resume, or graduate or professional school application.”

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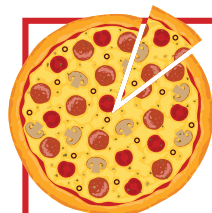
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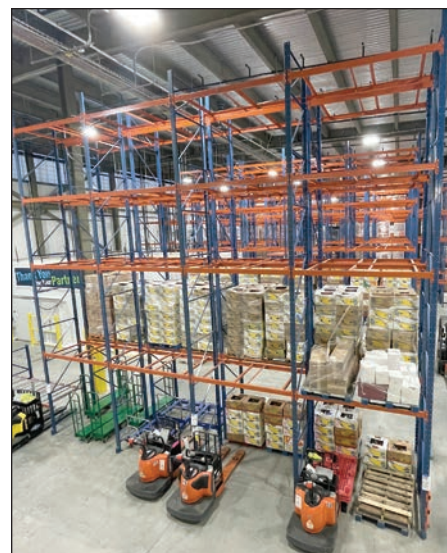
## Food Bank debuts new facility

By Dalton Zbierski  
 dzbierski@turley.com

CHICOPEE – Dec. 14, 2023 was a banner day for the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, as its newly constructed, state-of-the-art food distribution facility on Carew Street officially opened.

Food Bank employees showcased the 62,000 square-foot building during an evening ceremony attended by elected officials, donors, partners and invested residents from Chicopee and neighboring communities.

Since 1982, the Food Bank has been feeding neighbors in need in Berkshire, Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin Counties, and the strategically located warehouse and office space will allow the operation to further pursue its mission of ending hunger.



The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts’ new 62,000 square foot facility includes this state-of-the-art warehouse.

Turley photo by Dalton Zbierski

See SAFETY, page 10

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# Attainable New Year's resolutions for mental wellness

HOLYOKE – As we approach the dawn of a new year, Miravista Behavioral Health Center is championing the spirit of mental wellness by encouraging individuals to set realistic and attainable New Year's resolutions. Recognizing the importance of fostering positive mental health habits, Miravista is dedicated to empowering individuals on their journey towards overall well-being.

In a world where the pursuit of perfection can sometimes overshadow the significance of self-compassion, Miravista Behavioral Health Center emphasizes the need for resolutions that prioritize mental health and which are both realistic and achievable. This approach aims to reduce the pressure often associated with traditional New Year's resolutions and promotes a more holistic perspective on personal growth.

**Prioritize Self-Care Rituals.** Resolve

to incorporate daily self-care rituals into the daily routine. This could include activities like meditation, reading, taking a warm bath, or going for a nature walk.

**Establish Healthy Boundaries.** Set clear boundaries in both personal and professional lives. Learn to say 'no' when necessary and prioritize activities that contribute positively to your well-being.

**Cultivate Mindfulness and Presence.** Make a commitment to being more present in the moment. Practice mindfulness through activities like meditation, deep breathing exercises, or simply taking a moment to appreciate the present.

**Nurture Positive Relationships.** Focus on building and strengthening positive relationships. Invest time in meaningful connections with friends and family, fostering a support system that contributes to emotional well-being.

**Practice Gratitude.** Start a gratitude

journal and make it a habit to reflect on the positive aspects of life. Regularly expressing gratitude can shift focus towards positivity.

**Seek Professional Support.** Break down the stigma surrounding mental health by committing to seeking professional support when needed. Therapy or counseling can provide valuable tools for managing stress, anxiety, or other mental health challenges.

**Embrace a Healthy Sleep Routine.** Prioritize sleep by establishing a consistent sleep routine. Ensure that individuals are getting enough restorative sleep each night, as it plays a crucial role in mental and emotional well-being.

**Learn a New Skill or Hobby.** Individuals should engage their mind in positive and creative activities by learning a new skill or picking up a hobby. This can provide a sense of accomplishment

and contribute to your overall sense of well-being.

Dr. Negar Beheshti, a board-certified child, adolescent and adult psychiatrist and Chief Medical Officer for both MiraVista and TaraVista Behavioral Health Centers said.

"The start of a new year often brings a desire for personal growth. At Miravista, we believe that fostering mental wellness should be at the forefront of our resolutions. By encouraging realistic and attainable goals, we hope to empower individuals to prioritize their mental health and embark on a journey towards lasting well-being. Focus on resolutions that foster a positive and healthy lifestyle rather than focusing on restrictive goals. By prioritizing your mental health, you are setting the foundation for a more fulfilling and balanced life in the upcoming year."

## State awards Holyoke Community College \$1.46 million

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College and its partners have been awarded a state grant worth nearly \$1.46 million to create a CNA to LPN training program to help area hospitals meet their workforce needs.

Earlier this month, the Healey-Driscoll Administration announced a total of \$3.9 million in Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly Workforce Success grants for six initiatives representing employers and collaborative organizations across the Commonwealth.

The lion's share of that money - \$1,457,143 - will go to an HCC led training program to assist 86 unemployed or underemployed individuals transition from jobs as nursing aides to positions as licensed practical nurses.

The grants, funded through the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund and distributed by the Commonwealth Corporation, aim to increase sustainable wage career pathways for Massachusetts residents facing employ-

ment barriers and improve the competitiveness of Massachusetts businesses by enhancing worker skills and productivity.

HCC's partners in the grant include Baystate Medical Center, Baystate Wing Hospital, MassHire Hampden County, Springfield Works, and the National Fund for Workforce Solutions.

"We are delighted about the Commonwealth Corporation's award to HCC and our many partners in this unique and innovative career pathway in nursing," said HCC President George Timmons. "Healthcare is one of the largest industry sectors in our region, and it continues to grow. We hope that this pathway for licensed practical nurses will help create more family sustainable incomes for nursing assistants looking to advance in this exciting and rewarding career."

The multi-stage program will first train individuals as nursing aides, then help them obtain jobs at area hospitals while they continue their training in HCC's LPN program, all the while

providing them with wrap-around support services. HCC already has an existing framework for CNA training through its Jump Start program, which is designed for individuals receiving public assistance.

The grants were announced Dec. 18 by Labor and Workforce Development Secretary Lauren Jones during a graduation event at the Boston-area African Bridge Network, which received \$498,655.

To help leverage the state grant for the HCC-led project, the National Fund for Workforce Solutions invested \$200,000 to incorporate the voices and lived experiences of participants in the design of the program to advance equitable employment outcomes.

"This is an amazing achievement," said Anne Kandilis, director of Springfield WORKS/Working Cities Challenge. "Sometimes we focus on the grant itself, but the 18 months of hard collaborative work that goes into proposing something this big is important to lift up too."

According to the Healey-Driscoll Administration, the grants are part of a strategic investment in the Massachusetts workforce to develop programs that support individuals facing barriers to employment, such as lack of formal schooling, language literacy, or past involvement with the criminal justice system.

The six grant-funded initiatives aim to train and hire 384 individuals over three years. The Springfield-based Entrepreneurial & Business Collaborative also received a grant worth \$630,998 to prepare 90 individuals for jobs in the hospitality industry. The group is partnering with the Northampton Brewery, Granny's Baking Table, River Valley Market, Tandem Bagel Company, and Puerto Rico Bakery II.

Other grant recipients include the Training and Upgrading Fund in Quincy (\$717,220), Cambridge College, Inc., in Boston (\$436,062), and Cape Cod Regional Technical High School District in Harwich (\$225,425).

## SHC looking for new singers

SOUTH HADLEY – The South Hadley Chorale will resume rehearsals for its annual March concert on Wednesday, Jan. 3, 2024, from 7 to 9 p.m. at All Saints' Church, 7 Woodbridge St. The program features the John Rutter edition of Gabriel Faure's Requiem, Paul Basler's Missa Kenya, plus works by Chorale conductor Anita Anderson Cooper.

Rehearsals will continue Wednesday evenings until the concert on Sunday, March 24, 2024.

New singers are welcome to join. There are no auditions, although most sing-

ers have had some choral experience.

Interim Conductor, Anita Anderson Cooper, is a well-known area musician, conductor, teacher, and composer. She received degrees from Westminster College, Boston University, and Delta State University. Cooper also directs the chorus of the Paul R. Baird Middle School in Ludlow and conducts the Smith College Handbell Choir.

The South Hadley Chorale is made up of 50 singers from 16 communities. For more information, please visit [www.south-hadleychorale.org](http://www.south-hadleychorale.org) or call 413-533-3833.

## Applications open for young women award in public affairs

WESTERN MA – Applications for the 2024 Young Women in Public Affairs Award are available from the Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley. Applications can be obtained from the high school guidance counselors in local towns and on its website: [ZontaQV.org/scholarships/](http://ZontaQV.org/scholarships/).


A local recipient will receive a \$1000 award, funded by the Zonta Club of the Quaboag Valley and will be entered for the District YWPA award. The District recipient will be eligible for a \$5,000 award from Zonta International.

According to Zonta Club President Dana Burton, the goal of the award is to encourage young women to participate in public and political life by recognizing a

young woman's involvement in government, policy-making, and volunteerism. "The YWPA program looks to the young women of today for leaders of tomorrow and advocates the Zonta International's mission of advancing the status of women worldwide," noted Burton.

To be eligible for this award, applicants must be between the ages of 16 and 19, have an active commitment to volunteerism, leadership achievements, and experience in local or student government. Applicants must be pre-university or pre-college students.

Completed application and supporting documentation are due to the Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley by March 8.



### FREE FLY TYING CLASSES

Sponsored by the Western Mass Fly Fishermen,  
the Ludlow Elks Lodge 2448 and Turley Publications  
are starting January 11th, 2024.

*Held at the Ludlow Elks Lodge located at  
69 Chapin St. Ludlow Mass.*

**Thursday nights for eight weeks  
from 7PM to 9PM.**

The classes are open to the public with  
children 8 years and up accompanied by an adult.

Classes are geared to the beginner or novice.

Course materials and tools will be supplied.

Should you have your own tools, feel free to bring them.

**No Registration is Necessary!**

Should there be Bad weather  
please contact the Ludlow Elks after 4:00 PM  
for any cancelations at (413) 583-2448 or  
check our website <http://www.wmffclub.org>

Guest Column

# in the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid

## Native plants often need to be coaxed into germinating

Are you interested in starting your own perennials from seed this year? This column, straight from the archives, will be of use to you! Sadly, not all seeds sprout as quickly and easily indoors as tomatoes do.

Some seeds can be a bit tricky to germinate, and we must go through extraordinary measures to get them to sprout. In the grand scheme of things, you will learn that this is actually a good thing.

Take the Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) for example, and imagine what would happen if this late bloomer dropped its seed on the ground in October and the seed came up immediately? Likely, the seedlings would be so small and tender that they would not survive the winter.

On the other hand, if germination occurred in early spring (and it does!), success could almost be guaranteed.

The Cardinal Flower, along with many other native plants, has a built-in dormancy that is broken only by a period of moist-cold. Until “winter” has passed – either for real or simulated by us, these plants will simply not sprout.

In addition to Cardinal Flower, Columbine, Delphinium, Gas Plant, Great Lobelia, Lupine, Iris, Monkshood, Border Phlox, Primrose, Purple Coneflower and probably more that I am unaware of, all benefit from what is called “stratification.” The term, which admittedly sounds a bit intimidating, refers to the practice of “stratifying,” or storing seeds in layers alternating with moisture-holding material and exposing them to cold temperatures.

This can be accomplished both indoors and out, and I will go through the pros and cons of each.

No doubt the easiest way to expose seeds to a period of moist-cold is to sow them outdoors in the fall in a nursery bed or cold frame. They will go through the winter and when conditions are right (cross your fingers!) germinate neatly in their rows.

But because you are outside, seeds can sometimes disappear thanks to ants, rodents and birds. Weeds can also pop up in the seed bed, making it hard to tell which plant is which!

The elements can likewise take their toll and unless the beds are protected, soil can either dry out or get completely waterlogged.

Another way to stratify seeds outdoors is by using the milk-jug method. Taking a gallon size clear milk container and starting just below the handle, cut it almost all the way across.

If you begin just after the handle on one side and end up just before the handle on the other, you will make a hinge. Punch a few drainage holes in the bottom and a couple more on the sides, up and down from the cut so that you can “twist-tie” the jug shut after you are done.

Fill the bottom half with well-moistened seed starting mix and plant the seeds according to the directions on the packet – if they are tiny don’t cover; simply press them into the soil. Connect the two halves of the jug with twist ties (or just use duct tape) and label with pencil.

Keep the cap off to provide ventilation, then place in a spot protected from hard winds. As seedlings emerge in the spring you can flip back the top on nice days, but remem-

See GARDEN, page 5



Guest Column

## If my wife claims now, will it hurt my Social Security Amount?



Dear Rusty

*I am 69 years old, and my wife turned 70 early this year. I am still working full time. My wife is not working, but she got a letter from Social Security saying she should take her Social Security as soon as possible.*

*My question is: since my wife has reached her full retirement age, can she take her SS without it affecting mine when I claim? I plan to work at least another year, depending on how the economy goes I may have to work longer if it doesn't get better. I have IRAs and a 401k to pull from when I retire.*

Signed Anxious Husband

Dear Anxious

The reason your wife received a letter from Social Security suggesting she claims now is because her benefit reached maximum some time ago at age 70. Thus, there is no reason for her to wait beyond age 70 to claim. By delaying past age 70 your wife is

losing money so she should apply as soon as possible.

I suggest your wife call Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 or your local office right away to request an appointment to apply for her benefits and she should be sure to request six months of retroactive payments. SS will pay up to six months retroactively.

If your wife has a “my Social Security” online account, she can also apply online at [www.ssa.gov/apply](http://www.ssa.gov/apply), but she should be sure to request six months of retroactive benefits in the “Remarks” section of the online application. Because your wife is more than six months past age 70, getting six months retroactive benefits will not reduce her age 70 benefit amount. Nor will your wife claiming her benefits now negatively affect your Social Security when you later claim.

Even though you plan to continue working, likely beyond 70 years of age yourself, you should not wait beyond age 70 to claim for the same reason, your benefit will reach maximum when you are 70. You can apply for your benefits up to four months in advance and specify you want benefits to start in the month you turn 70.

If you haven’t already done so, you may wish to create your own “my Social

See SECURITY, page 5



I received an email from a Brimfield resident, who along with his wife, participated in the Allen Bird Club’s Christmas Bird Count on Saturday, Dec. 16.

One unexpected species they saw were three female buffleheads at the Springfield Reservoir.



Female Bufflehead

The bufflehead is a small duck about 14 inches long. It has a distinct, large rounded head.

The male has a white wedge behind its black head. The male also has white flanks and breast. The female is gray brown with a small patch of white behind the eye.

They are diving ducks and feed on mollusks, fish, snails and crustaceans. They summer on wooded lakes, rivers and winter on lakes and coastal waters.

The female lays eight to ten ivory to buff eggs in a tree cavity or nest box. Their courtship begins in January and these ducks show a high level of aggression during that time.

Buffleheads are generally silent. However, the female makes guttural sounds during courtship.

Bird count

In his email, the Brimfield resident said he did his first Allen Bird Club count in the late 1970s. He said, “We have been covering the town of Ludlow, excluding the Westover Conservation Area covered by others, since 1989. The club’s count circle center is in Springfield and includes adjacent towns.

He also said, “We had an excellent day weather wise, but the songbirds were hard to come by. With all the water ice free, we

See BACKYARD, page 5

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Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

Please email (preferred) letters to [thesun@turley.com](mailto:thesun@turley.com). Mailed letters can be sent to *The Sun*, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

**SECURITY, from page 4**

Security" online account now at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount), which will make it easier for you to apply online at [www.ssa.gov/apply](http://www.ssa.gov/apply) when the time comes next year. Applying online is, by far, the most efficient way, but you need to have your online account set up first to do so.

Just so you know, there is no need to worry that you won't get credit for work income earned after you have applied for your benefits. Even after you are collecting benefits, Social Security will automatically review your earnings each year when that information is received from the IRS, after you file your income tax return.

If your most recent earnings are higher than those in any of the 35 years of lifetime earnings used to calculate your benefit when you claim, Social Security will automatically increase your monthly payment amount. In other words, you shouldn't delay past age 70 to claim Social Security

because you're working; you'll still get credit for those earnings, automatically.

So, I suggest that your wife take fast action to apply for her Social Security benefits to avoid losing any more money and that you plan to apply for your benefits to start when you turn 70. There is no financial advantage to waiting beyond age 70 to claim, even if you continue working.

*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](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.*

**GARDEN, from page 4**

ber to replace each night and water as needed.

If you prefer to start your seedlings indoors you can mimic winter by placing your seeds in the refrigerator to "chill." Don't put them in there in their seed packets, though, since they must also be kept moist.

If you have enough room in the refrigerator, you can simply sow them in their flats, cover the flat with a loose plastic bag and place it inside for the recommended length of time, usually anywhere from one to three months. Afterwards, set them out to germinate as you normally would, with supplemental light and bottom heat (in other words, fake spring this time around!).

Most folks don't have a spare refrigerator to fill up with seedling flats. In this case put a small amount of moist

seed-starting medium in a tiny plastic bag and sprinkle in the seeds.

After "winter" has elapsed, sprinkle the contents on to the top of moistened soil in your container and firm down. Large seeds can be covered with an additional sprinkling of growing medium. Proceed as above to promote germination.

If you plan to order perennial seeds by mail, do so soon, so that you can stratify and have them sprout at the normal time. This may sound tricky, but it's really pretty simple, and the pay-off is lots of new plants for your perennial border!

*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](mailto:pouimette@turley.com) with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.*

Read The Holyoke Sun online at [www.sun.turley.com](http://www.sun.turley.com)

**BACKYARD, from page 4**

had high number of Canada geese (93), common mergansers (170, mostly males) and mallard (115). The common mergansers and many of the mallards were at the Springfield Reservoir."

He reported 20 ring-necked ducks at a pond near the Ludlow Country Club was another unexpected species in the count. In all, they had 32 species on their list, slightly more than the average of 29 species. Following the time in the field, the participants held a zoom meeting to discuss the results. No one mentioned seeing any winter finches i.e. redpoll, siskin or evening grosbeak.



Canada goose

**Large flock of Canada geese**

Recently, I saw a large flock of Canada geese in a cornfield in Spencer. There must have been at least 100. I did not stop to take an accurate count, but it was the largest flock I've seen.

**Christmas card count**

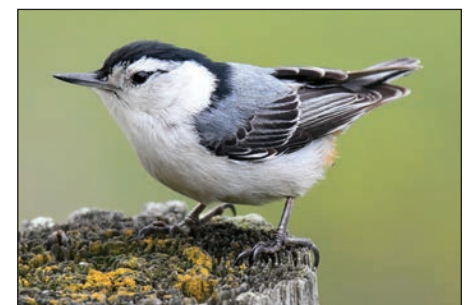
Years ago, Thelma Crawford, told me she kept a Christmas card bird count every year. While she was alive, we would share our card counts. Often the bird fell into the unspecified species category. I wven received a Christmas card one year with a loon with an evergreen wreath around its neck.. This was the first year I did not receive any Christmas cards with birds even one perched off in a distant tree in the background.

**Suet feeder**

I now have my suet feeder out all the time as I have not seen any sign of wandering black bears in awhile. I also feed a combination of mixed bird seed, black oil sunflowers and shelled peanuts, which I mix together to put out daily. I have the usual juncos, chickadees, tit-

mice, nuthatches, blue jays, mourning doves and of course, squirrels. I have not seen the cardinal pair yet, but then I don't have a lot to time to spend watching my feeders.

*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](mailto:mybackyard88@aol.com) or [edowner@turley.com](mailto:edowner@turley.com) or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005.*



White-breasted nuthatch

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13					14				15			
16				17					18			
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49	50		51			52			53			
54		55				56				57	58	59
60					61					62		
63					64				65			
66					67				68			

**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Bleated
- 6. Snakelike fish
- 9. Database management system
- 13. Russian-American violinist
- 14. Wendy's founder Thomas
- 15. Ancient Italian-Greek colony
- 16. Negatives
- 17. Rescued
- 18. Self-immolation by fire ritual
- 19. Assigns tasks to
- 21. Island nation native
- 22. Trade
- 23. Detergent brand
- 24. Famed NY Giant
- 25. Before
- 28. Split pulses
- 29. Extremely angry; highly incensed
- 31. Body part
- 33. American state
- 36. David \_\_, US playwright
- 38. Move one's head slightly
- 39. Secret rendezvous
- 41. Improved
- 44. A place to exercise
- 45. 18-year astronomical period
- 46. Automobile
- 48. You can take it
- 49. A radio band
- 51. Jaws of an animal
- 52. Short-billed rails
- 54. Chinese province
- 56. Shameless and undisguised
- 60. Horizontal passage into a mine
- 61. Adult males
- 62. Fail to entertain
- 63. Dried-up
- 64. City in north-central Utah
- 65. Southern U.S.
- 66. German river
- 67. Oxygen
- 68. Make law

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Curved segment
- 2. Wings
- 3. From pentane (Chemistry)
- 4. Gradually gets into
- 5. Commercial document (abbr.)
- 6. Overhang
- 7. Christmas and New Year's have them
- 8. Type of bulb
- 9. Lacking a plan
- 10. Tattle
- 11. Rockers like it "heavy"
- 12. One who's been canonized
- 14. Indicate time and place
- 17. Nobel Prize winner in physics
- 20. The voice of Olaf
- 21. Fragmented rock
- 23. They \_\_
- 25. Master of Philosophy
- 26. Backside
- 27. Landmark house in L.A.
- 29. An act of undue intimacy
- 30. From which a later word is derived
- 32. Equal to 10 meters
- 34. Neither
- 35. Computer language
- 37. Sacred book of Judaism
- 40. A woolen cap of Scottish origin
- 42. A way to dedicate
- 43. Challenges
- 47. British Air Aces
- 49. Large, influential bank
- 50. Portended
- 52. Cavalry-sword
- 53. Vaccine developer
- 55. Napoleonic Wars general
- 56. Italian Seaport
- 57. Hip joint
- 58. \_\_ Clapton, musician
- 59. Insect repellent
- 61. Decorative scarf
- 65. Delaware

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 6

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# Public Notices

**NOTICE AND ORDER:**  
Petition for Resignation  
or Petition for Removal of  
Guardianship of a Minor  
DOCKET NO.  
HD08P2111GM1  
COMMONWEALTH OF  
MASSACHUSETTS  
The Trial Court,  
Probate and Family Court  
Hampden Probate and  
Family Court  
50 State Street,  
Springfield, MA 01103  
In the interests of

Yohan Pacheco  
of Holyoke, MA  
Minor  
**NOTICE TO ALL  
INTERESTED PARTIES**  
1. **Hearing Date/Time:**  
A hearing on a Petition  
to Resign as Guardian of  
a Minor or Petition for  
Removal of Guardian of a  
Minor filed by **Department  
of Children and Families** on  
November 13, 2023 will be  
held **01/19/2024 08:30 AM**  
Motion located Hampden

Probate & Family Court,  
50 State Street, 4th Floor,  
Springfield, MA 01103  
2. **Response to Petition:**  
You may respond by fil-  
ing a written response to  
the Petition or by appearing  
in person at the hearing. If  
you choose to file a written  
response, you need to: File  
the original with the Court;  
and Mail a copy to all inter-  
ested parties at least five (5)  
business days before the hear-  
ing.

3. **Counsel for the  
Minor:** The minor (or an  
adult on behalf of the minor)  
has the right to request that  
counsel be appointed for the  
minor.  
4. **Presence of the Minor  
at Hearing:** A minor over age  
14 has the right to be pres-  
ent at any hearing, unless the  
Court finds that it is not in the  
minor's best interests.  
**THIS IS A LEGAL  
NOTICE:** An important  
court proceeding that may

affect your rights has been  
scheduled. If you do not  
understand this notice or other  
court papers, please contact  
an attorney for legal advice.  
Date: December 15, 2023  
**Rosemary R. Saccomani,**  
Register of Probate  
01/05/2024  
**NOTICE IS HEREBY  
GIVEN ON THE  
APPLICATION OF  
Race Street  
Properties, LLC of**

**40 Main Street  
TO BE A PUBLIC  
WAREHOUSE WITHIN  
AND FOR THE  
County of Hampden in  
the City of Holyoke.  
FOR THE PURPOSE  
OF CONDUCTING A  
GENERAL WAREHOUSE  
BUSINESS AS PROVIDED  
IN CHAPTER 105 OF  
THE MASSACHUSETTS  
GENERAL LAWS  
12/29/2023, 01/05/2024**

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COINS, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS,  
WATCHES, TOYS, SILVER, ETC.**  
Contact Bill or Beth **413-543-6065**  
email: oldiesfrom@aol.com  
45 Parker Street, Indian Orchard  
Wed.-Fri. 10-4:30, Sat. 10-2:30, Closed Sun. - Tues.

## Mobile Blood Donation Team making rounds

PALMER – The Baystate Health Blood Donation team will host blood drives at Baystate Wing Hospital beginning on Feb. 7, from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
“There continues to be an urgent need for blood, when you donate blood to Baystate Health, your precious gift remains in our local communities,” said Nicole VanZandt, MLT III, supervisor, BRL Blood Donor Services.  
Blood donations take approximately one hour to complete, including the interview, donation, and refreshments. To donate blood, you must be at least 17 years old; weigh at least 110 pounds have a photo ID; be in good health (no

colds, or sore throat); and have not donated blood within the past eight weeks.  
Blood drives will be held at Baystate Wing Hospital, 40 Wright St., Palmer, in Snow Conference Room C. In appreciation, all eligible donors will receive a \$10 Gift card.  
For more information or to book an appointment to donate blood, call the Blood Donor Center at 413-794-4600. Please note the Baystate Health hospital location you would like to make your donation at when you make your appointment.

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USDA INSP. FROZEN COUNTRY STYLE PORK RIBS ..... <b>\$1.19</b> lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF TOP ROUND ROAST or STEAKS <b>\$3.88</b> lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN CHICKEN THIGHS TRAY PAK ..... <b>59¢</b> lb
USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS PORK BUTT STRIPS..... <b>\$3.33</b> lb	USDA INSP. FRESH CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS 10 LB BAG..... <b>62¢</b> lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN WHOLE ROASTER CHICKEN..... <b>99¢</b> lb
SLICED IN OUR DELI WUNDERBAR BOLOGNA.... <b>\$2.99</b> lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN RAW SHRIMP 2 LB BAG..... <b>\$6.99</b> ea	
<b>TAILGATE SPECIALS</b>	USDA INSP. STORE MADE KOREAN BBQ MARINATED BONELESS PORK STRIPS ..... <b>\$3.35</b> lb	
	USDA INSP. STORE MADE CAROLINA GOLD MARINATED BONELESS CHICKEN THIGH .. <b>\$2.99</b> lb	
	USDA INSP. FROZEN FULLY COOKED BBQ MARINATED BABY BACK RIBS ..... <b>\$3.99</b> lb	

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**NOTICE**  
ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.

**PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE**

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 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](http://www.publicnotices.turley.com)

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The Holyoke Sun  
**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.*



More murals were completed by artists throughout the city in late June and early July.

File photos

Kids and parents gather at Holyoke Public Library to play games at the Learn in Motion program in July.



The Holyoke High School graduation was held on June 4. The event beat the rain as more than 200 graduated the school.



Students at Holyoke High School presented a multi-lingual rendition of the play, "Our Town" in late November.



The St. Patrick's Road Race was held on March 18. The race is part of the holiday tradition in Holyoke.



The Holyoke Merry-Go-Round was the place to be for an Easter event in early April.



Abby Glasheen reacts to her name being called as the next Grand Colleen at the coronation held in mid-February.



Dean Tech's graduation was held on June 2 at the school.



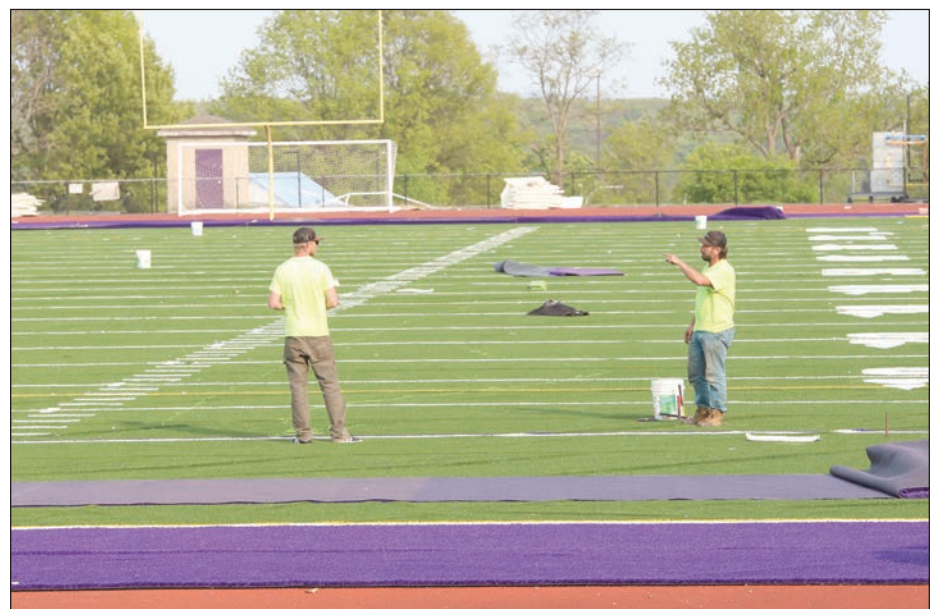
Mayor Joshua Garcia and Chamber of Commerce Director Jordan Hart place a box in the time capsule created to commemorate the city's 150th anniversary. The closing of the capsule was the final event of the year.



A bear runs down South St. after being seen by a resident in August. Bears and other wild animals were seen in residential areas throughout the year.



The Holyoke High School marching band leads the way during the Salute to Holyoke parade held at The Big E.



Work began in May to replace the artificial turf at Roberts Sports Complex at Holyoke High School. The work went through the summer and was ready in time for the fall season.

# SPORTS

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## Knights compete at Agawam tournament

AGAWAM – Holyoke wrestling took part in Agawam’s Phil Tomkiel Holiday Tournament last Thursday. As a team, Agawam took the crown with an impressive 274.5 points. Natick placed second with 234 points. Also competing was Chicopee, which placed ninth with 68 points, South Hadley (12th) with 56 points, Holyoke (13th) with 53 points, and Quabbin Regional (14th) with 46 points. Agawam also placed a “B” squad in the meet, and their squad came in eighth with 79.5 points. Agawam would crown three individual champions and five runner-ups. Holyoke had an individual champion as well. Holyoke’s Steven Santiago was a champion at 113 pounds, while Agawam was led by Jordin Agosto (120), Nicholas Ugolini (132), and Ilya Shlemanov (150) led Agawam. There was also a girls tournament that several teams sent competitors to.



Davian Diaz works under pressure as he dribbles into the offensive end.



Shawn Rivera rushes down the court.

*Turley photo by Gregory A. Scibelli*



Dominick Renaldi lunges for a shot.



Luis Figueroa takes a three-point attempt.

## Knights defeat Pacers

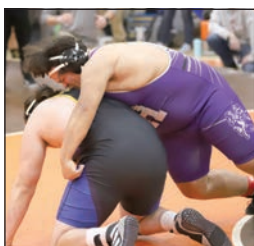
CHICOPEE – Last Wednesday night, Holyoke High School boys basketball continued its hot streak and defeated host Chicopee 65-44. The Pacers were able to rebound and

defeat Putnam two days later 63-59, but a four-game losing streak has Chicopee at 2-5 heading into the start of 2024. Holyoke improved to 5-2 with the win and face Putnam on Friday, Jan. 5.



Jacob Rosa locks up with a wrestler from Quabbin Regional.

*Turley photo by Gregory A. Scibelli*



Ivan Rivera Soler gets the takedown.



Jonathan Rivera Marrero tries to work his way out of a predicament.



Cecilio Sanchez gets the takedown in a 132-pound match.



Amilyan Treadwell-Mercedes tries to rein in a rebound.

*Turley photo by Gregory A. Scibelli*



Evangeline Cauley eyes the hoop.



Kiara Perez rushes down the court.



Kylie Blaha rushes toward the hoop.

## Holyoke girls get first win

HOLYOKE – Last Thursday night, Holyoke girls basketball had its final game of 2023, and picked up its first win of the season, defeating Amherst 54-27. Holyoke had struggled on offense early in the season, but was able to put it together against the Hurricanes. Amilyan Treadwell-Mercedes led all scorers with 24 points. Kiara Perez was next with 12 points to pace the offense. Holyoke has several days off before returning to action on Jan. 9 against West Springfield at 7 p.m.



Jaylaness Santiago looks to pass inside the arc.



# New modifieds event announced for early February

AUBURNDALE – After discussion with race teams, competitors and fans, Showdown Series officials have decided to update the schedule for the upcoming events at Auburndale Speedway in February during Speedweeks. With the new adjustments, the 602 Modifieds and Tour-Type Modifieds will compete in racing action at Auburndale on Thursday, Feb. 8 and Friday, Feb. 9 only.

The Tour-Type Modifieds will run two feature races - one Thursday and one Friday. Tour Modified events pay \$2,000 to win, \$1,000 for second and \$750 for third. The 602 Modified division will pay \$500 for the winner of each race, \$350 for second and \$300 for third. The 602 division will run double-feature events on Thursday and one on Friday. The 602 Modified features will be 30 laps and the Tour-Type Modifieds 50 laps.

“We’re getting more and more

phone calls and momentum is building surrounding these Modified races and we wanted to do everything possible to avoid conflicts with the New Smyrna Speedway Modified events,” Brad Hockaday, owner of Professional Motorsports Solutions, said. “Seeing Modifieds on Auburndale Speedway is going to be something special that fans and competitors are not going to want to miss. Extending Speedweeks a few days earlier is a great opportunity for everyone to enjoy some more time in the sunshine state.”

For the 602 Modified division, unlike some other events, there is no age limit on the races. Teams are asked to be responsible with their drivers age and experience level to compete in this event. No NASCAR licenses are required for either division.

New Smyrna Speedway has also

adjusted the times for their parking times for Modified teams. No Modified teams (excluding the Whelen Modified Tour) will be able to park until early on Sunday morning. This means that teams can compete in the Auburndale Speedway events and have plenty of time to make it across the state, which is just over a two-hour ride. The Tour-Type Modifieds have been adjusted to go out early in the schedule for Friday and will be able to exit the track by approximately 9 p.m. The 602 Modifieds will race earlier in the night.

The tire rule for the event is posted online. The rule will be six race tires for the 602 Modifieds with the F45 by Hoosier, and eight race tires for the Tour-Type Modifieds running the M20 & M30. Practice tires allotment is unlimited for the event, but teams need to let the management know in order for Hoosier to have a proper amount on site

for the event.

Race teams with questions about the event are encouraged to email [wnt-showdown@gmail.com](mailto:wnt-showdown@gmail.com). There are practice nights available on Tuesday and Wednesday. Each night has a session from 4-7 p.m. and another from 7-10 p.m. Each session is \$50 per car running.

Teams are also encouraged to register as soon as possible so the promoters can prepare for the race. For more information on the Showdown Series events at Auburndale Speedway, everyone is encouraged to visit <https://linktr.ee/seriesshowdown>. There, you can find the event tickets, registration forms, event schedule, event flyers, technical rules, general information and more. Auburndale Speedway will see the rumble and roar of Modifieds in February for the first time in the history of the Florida oval.

## Worcester Railers edged in one-goal loss to Reading Royals

READING, PA – The Worcester Railers HC (12-11-3-2, 29pts) lost in a close one against the Reading Royals (11-13-1-1, 23pts), on Saturday night, Dec. 30 by the final score of 4-3 in front of 3,233 fans at the Santander Arena.

The game started right where they left off last night: physical. The Royals would do most of the heavy lifting in this department as they committed their 8th and 9th penalty of the weekend with a tripping minor penalty by Royals Forward Kenny Johnson (0-0-0) and a bench minor by Forward Tag Bertuzzi (1-0-1) committed while he was on the bench. The Railers offense would make them pay on the Bertuzzi minor penalty. Joey Cipollone entered the offensive zone with the puck in the middle of the ice where he found Zach White open on the right wing of their offensive zone. White quickly sent a cross-ice pass to an open Daylan Kuefler on the left side dot and sniped it past Royals goaltender Parker Gahagen’s blocker side. Bertuzzi came back the other way three minutes later for Reading and tied the game 1-1 going into the second period. The Railers led the period in shots on goal 13-11.

The Railers struggled to find many scoring chances in the second but relied

on their defense and goaltending to get them through the period and deny the Royals from scoring. The Railers were disciplined and managed spacing well throughout the period until they would get a power play opportunity late in the second period. Towards the end of the power play, Copeland drove the puck past Gahagen in net for the Royals to put Worcester back ahead, 2-1. The Royals answered back not much later with a power play goal by Forward Shane Sellar to beat Fulcher and tie it 2-2. The Royals led shots on goal in the period, 12-5.

Reading grabbed their first lead of the night when Matt Brown shot one blocker side to beat Fulcher and make it a 3-2 game. Late in the third, the Railers got another power play and did a great job keeping the puck in the zone and battling down low. Jenkins quickly fired the puck past Gahagen’s low blocker side to tie the game up once again. Both sides would get chances on the net but nothing came out of it in the box score where this game would head into overtime. The Railers led the period in shots on goal, 14-13.

In overtime, the Royals worked their way down ice in a 2-on-1 3:18 into the frame with Brown and Bertuzzi to score and give the Royals the 4-3 win at home.

## T-Birds fall hard against Bruins

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (16-10-3-1) had few answers for a confident opposing attack, falling 8-2 to the Providence Bruins (17-12-2-2) on Saturday night in front of a sold-out MassMutual Center crowd of 6,793.

The Bruins were opportunistic off a self-inflicted T-Birds mistake to jump to a 1-0 lead at 3:44 of the opening period. Will Bitten directed a pass back toward the Springfield bench, where a pair of defenders were in the process of a line change. Out of the confusion, Anthony Richard jumped on the loose puck and quickly snapped a wrister through Vadim Zherenko to give Providence the game’s opening goal.

Rookie Bruins blueliner Ethan Ritchie would add his first career AHL goal just 60 seconds later, jumping up into a 3-on-2 rush and ripping a shot through Zherenko at 4:44 off a drop pass from Jesper Boqvist. Providence also made life difficult on the T-Birds’ offense, as the Springfield attack mustered only five shots in the opening 20 minutes.

After going unsuccessful on a power play early in the second, the T-Birds saw a familiar bout of adversity when Justin Brazeau whipped a turnaround wrister through Zherenko at 6:21 to make it 3-0 for Providence.

The T-Birds gave the sellout crowd a glimpse of another comeback bid

when Jakub Vrana extended his point streak to four games with a beautiful wrist shot under the crossbar behind Brandon Bussi, cutting the lead to 3-1 just 18 seconds after the Brazeau goal.

The two-goal deficit proved only temporary, though, as Jesper Boqvist scored on the front end of a four-minute power play, one of his three points on the night, at 8:40 to make it 4-1.

Zach Bolduc had the opportunity to give the T-Birds another jolt when he was awarded a penalty shot with Springfield down a man at the 10:46 mark. However, Bussi had the answer with the leg pad, shutting the rookie’s bid down and keeping Providence ahead by three.

The Bruins rewarded their goalie in kind with back-to-back power-play goals from John Farinacci at 11:31 and Trevor Kuntar at 15:11, upping the margin to 6-1 before Bitten finally got Springfield on the board again with a power-play tip-in at 19:27 of period two.

Patrick Brown would add to the Providence lead with a rush up the left side at 7:17 of the third, and Jayson Megna capped off the scoring by netting the first shorthanded goal against Springfield all season at 18:00.

The T-Birds finish up the home-stand as they begin a 3-in-3 weekend against the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins on Friday at 7:05 p.m. at the MassMutual Center.

## FOOD BANK, from page 2

“It’s at the crossroads of the major interstates of Western Massachusetts, so we selected this location because it will really enable us to provide healthy food to anyone and everyone who needs it, when they need it, across all four counties in Western Massachusetts,” Food Bank Executive Director Andrew Morehouse said.

The new structure is far larger than the food bank’s previous home in Hatfield, enabling it to serve more people than ever. Last year, the Food Bank distributed the equivalent of 11 million meals to about 107,000 people monthly, and Morehouse expects the number to rise, as residents battle inflation and the end of federal pandemic benefits.

“So, they turn to the Food Bank and our 175 partners, the local, frontline food pantries, meal sites and shelters, to seek food assistance so they can carry on with their lives and get ahead in life,” Morehouse said.

The Food Bank employs 64 people, but that number could rise as management capitalizes on the facility’s “incredible” capacity. Morehouse said the staff is currently in a “learning

mode,” getting accustomed to the space and repeatedly rearranging inventory to maximize efficiencies and food flow.

Statistics are already proving the larger warehouse to be more effective than the previous site.

“In the last three months, we’ve provided 25% more healthy food than the same period last year, and we’re confident we’ll be able to sustain that growth moving forward,” Morehouse said.

Being able to serve the community better than before is fantastic, said Director of Programs Christine Maxwell. She described the building’s teaching kitchen.

“We’ll be using that for community programming, for food demonstrations and for cooking classes and nutrition workshops. We weren’t able to do that in our old building, so we’re excited about that,” Maxwell said.

Director of Development Jillian Morgan said moving into a facility that allows the Food Bank to serve its communities at a higher clip is significant. She said the staff is dedicated to making sure food is delivered to as many people as possible who are facing food insecurity, and the larger warehouse pays

dividends.

“This was a really important move for the food bank to be able to increase our capacity and efficiency,” she said. “We already have distributed more food in this building, so we know that it’s going to serve us for decades to come until we end hunger.”

Farm Manager Lee Gadway estimated that the new warehouse can store twice as much food as the old one. He said even the parking lot is twice the size.

“This is amazing,” Gadway said. “Just being able to warehouse this much food and being able to think of it as a hub and spoke system on a bicycle. Everything’s brought in on the spokes to the hub, and then we deliver it back out.”

Gadway said the larger space makes the operation more efficient, as the Food Bank delivers food to places that smaller farms are unable to reach.

Morehouse said people are blown away when they enter the building and see its size and magnitude. He said the Food Bank looks to leverage the power of community to create a hunger free Western Massachusetts.

“The way we’re going to do that is by talking to one another and cook-

ing up new ideas, so this new facility and food distribution center has a lot of space for us to invite community groups in, whether they want to volunteer or just collaborate and plan how we can work better together to get more done,” Morehouse said.

Morehouse pointed out that the dream could not have become a reality without the assistance of state and federal legislators. The Food Bank raised \$30 million to build its new home, and about half of the money came from state and federal government.

He also expressed gratitude for private donors, as 246 businesses and individuals invested in the food distribution center.

“We couldn’t have done it without them, large and small,” he said.

Morgan said she is humbled by the amount that was raised, noting that it displays the community’s investment in addressing the underlying causes of hunger and making sure that the operation can help alleviate hunger in the community or get rid of it entirely.

“(The \$30 million raised) is a real testament to how much people in this area care about addressing the needs of people who are facing hunger,” she said.

**SAFETY**, from page 1

did not feel that increased surveillance was the best use of funds.

“We need to try a more preventative approach,” Rivera had said. “This is a war on poverty, not a war on drugs and crime. It’s a war on poverty because the people who are being policed are the people that live in the most impoverished communities of Holyoke.”

Both felt that the use of surveillance in the city had been tried before, and had not been very effective. They wanted to try something new.

Rivera wanted, and still wants, to focus on a more proactive and preventative approach. He hopes to focus on improving rehabilitation programs, youth programs and other programs to support the citizens of Holyoke.

“It’s about a strategic approach that we as a community are taking to make sure that we are taking preventative measures that are proactive instead of trying to put out fires,” Rivera said.

He hopes to get a community responder team together, to provide resources to homeless people, people suffering from substance abuse or other mental health disorders.

Mayor Joshua Garcia had put forward a public safety plan named Ezekiel’s Plan, that would have focused both on supporting the police and improving the community response side of public safety.

This plan had included creating foot and bike patrols for the police and hiring 13 new officers. It also would have increased inspection of rental properties, tenant and neighborhood protection strategies and would have worked on strengthening neighborhood outreach.

Additionally, it would have created a Homeless Liaison / Housing Navigator position and provided funding for youth programming and education.

“This was a clear plan to unite and

show the community that we care about their safety,” Garcia said. “And not just through one lens...it was taking advantage of all the different ideas that councilors have brought up in the past.”

Unfortunately, this plan was budgeted to cost \$1 million and the city council voted it down.

The plan needed nine votes in its favor to go through, only seven city councilors voted for it.

Councilors Jourdain, Linda Vacon, Israel Rivera, Todd McGee, David Bartley and Will Puello all voted against this plan.

Some councilors had felt it was too expensive and warned against significantly increasing the tax levy.

“The fact of the matter is this is not ready for prime time, this is not sustainable, this is not affordable,” Jourdain had said.

Rivera was concerned that the plan did not fully map out how the funds going to the police would be used.

“There are some very valuable pieces but then there are others that still need to be drawn out and mapped out,” Rivera said. “They’re not breaking down how they’re going to use the money. If they could do that, that would be great.”

With Ezekiel’s Plan shut down, Garcia was disheartened. However, he plans to keep pushing forward with the ideas behind the plan.

“We’ll continue to do what we can and be as creative as possible to engage in public safety response, but the path that I had presented is just not going to be a path,” Garcia said.

Garcia does not want the citizens of Holyoke to feel that the city does not care for their safety. So, he promises to keep trying to implement ideas to improve the city.

“My goal is to continue to do what I can, what’s in my power, to make sure that nobody ever feels that way,” he said. “So, we’ll keep moving forward.”

**ROSSI**, from page 1

to residents of the city.

“I don’t know if you’ve driven through Holyoke during garbage days, but you’ll notice that the city looks a lot cleaner,” he said.

He tried to have his biggest focus be on trash and recycling throughout this past year.

According to Rossi, recycling had gone back to single stream during COVID, even though Holyoke is a dual stream community. Rossi has since corrected that.

“We did that in October and we saw significant cost savings in recycling,” Rossi said. “It was costing us about \$14,000 a month, now it’s costing us about \$7,000 and last month it was about \$5,000.”

In his next year in the position he hopes to continue these efforts to improve recycling in the city. He hopes to roll out recycling totes in the city and purchase an EV trash truck through grants.

Additionally, he plans to condense and balance recycling routes and reevaluate where trash is deposited.

“Twice a week on Tuesday and Thursday residents can bring trash or recycling down to our facility here,” Rossi said. “We could try to reevaluate that to make it more efficient and see if we can get a cost savings on that.”

He also hopes to do a push on recycling to reduce household waste. Holyoke’s recycling rate is only 14%, and the national average is 32%. Rossi hopes to get the numbers to the national average.

“When I first interviewed for the job and before I even stepped into my office there was a meeting with the garbage study committee...when I was part of those meetings [recycling] was the big concern and I know that was the mayor’s big concern,” he said. “That

was something I knew I could take and focus on right away.”

Focus on recycling reduces the tipping fees for trash, reduces waste environmentally and overall reduces costs for the city.

Moreover, he wants to finalize a five-year capital equipment replacement plan for vehicles.

Rossi was invited to this position by Chair of the Board of Public Works Mary Monahan. From there, he interviewed with Mayor Joshua Garcia and eventually got a chance to tour Holyoke.

Rossi was living in New Jersey at the time, but he fell in love with the Holyoke area as he got to visit.

“I was ready to make a move up here,” Rossi said. “I was looking to get out of New Jersey...and I really like it up here.”

He has continued to enjoy the city since he moved up, and hopes to be able to bring the rest of his family to Holyoke from New Jersey soon.

Rossi is grateful for all the support and welcome the residents of Holyoke and those he works with have shown him. Without all of them, he would not be able to do his job.

“The city of Holyoke is very fortunate to have department heads that all work together,” he said. “The mayor has been fantastic, very supportive... he gives me the go ahead to do what I need to do to get the job done.”

He also gave his thanks to Monahan, the entire board of Public Works, the finance department, the legal department and more.

“I can’t say it’s only one person, it’s a team effort here,” Rossi said. “They’ve been great here, the city has a lot of potential.”

He looks forward to the year ahead and the work he and the rest of the team will be able to do to continue helping Holyoke.

**COUNCIL**, from page 1

cilors how they hoped to address this. She asked them to work on rising above this “pettiness” and focus instead on the important work they needed to conduct.

“Enough is enough, the public is tired of it,” Divine said.

She focused on the words hung above the council chamber, “makers of law, makers of history”. She asked councilors to shift their focus to continuing to honor those words.

“I can only look up, as I have done many times in the past, at the words ‘makers of law, makers of history,’” Divine said. “Where did those words go? Why are they no longer important to some here? Why are they ignored?”

Resident Nathan Chung also expressed concerns over the councilors’ recent conduct. He felt that if the councilor truly wanted people to have a better idea of Holyoke as a city, it needed to start in the behavior of the council.

“I think if you want people to feel hopeful about Holyoke...that culture needs to change”

Councilor Israel Rivera agreed that the poor conduct created a poor image of the council and the city as a whole.

“I think when you’re personally

attacking a fellow councilor or incoming councilor, you’re setting a tone for something that is not projecting growth for our community,” he said.

Resident Linda Pratt addressed this issue as well. During her comment, she thanked Councilor Jose Maldonado Velez for all of his work on the council, particularly in his decorum at meetings. Pratt felt other councilors could learn from Maldonado Velez’s actions.

“I’d also like to thank you for the decorum and respect that you have shown others in these chambers, and I think some of our longtime councilors could definitely take a lesson from you on that,” Pratt said.

Many city councilors have also noticed the problem.

Bartley felt that there had been several instances in the past two years of poor decorum. He mentioned the use of profanity from councilors, which he was frustrated by.

Bartley felt the reason for many of these heated moments was due to the importance of the topics discussed in council.

“As the city council president has indicated numerous times, some of these questions get emotional, so sometimes you’re going to have pointed, hard com-

ments,” Bartley said. “But they should never be personal.”

Rivera felt that the issue of poor decorum had started even before he was on the council. He described several instances of pointed comments against him after he was elected, but before he took his seats.

“I had already begun to get attacks with regards to my personal employment, working in the schools and other stuff,” he said.

The hope is that this conduct will improve in the new year, but it is up to the councilors on what the environment will look like moving forward.

“There needs to be more decorum, there needs to be more respect, there needs to be more attention to what we’re actually working on and less personal attacks,” Councilor Kocayne Givner said.

“People need to keep arguments and debates to the issues at hand,” Councilor Kevin Jourdain said. “If we do that, we’re not going to devolve into personal attacks that break decorum.”

Givner had proposed a rule that would cap the meetings at two and a half hours. This initial proposal was not accepted by the council as they wanted to change some of the wording, but Givner plans to keep pushing for it.

She hopes that passing this rule will push councilors to focus more on making concise points to address the subject at hand, rather than breaking decorum or rehashing discussions that already occurred in subcommittee meetings.

“City Council meetings should really be cliff notes of what happened in the subcommittee meetings,” Givner said. “But instead, we have several councilors who prefer to use the council meetings to pat themselves on the back, sling personal insults or basically rehash every item that was already covered in the subcommittee meeting.”

Some councilors felt that since more citizens attended city council meetings, they would prefer to hear discussions more in-depth there.

Givner felt that if a citizen was truly interested in hearing a more in-depth discussion, then they could watch the subcommittee meeting on the topic. Otherwise, rehashing the discussion simply opened room for insults and slowed the governmental process.

“If we spent less time attacking one another, we would get a lot more done for the city,” Givner said. “The people who suffer are not the people in the chambers, the people who suffer are the public in Holyoke.”

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# Meet the Grand Colleen candidates



**Mairin Frances Bresnahan**  
17, Holyoke



**Blythe Grace Bullock**  
19, Holyoke



**Farrell Jean Dawson**  
20, South Hadley



The 18 contestants for this year's Grand Colleen contest pose as a group after having orientation last week. They will compete to be in this year's court this Saturday, Jan. 6, at 7 p.m. at Holyoke High School.

*Turley submitted photo*



**Hunter Rose Edwards**  
19, Holyoke



**Amelia Frances George**  
22, Holyoke



**Rachel Elizabeth Gouin**  
19, South Hadley



**Elizabeth Katherine Gourde**  
22, Holyoke



**Sophia Grace Kennedy**  
19, South Hadley



**Madelyn Faith McArdle**  
18, Holyoke



**Megan McGuinness**  
22, Holyoke



**Natalie Belle Morris**  
19, Holyoke



**Lillian Bella Nadler**  
17, South Hadley



**Caitlin Grace O'Brien**  
17, Holyoke



**Johanna Marie Ross**  
21, Holyoke



**Trinity Annabella Roy**  
17, South Hadley



**Taryn Shaylene Ryan**  
21, Holyoke



**Talia Taylor Uribe**  
19, Holyoke



**Lauryn Kathleen Wresien**  
20, Holyoke

## 18 vie to be next Grand Colleen

**HOLYOKE** – This Saturday evening at Holyoke High School, 18 young women from Holyoke and South Hadley will look to be part of the 2024 Grand Colleen and Court. Judges will choose five from the 18 contestants to be part of this year's court. The Grand Colleen will be crowned in February, chosen from among the five finalists. The path to the Colleen Court will begin at 7 p.m.