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Assessors apologize for property tax bill error

HOLYOKE – Last week, The Board of Assessors sent a letter to the Mayor and the City Council acknowledging an error on the FY26 property tax bills due to a miscommunication with the vendor used by Board of Assessors to generate tax bills.

The letter reads as follows:

This communication is intended to update you on a tax billing issue that was recently identified.

On Friday, 01/02/2026, it was discovered that the FY26 tax bills used a CPA assessment rate of 1.5%. This was incorrect; the rate should have been set at 1.0% in accordance with the ballot initiative approved last November and reflected on the third-quarter bill. The issue stemmed from a miscommunication with the vendor used by this office to generate tax bills once the final rate is voted on by the Council.

Upon discovery of the error, this office immediately began working with the Tax Collector and Treasurer to resolve the issue. We have since begun recalculating the affected bills to ensure the correct CPA assessment is applied.

As of the date of this communication [January 5, 2026], most of the corrective work has been completed, and we expect the process to be finalized within the next day. The corrected information will be reflected on the fourth-quarter tax bills, which will be mailed in April.

In the interim, taxpayers may request an updated tax statement and, by the end of this week, will be able to download corrected bills through the UniPay system available on the City's website: holyoke.org. Any taxpayer who has already made a payment based on

See **ERROR**, page 6



FIRST NIGHT JUNIOR lights up Heritage Park

HOLYOKE – On New Year's Eve, First Night Junior was hosted once again at Heritage Park at the Merry-Go-Round. The event featured many fun activities for young people, including a simulated ball drop for little ones who were not going to make it until midnight. The event has been held in the past and has been very successful.

Top photo, Valentina Porter and Emilia Costa ride the merry-go-round. Right, Penelope Lynch with Moana. Please see more photos on page 16.

Turley photos by David Henry



City Council vice president appointed for first time

By **Brendan Rooney**
Correspondent

HOLYOKE – The title of newly appointed vice president went to City Councilor At Large, Israel Rivera, who admitted he felt, “fully supported, appreciative and just at a loss for words,” Rivera admitted. Before acknowledging “it’s a work in place position, but he is ready to support both President Tessa Murphy-Romboletti and the rest of the city council going forward, as he provided insight into what the role of VP will entail.

“For now, I was told I am a fill-in for whenever the president (Romboletti) isn’t around, and to help balance the city council, department heads, and the mayor, because everyone is on different levels,” he said. “We also have to remember sometimes the president may not be able to connect with someone, and I could, and it goes vice versa, that it kinda plays out and works in favor of the city government to have this type of balanced relationship.”

Rivera also disclosed that the primary element of focus is to continue to move forward with the Fiscal Modernization Act, as a way of ensuring a future of stability is put in place, citing concern for his family and the youth 10-15 years down the road. He also touched upon the importance of the community response division taking shape and having a foundation to lean on.

“We’re looking to mitigate the issues of homelessness and substance abuse, which stem from reentry, and as a former incarcerated individual, I want to make sure we’re putting that at the forefront, and we’re trying to help out,” Rivera said. “And the community I feel that needs it the most in the city of Holyoke are usual-

See **FIRST**, page 6

Tessa Murphy-Romboletti re-elected as city council president for new term, vice president chosen

By **Brendan Rooney**
Correspondent

HOLYOKE – After a historic inauguration, the newly appointed Holyoke City Council adjourned to the chamber to appoint a City Council President, along with the reveal of a Vice President as well.

It was quickly decided that returning City Councilor at Large Tessa Murphy-Romboletti, who was the woman elected to the position, secured the votes to regain the role of City Council President by a margin of 11-1-1. City Councilor At Large Israel Rivera secured the historic appointment by a margin of 8-2-2-1.

Reflecting on the achievement was Romboletti herself.

“I’m very excited to have the confidence of the Holyoke City Council to serve as president for a second term. I’m grateful, and I do not take any of this for granted,” Romboletti said. “I also know we have a lot of important work that we need



Holyoke City Council President Tessa Murphy-Romboletti leads the new chamber.

to do, especially in the next couple of weeks, as it relates to our Municipal Finances, something we have been talking about for years now, and I feel that is going to take priority.”

She is looking around the chamber with new

faces and constituents; this chapter is a ‘fresh start’, a running theme among all parties within the Garcia Administration as it enters its 2nd term in the Paper City.

“It’s what the people of Holyoke wanted and they sent a very clear message,



Holyoke Mayor Joshua A. Garcia watches on as the City Council gathers for the first time.

Turley photos by Brendan Rooney

and as President as I said during my remarks that I’m going to try to bring everyone to the middle, I want everyone in the community to feel empowered and engaged, and so when were working well together, hopefully members of the com-

munity will step up and help our efforts as well,” she said.

Romboletti also emphasized the point of working together, as she cited that the role of the legislative branch is to exhibit and hold the executive branch to an understanding of checks

and balances.

“We need to figure out what’s important to everyone so we can do this strategically so we can really make the most of the next two years, and that involves hearing

See **COUNCIL**, page 6

CPA Committee seeks public input for projects

HOLYOKE – The City of Holyoke Community Preservation Act Committee is pleased to invite the public to attend the project presentations by this year's applicants. These will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 14 and Wednesday, Jan. 21 via Zoom.

- On Jan. 14 presentations will be given by:
- Friends of the Holyoke Merry-Go-Round for the restoration of 4 carousel horses
 - Nick's Nest for restoration of its historic Chicago

band box

• Wisteriahurst Museum for its renovation of the butler's pantry

• Holyoke Health Center for the restoration of their historic Russell Osborne windows, currently boarded up

• City of Holyoke for rehabilitation of the granite stairs and stone pillars at City Hall

On Jan. 21 presentations will be given by:

- Neighbor2Neighbor for infrastructure improvements

to the community gardens on Dwight St.

• City of Holyoke to continue the restoration of Scott's Tower

• City of Holyoke to make improvements to Pouliot Pool

• City of Holyoke to upgrade the facilities at Bonin Field

A project spreadsheet with links to the full applications can be found here: Holyoke CPA Project Submissions FY26. For a zoom link, please go to the

City's calendar page on their website holyoke.org/calendar available Jan. 9, or contact Naomi Klayman, CPA Administrator at klaymann@holyoke.org.

Created by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in 2000 and adopted by the City of Holyoke in 2017, the purpose of the CPA is to support Historic Preservation, Recreation, Open Space and Community Housing within Holyoke. The Holyoke CPA has funded a variety

of popular projects throughout the City including the Miracle League Playground, restoration of Lady Liberty at Veterans Park, the ongoing upgrades to Scotts Tower and surrounding park and many others.

Since adoption, the Holyoke CPC has disbursed over \$4.5 million dollars to preserve Holyoke's character and improve quality of life for its residents. Please visit our website at www.holyokeCPAC.org for more information.

Play Switch at HPL

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Public Library will host a Nintendo Switch Game Night on Wednesday, Jan. 21. The evening will go from 6 to 8 p.m. and there will be multiple games available to be played in the community room.



Daruma Japanese recently made a donation to those impacted by recent fires in the city. Submitted photo

Daruma makes donation to fire victims

HOLYOKE – Daruma Japanese BBQ & Sushi AYCE is proud to announce the successful completion of its inaugural fundraising initiative in support of those impacted by the Clemente and Franklin Street fires. Through the generous support of the community, Daruma raised a total of \$3,584.11 for the Enlace de Familias relief fund. On Jan. 13, 2026, a check representing the full donation amount was presented to Enlace de Familias, directly benefiting the 36 families whose lives were affected by these devastating events.

The campaign stands as a testament to Daruma's commitment to stand with neighbors in times of crisis and to foster a spirit of solidarity across Holyoke. By

leveraging its platform and the enthusiasm of the local community, Daruma provided both immediate and meaningful aid, while delivering a special dining experience that brings people together.

Each ticket, valid for Daruma's celebrated All You Can Eat menu, allowed guests to enjoy premium Japanese BBQ and Sushi while ensuring that the full value of their purchase supported local relief efforts. Upgrades to the premium grill menu were available at redemption, further increasing the overall contribution. Every dollar raised went directly to the Enlace de Familias relief fund, maximizing the impact of each purchase.

Daruma's efforts are

grounded in respect, inclusion, and an unwavering desire to serve as a true community partner. "We are deeply grateful for the trust and generosity demonstrated by the community," said Daruma management. "Delivering this donation is a proud moment for us all, and we remain dedicated to engaging with and supporting our neighbors."

As the team looks ahead, Daruma is eager to identify more opportunities to support the Holyoke community—not only through charitable action, but also by providing a unique dining experience that celebrates togetherness and resilience. Daruma remains committed to listening, learning, and building even stronger partnerships throughout Holyoke.

Print shop to offer free workshops

HOLYOKE – The Print Shop Makerspace in downtown Holyoke invites families, creatives, and curious community members of all ages to explore hands-on art and design through First Saturdays at the Print Shop, a free monthly workshop series running February through May 2026.

Held on the first Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Print Shop Makerspace, 62 Main Street, the series offers welcoming, drop-in workshops that introduce participants to the tools, technology, and creative possibilities of a working print shop and classroom space. No prior experience is required, and all materials are provided while supplies last.

Each First Saturday features a different make-and-take activity designed

to spark curiosity and build creative confidence. Winter-Spring workshops include Valentine's card making, custom sticker printing, wearable art using heat transfer vinyl, and a special Print Day in May Open House on May 2, part of an international celebration of printmaking and creative production.

"First Saturdays are about opening the doors and lowering the barrier," said Jeff Bianchine, manager of the Print Shop Makerspace. "We want people to feel comfortable exploring professional tools, asking questions, and discovering that this space is for them—whether they're kids, artists, families, or first-time visitors."

The May 2 Print Day in May Open House will feature expanded activities and demonstrations, inviting the public to circulate through

the space, try multiple creative processes, and celebrate Holyoke's long history as the Paper City while connecting to a global printmaking movement.

The Print Shop Makerspace is a project of Holyoke Art, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting artists, creative entrepreneurs, and cultural programming in Holyoke. Holyoke Art operates community-focused spaces and events that strengthen access to the arts, support local creatives, and contribute to the city's cultural and economic vitality.

First Saturdays at the Print Shop are made possible in part by a grant from the Holyoke Local Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Bill assistance events being held by Eversource

SPRINGFIELD – As many Massachusetts customers experience higher winter energy bills driven by colder weather and seasonal energy use, Eversource is hosting a series of in-person bill help events throughout the month of January to connect customers with programs and payment options designed to help make energy bills more manageable. At these events, Eversource customer care representatives will be available to review bills, answer questions and help customers understand which assistance programs or payment options may be right for them.

These events are part of Eversource's ongoing outreach to ensure customers are aware of the resources available to help manage energy costs, including financial

assistance programs, flexible payment plans, and energy efficiency solutions. The goal is to provide customers with clear information and one-on-one support so they can make informed decisions about their energy bills that best fit their individual needs.

"Winter energy bills can be challenging for many customers, especially during periods of sustained cold weather when energy usage is higher," said Eversource Senior Vice of Customer Operations and Digital Strategy Jared Lawrence. "We want customers to know that help is available, and these in-person events are an opportunity for us to meet customers in their communities and connect them directly with resources that can make a difference."

Energy usage typical-

ly increases during the winter months as customers rely more heavily on heating systems and other household energy needs. Colder temperatures, longer periods of heating use and shorter days can lead to higher overall energy consumption, which alone can significantly impact monthly bills, regardless of changes to rates.

"We know higher winter bills can be stressful, and no customer should feel like they're facing that alone," Lawrence said. "We encourage customers to attend one of our bill help events or reach out to us directly so we can work together on a solution. Our team is here to listen, answer questions and connect customers with options that can help make their bills more manageable."

MassHire announces February job expo to be held at Basketball Hall of Fame Center Court

SPRINGFIELD – Hundreds of people are expected to attend the Feb. 3 Job Expo at the Basketball Hall of Fame. Forty to fifty companies are expected to attend the event, which runs from 4 to 7 p.m. They will be hiring to fill hundreds of openings. Job seekers will have opportunities available in many different industries

including; health care, manufacturing, social services, education and banking. The Job Expo is held in Center Court and is open to the public. This provides an increasingly rare opportunity for applicants to meet recruiters face to face.

The turnout is expected to mirror a growing trend of increasing num-

bers of job seekers attending recruiting events. Kevin Lynn, Executive Director of MassHire Springfield Career Center says the job expo continues to be a draw. "Our October Job Expo had 617 job seekers show-up to meet with 54 employers. This was the largest group of job seekers since before the start of COVID in 2020. Local com-

panies continue to hire with many struggling to find the right candidates."

Job Expos give people the chance to make positive impressions on prospective employers while at the same time having the opportunity to learn about career paths and corporate culture. This helps job seekers determine which organizations are the

best fit for them. Recruiters find face to face events useful in screening candidates and selling their opportunities to prospective applicants. The ability to make these connections is why job expos remain popular with businesses.

Located at 95 Liberty Street, MassHire Springfield Career Center served over

11,000 job seekers and 1,600 business last fiscal year. We provide people with job search assistance and access to skills training. Our business services include no cost job postings and recruiting events. A list of companies and positions available at the job expo is attached. An updated list can be found at MassHireSpringfield.org.

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 or go to www.adventuretourssofarren.com

Irish Night 2026 set for Feb. 28

HOLYOKE – The Hibernians of Hampden/Hampshire Counties and Ladies Order invite the public to attend Irish Night in Holyoke 2026 on Feb. 28 at the Log Cabin 500 Easthampton Rd. Holyoke, Mass. Doors open at 5 p.m. and dinner is at 6:30 p.m.

The night will feature the Keohane and Kenneally Irish-American band and a corned beef and cabbage dinner with ribs. The price is \$50 per person and valet parking services will be available.

For reservations by Feb. 24 call Joe O'Connor at 413-627-7148, or Fran Hennessey at 413-785-5687 or online at eventbrite.com.

Additional entertainment by the Cassin School of Irish Dance and Piper Matt O'Connor. The night is in memory of Hibernian Daniel P. Curran and will benefit the Maurice A. Donahue Memorial Scholarship.

Free HCC line-cook training program begins Jan. 26

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College will be running both daytime and evening editions of its free, line-cook training program at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute beginning Jan. 26.

The six-week daytime program starts Monday, Jan. 26, and runs until March 6. Classes meet Mondays and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The 11-week evening program runs from Jan. 26 until April 8 on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 5 to 9 p.m.

Additional spring semester line-cook training programs will start on March 30 (daytime), April 27 (evening) and May 11 (daytime).

"HCC tries to meet the needs of its students by offering multiple options for start days and times," said Paul Sheehan, assistant project coordinator for culinary arts programs. "Over the last few years, we have offered our free line cook

training as separate day and evening programs to help students find the schedule that works best for them."

The program is designed for those already in the restaurant industry who want to upgrade their skills as well as unemployed or underemployed individuals interested in starting new careers.

"We usually have a mix of young people entering the job market for the first time and people who are re-entering the job market, looking for a second career," Sheehan said. "The course is perfect for anybody who's looking for a job and has a passion for food and the dining industry."

All classes meet in person at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute at 164 Race St.

Participants will learn all the essential competencies they need to become successful line cooks: knife skills; how to prepare stocks, soups, sauces, desserts, poultry, fish and meat; culinary math and measure-



If you ever wanted to learn to be a line cook, free training is available at HCC.

Submitted photo

ments; moist and dry heat cooking methods; as well as workplace soft skills, such as building a resume and searching for jobs.

Offered as part of HCC's Business & Workforce Development division, the line cook course is free to qualifying

applicants.

For more information, or to fill out an inquiry form, please go to hcc.edu/line-cook.

Metamorphosis exhibit now open

HOLYOKE – Wistariahurst Museum is excited to announce the upcoming exhibit Metamorphosis, opening Jan. 6, 2026. This exhibit features artists who have attended one or more of the artist sessions held at Wistariahurst Museum. These sessions, led by artist and volunteer Linda Devine, serve as a way for local artists to network, share their work with one another, and develop as artists. The artist sessions have been held monthly since January of 2025, and the group of artists has strengthened their skills

each session. To celebrate the growth these artists have made over the past year, they will be exhibiting their work in Wistariahurst's gallery. Metamorphosis has a theme of change, which each artist has interpreted their own way through several mediums, from painting and sculpture, to writing. Artists express themes of personal change, changes in nature, fashion, culture, and more.

Artists featured in this exhibit include J. Arthur Birth, Natasha Colon Ortiz, Linda Devine, Lydia E Freytes Rodriguez, Emily Munsell, Maureen Naff,

Catalina Rojas, Whit Kilpatrick Russell, Carolyn Ruzala, Deborah Skelly, Darlene Swiszc, Chuck Collins, and Mike Worden.

The opening reception of Metamorphosis will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 6, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Wistariahurst is an artist-friendly space that encourages creativity and supports the growth of this region's artists. Open Gallery Hours will be held from Jan. 6 through Feb. 24 on Mondays (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) and Tuesdays (4:30 to 6:30 p.m.), which will also be free and open to the public.

Cradles to Crayons places local drop box

HOLYOKE – While many children head out to sled or build a snowman with friends, others face clothing insecurity and lack access to coats, warm clothing layers, gloves, and boots to stay warm during these weather extremes.

Cradles to Crayons needs winter weather gear. Can you help us by sharing an urgent plea with your audience?

Cradles to Crayons Gear Up for Winter initiative aims to provide 50,000 coats to children living in low-income and homeless situations across Massachusetts so they can stay warm and feel prepared for the winter weather.

"As winter begins, one in three children in Massachusetts don't have the winter clothing they need," said Alicia Kabir, Executive Director of Cradles to Crayons Massachusetts. "As families juggle the costs of housing, heat and food, their budgets are stretched to the limits. Cradles to Crayons Gear up for Winter will help provide warm clothing like coats, boots, and hats so local families have one less expense to worry about," she added.

Thousands of families rely on Cradles to Crayons to keep their kids warm during New England's harsh winter

weather. This need includes clothing items, boots, hats, gloves, and coats. We need more donations to meet the growing need across Massachusetts this year.

Cradles to Crayons has donation drop box locations in your area where we accept new or gently used clothing items:

- Old Navy store in Holyoke- 50 Holyoke Street Holyoke, MA
- Old Navy store in Hadley- 335 Russell Street Hadley, MA
- Lander Grinspoon Elementary School- 257 Prospect St Northampton, MA

Scholarship and Fellowship funds available

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

Awards are made based on both academic achievement and merit. Of great importance is a personal written account of why

the student feels deserving of financial assistance and their goals in pursuing higher education.

Last year, \$297,000 was awarded to 24 individuals. Scholarships were given to 18 graduating seniors from 11 Hampden County high schools. Three scholarships were also awarded to current college students to assist them in completing their undergraduate degrees, and three fellowships were given to college graduates pursuing advanced degrees, who had graduated from Hampden County high schools.

The Horace Smith Fund was established in 1899 by the successful and generous philanthropist named Horace Smith,

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

Completed applications must be received either electronically or by mail to The Horace Smith Fund at 16 Union Avenue, Suite 2K, Westfield, MA 01085 no later than March 15, 2026.

Applications will also be available at local high school guidance offices, college financial aid offices, online at www.HoraceSmithFund.org or by phoning (413) 739-4222.

South Hadley Chorale to resume rehearsals, new singers welcome

SOUTH HADLEY – The South Hadley Chorale will resume rehearsals for its annual March concert on Wednesday, Jan. 7 from 7 to 9 p.m. at All Saints' Church, 7 Woodbridge Street, South Hadley. The program features Vivaldi's Gloria, plus a selection of spirituals.

Rehearsals will continue on Wednesday evenings until the concert on Sunday, March 15, 2026.

New singers are welcome to join. There are no auditions, although most singers have had some choral experience.

This is Anita Anderson

Cooper's second year as Music Director of the South Hadley Chorale. Ms. Anderson Cooper is a member of the faculty of the Paul Baird Middle School in Ludlow and directs the Smith College Handbell Choir. She is also a composer and a frequent soloist and guest conductor both locally and throughout the East Coast.

The South Hadley Chorale is made up of 70 singers from 16 communities. For more information, please visit www.southhadleychorale.org or call 413-533-3833.

Sarah the Fiddler to perform

HOLYOKE – Day Brook Village Senior Living, a locally owned, not-for-profit Continuing Care Retirement Community located in Holyoke, MA will be hosting a concert featuring Sarah the Fiddler on Thursday, Jan. 29 at 2 p.m. in the Sheldon Dining Room.

This performance is free and open to the public. An RSVP is required; kindly call 413-561-7958.

Check us out on the web: www.sun.turley.com

Sale of Real Estate Under M.G.L. C. 183A:6

Tuesday, January 20, 2026 @ 11:00 AM

70 Greenwood Terrace, Unit 6026C, Chicopee, MA
Doverbrook Estates Condominium

This spacious (+/-871 sq ft), 1bedroom, 1 bathroom, garden unit with eat-in kitchen opening to formal dining room, large living room. Private patio area. Attached garage. Storage. Association swimming pool and tennis court.

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SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor



Why didn't my friend's wife get all her SS immediately?

Dear Rusty:

A friend told me about what he believes is a strange thing in the Social Security system.

His wife reached her full retirement age of 66 several years ago. She delayed filing for Social Security past her FRA and claimed on her 68th birthday in June of that year, exactly two years after her FRA. When she filed, she was told she would receive approximately \$300 per month, which, of course, was more than she would have received at her FRA.

She was told however that she would only receive \$300 per month as of Jan. 1 of the following year. Between June of the year she turned 68 and filed for SS until the end of that year, she would receive an amount less than \$300. This lower amount was the amount she would have received if she had filed in December, the year she turned 67. She said she was told that was how SS works. She would never receive the difference in benefits she lost from June through December of the year she filed. If the above is true, can you explain?

person claims, they will have .667% added to their PIA. That means that for each full year of delay, that person will get an extra 8% added to their PIA. For someone (like your friend's wife) who claimed 24 months after her FRA, she would receive a benefit 16% higher than her FRA amount. However, Social Security normally only applies DRCs in January of each year.

So, even though your friend's wife claimed her SS benefits in June, 24 months after her FRA, she would initially only get the DRCs she had accumulated through the end of the previous year - in this case, about 18 months' worth of DRCs or an SS payment about 12% higher than her PIA (her FRA amount).

She would not get her remaining earned DRCs (another 4%) until January of the following year. So, in effect, the wife's initial benefit didn't reflect all her earned DRCs until her later January benefit payment. Thus, the wife essentially lost that extra benefit money for the period between June and December of the year she claimed Social Security. In other words, she wouldn't get the full 16% amount until SS applied the additional 4% DRCs to her benefit payment the following January. And that is why your friend's wife initially received a payment a bit less than the \$300 Social Security said she was entitled to by waiting two years after her FRA to claim.

This surprises many who choose to wait beyond their full retirement age to claim Social Security. But, curiously, this process doesn't apply to those who wait until age 70 to claim their SS benefits. For those who wait until age 70 to claim, Social Security will immediately apply all DRCs that they have accumulated and provide them with their maximum SS benefit immediately.

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 ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

A resident of Lake Lashaway saw her first ever evening grosbeak in the morning at her feeder on Sunday, Jan. 4.

The evening grosbeak is an eight inch long, chunky, thick billed finch, which wanders widely in winter.

The males are yellow and brown with black and white wings. The females are gray with white and black wings. Both sexes have a thick bill. They have notched, square tipped tails and pointed wings.

Often evening grosbeaks visit feeders in large flocks. They inhabit conifer forests



Male evening grosbeak

in my BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer

and in winter are seen in box elders, maples and fruiting shrubs. They breed in the coniferous and mixed forests. They are seen in spruce and fir trees in the northern forests and pines in the western mountains. They are seen in winter in deciduous woodlands and semi-open country. Their song is a series of short, musical whistles. Their call note is similar to the chirp of a house sparrow, but louder.

The female lays three to four pale blue to blue green, blotched with brown, gray or purple eggs. The female does all the incubating, but the male may feed the female during this time. Both parents feed the nestlings.

Their diet is mostly seeds and some berries and

insects. They prefer seeds of box elder, ash, maple, locust and other trees. At feeders, they prefer sunflower seeds. They also will feed on oozing maple sap. They extended their breeding range eastward in the 19th century and early 20th century. The population declined in the east in recent years.

Other birds at Lake Lashaway

The Lake Lashaway resident also had red cardinals, blue jays galore, gold finches and a red bellied woodpecker. She said bald eagles are very common visitors on the lake.

Brimfield birds

I received an email from a Brimfield resident on Jan.

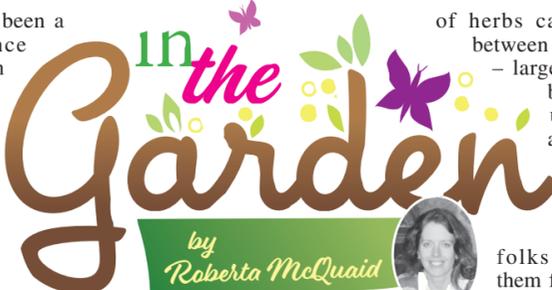
See BIRDS, page 5

Baking bread with herbs

There has been a resurgence lately in doing things the "old fashioned way!" I am definitely all for that, since I have often felt I was born a century too late.

People are making their own soap and laundry detergent, growing gardens, and canning and preserving the harvest. Many have also gotten the sourdough itch, and are baking all sorts of breads, rolls and treats using sourdough starter. My niece shared some of her starter with my husband and I! It traveled several states to make it to us and boy was our first loaf delicious.

I don't feel as if I will give up making yeast-bread entirely, though, especially since my favorite bread of all time is a braided bread that incorporates herbs. (You knew that eventually I would weave in a gardening topic!) I'm excited to share the recipe with you. Maybe you will even



become inspired to grow your own herbs to use in this or any number of recipes down the road.

This time of year it is likely you won't have fresh herbs on hand, so before we begin, I'd like to give you some tips for using dried herbs.

First, remember to break them up finely just before you incorporate them into any recipe. Honestly, there is nothing worse than coming across a full-size piece of Rosemary foliage, for example. It's like you are chomping on a pine needle!

Besides making the herbs more palatable, the flavor will be released ever so nicely once they are finely ground. Small amounts

of herbs can be crushed between your fingertips - larger amounts can be ground up using a mortar and pestle.

Pulverize whole spices in a coffee grinder. Some folks gently roast them first to intensify their flavor.

If you want to substitute fresh herbs for dried in any recipe, use at least twice as much; likewise in this recipe you would use only have the amount if using dried.

Store dried herbs and spices away from heat and light; even so, they will start to lose their flavor after about a year. When I buy a new jar of dried herbs, I find it helpful to mark the date right on the bottle.

Without any further ado, here is the recipe for that wonderful bread - as pretty as it is flavorful.

Certainly a nice addition to a bowl of soup on a winter's night! And it makes the best croutons, too!

See GARDEN, page 5

The Holyoke Sun welcomes election letters to the editor

The Holyoke Sun 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 Holyoke Sun, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to thesun@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 newspa-

per 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 Holyoke Sun.

the HOLYOKE Sun TEAM

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Letters to the Editor have a maximum of 350 words. We require writers to include their name, address and phone number in order for our office to authenticate authorship prior to publication. Addresses and phone numbers are not published.

Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions. Libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks or defamation of character are not allowed.

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

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

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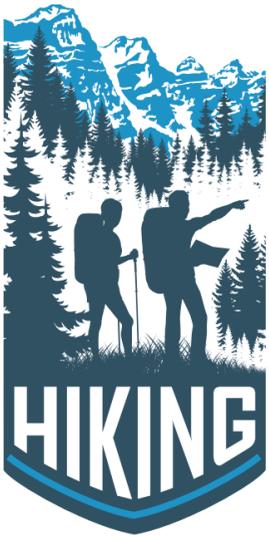
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A final hike of 2025 - Mount Jackson Summit

By Julie Midura
Guest Columnist



“You know, honey, we always talk about how we’ll REALLY start living ‘some day.’ Once the kids are grown. Once we have more time and more money. Once we retire. But how do we know that we’ll both be physically capable of doing something so demanding if we wait for ‘some day’ to arrive? How do we know that we will even reach that elusive ‘some day?’”

It was a beautiful August day in 2016, and Tom and I were standing on the summit of Mt. Lafayette in the White Mountains of New

Hampshire. We were completing Tom’s lifelong dream of hiking the Franconia Ridge Loop—a majestic 9-mile hike featured on a National Geographic List of the 20 Best Hikes in the World.

On that summer afternoon almost ten years ago, I was trying to convince my husband that we should attempt to hike all of New Hampshire’s 48 tallest peaks. I was 51, and he was 59 at the time. There were numerous reasons not to pursue such a time-consuming and physically challenging endeavor. One of which, as Tom stated, was because “We’re far too old and there’s no way we can hike up all

those mountains in our lifetime.”

It took a bit of persuasion on my part, but he finally agreed to chase after those 48 mountain peaks.

Since that day, Tom and I have not only completed the entire White Mountain 4,000 Footer List once, but twice including climbing every peak during the winter season. And we’ve repeated several of our favorites over a half dozen times. In addition, we’ve backpacked 800 miles on the Appalachian Trail, completing 8 of the 14 states. We have also climbed the second highest peak in the continental United States—14,440’ Mt. Elbert in Colorado—when I was fif-



ty-eight and Tom was sixty-six years old.

The thousands of miles we have walked over the past ten years have not just proven what our bodies and minds are capable of. Every mile has been a journey of adventure, self-discovery, courage, humility, resilience,

contentment and gratitude. And every footprint we have left on every woodland trail and every slab of granite has propelled us forward to the next.

Our final hike of 2025 in New Hampshire, just two

See HIKING, page 16

GARDEN, from page 4

COUNTRY HERB BREAD TWIST

- 1 envelope active dry yeast
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ¼ cup water (110 degrees)
- ¼ stick unsalted butter, melted (2 tablespoons)
- 2 ½- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt

1 tablespoon minced fresh oregano

1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme

1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary

Sprinkle yeast and sugar over ¼ cup warm water in a large bowl; stir to dissolve. Let stand until foamy (approximately 15 minutes).

Blend 1 cup water and 1 tablespoon of the melted butter into the yeast mixture. Combine 2 ½ cups

flour and salt.

Stir into yeast mixture ½ cup at a time to form a slightly sticky dough, adding up to ½ cup additional flour if necessary.

Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth and elastic, about 5 minutes. Place dough in a large bowl that has been lightly buttered.

Turn dough to coat entire surface. Cover with a clean cloth and let rise in a warm,

draft-free area until the dough has doubled in volume, about 1 ½ hours.

Punch dough down. Divide into thirds.

One by one, take each third and knead in the individual herbs. Roll each dough ball between the palms of your hands into a rope about 20 inches long. Taper the ends.

When complete, lay the three side by side and working from the middle, braid each end. Transfer the bread to

a buttered baking sheet and cover loosely with a clean cloth.

Allow to rise in a warm place for 45- 50 minutes, until doubled in size.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Brush loaf with remaining 1 tablespoon of melted butter and bake for 20-30 minutes or until golden and loaf sounds hollow when tapped.

Cool for 30 minutes before serving. Serve it warm

with a pat of butter or have some olive oil handy for dipping!

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

BIRDS from page 1

5. He said, “Not much happening in the yard. We’ve seen one white-throated sparrow after recent snow storms and a group of about a dozen house finches show up often. Yesterday there was a group of American goldfinch in a birch tree eating seeds but they didn’t come to the feeder.”

Christmas bird count

He said, “My wife and I did the Christmas Bird Count with the Allen Bird Club again this year. We cover the town of Ludlow. The weather was fine but the birds were not cooperating. We managed 26 species which is a few below our average. Woodpeckers (only 1 downy) and sparrows (3 junco) were

hard to find.”

He also said, “At the Ludlow Reservoir there was a good amount of open water but few birds, eight hooded mergansers and four mallards. Curiously last year there was a lot less open water at the reservoir but a lot more birds. Go figure.”

People may visit <https://netapp.audubon.org/CBCObservation/CurrentYear/ResultsByCount.aspx> to obtain Christmas Bird count results. Enter the county and state to get Massachusetts counts. He said he did not know the Springfield count results, but the Worcester count had 78 species.

Snowy owls

He also heard there have been two snowy owls in Northampton for a few

weeks now. Initially they were seen in fields north of Route 9, but lately have been seen in the fields near the airport.

Barred owl and pileated woodpecker

I saw a barred owl and a pileated woodpecker in the same day, Jan. 6. The barred owl was perched in a tree and stayed awhile before flying off. When I went to pick up my grandson at the bus stop, I saw a pileated woodpecker on Lincoln Road.

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

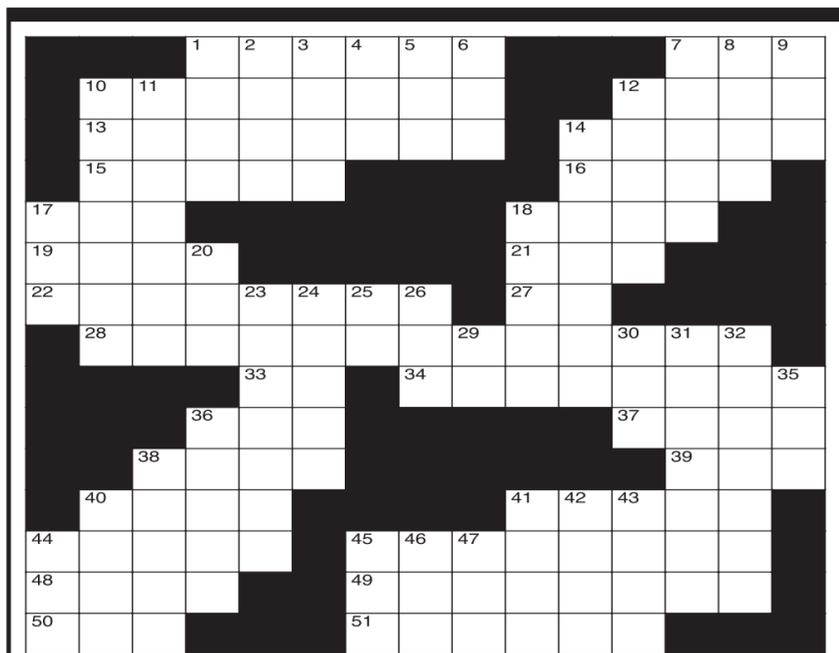
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donovanspub.com

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Saturday, Jan. 17th Dee Reilly 6-9pm	Sunday, Jan. 18th Jimmy McArdle & Jerry Murphy 2-5pm
Saturday, Jan. 24th Charlie Bongiovi 6-9pm	Saturday, Jan. 31st Billy Eagen 6-9pm



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Mechanical lever
- 7. Rocky peak
- 10. Leave a country
- 12. Discount
- 13. D.C. ballplayer
- 14. Partner to “oohed”
- 15. Engine sound
- 16. Japanese ornamental box
- 17. Fido is one
- 18. Amounts of time
- 19. DiFranco and Phyo are two
- 21. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
- 22. Make secret plans
- 27. “Tiny Bubbles” singer
- 28. “His Airness”
- 33. Morning
- 34. Perfected
- 36. Winger guitarist

- Beach
- 37. Abba __, Israeli politician
- 38. Self-immolation by fire ritual
- 39. A way to save money
- 40. Pulpit
- 41. Make ecstatically happy
- 44. Once more
- 45. Works on
- 48. Nocturnal S. American rodent
- 49. State again
- 50. Expression of disappointment
- 51. Type of door

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Yugoslavian communist leader
- 2. Exchange rate
- 3. High school dance

- 4. Peter’s last name
- 5. When you anticipate arriving
- 6. Israeli city __ Aviv
- 7. Goat-like mammals
- 8. Margarine
- 9. End-of-the-spectrum color
- 10. Make poisonous
- 11. Popular beverage
- 12. Actress Lathan
- 14. Where planes land and depart
- 17. Political fundraising entity
- 18. The distinctive spirit of a people or an era
- 20. Buffer used in microbiology
- 23. Light, open carriage
- 24. Metrical feet
- 25. Email subject line feature
- 26. A street with lots of nightmares
- 29. Rapper Rule
- 30. River in Scotland
- 31. One who settles a dispute
- 32. Most chummy
- 35. We all have our own
- 36. Arab tribe
- 38. Slap
- 40. Ottoman military commanders
- 41. Scottish or Irish Gaelic language
- 42. Emit coherent radiation
- 43. Sun or solar disk (Egyptian mythology)
- 44. Inclined to
- 45. Olfactory reference syndrome
- 46. Chest muscle (slang)
- 47. Body part

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 8

Blessed Sacrament Parish

Rev. Duy Le
frduyle@blessedsacramentholyoke.org
1945 Northampton St., Holyoke
PARISH RECTORY: 413-532-0713
OFFICE HOURS:
Monday - Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Friday 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
WEEKEND MASSES:
Saturday 4 p.m.
Sunday 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
DAILY MASS AND ROSARY
Monday - Friday: ROSARY 6:15 a.m.
Monday - Friday: MASS 6:45 a.m.
Legal Holidays: ROSARY 7:30 a.m.
Legal Holidays: MASS 8 a.m.
ROSARY AND MEDITATION
Monday Evening: 6 p.m.
www.blessedsacramentholyoke.org
Facebook: @bspholyokema

First Baptist Church

Pastor Theresa Temple
1976 Northampton St., Holyoke
(413) 533-7728
firstbaptistchurchholyokeye@comcast.net
Facebook: First Baptist Church of Holyoke, MA
HOURS: Sunday worship service (winter hours) at 10:30 a.m. (summer hours) at 10 a.m.
Wednesday Bible Studies, one at 11 a.m. and one at 5:30 p.m.

Our Lady of the Cross Catholic Parish

Pastor: Fr. Albert Scherer, OFM Conv.
Email: pastor@ourladyofthecross.com
Holy Cross Ave., Holyoke
Parish Offices are located at: 15 Maple Street, Holyoke (413) 532-5661
parish@ourladyofthecross.com
OFFICE HOURS:
Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
WEEKEND MASSES:
Saturday 4 p.m.
Sunday 7:30 a.m., 9 a.m. (Polish), and 10:30 a.m.
DAILY MASS:
Monday - Saturday 8:30 a.m.
Legal Holidays Mass 9 a.m.
Reconciliation (Confession) Monday - Saturday 8 a.m.
Saturday 3:15pm
Anytime by Appointment
DEVOTIONS
Monday - Saturday
Divine Mercy Chaplet - 7:50 a.m.
ROSARY 8:05 a.m.
www.ourladyofthecross.com

CHURCH DIRECTORY



Your Community Church

St. Peter’s Lutheran Church

Rev. Debora Stein
34 Jarvis Ave., Holyoke
Office: (413) 536-3369
Office: stpetersholyokeye@gmail.com
Pastor: revdebma@gmail.com
Website: www.stpetersholyokeye.org
Social media: facebook.com/stpetersholyokeye
OFFICE HOURS:
Monday and Thursday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Friday, 12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
WORSHIP:
Sundays at 9:30 a.m. (also on Facebook Live) & Thursdays at 6:30 p.m.
Other: Prayers with Pastor - Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. - on Facebook Live.

St. Paul’s Episcopal Church

The Rev. Canon Joel Martinez
485 Appleton St., Holyoke
413-532-5060
Office@StPaulsholyoke.org
StPaulsholyoke.org
Instagram: stpaulsepiscopalchurch_holyoke
OFFICE HOURS:
Tuesday - Friday 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Days and Hours of Services:
Sunday: 8 a.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m.
Sunday: 5 p.m. (Spanish)

BBB Tip: Don't scan QR codes on unexpected packages

Paula Fleming
pfleming@boston.bbb.org

A package you didn't order could be a fun surprise, but be careful, especially if it comes with a QR code. It might be the setup for a scam.

What you'll learn:

- How brushing scams use fake packages-and now QR codes-to trick consumers and post fake reviews

- Why scanning a QR code from an unexpected package can expose your personal information or device to scammers

- What steps to take if you receive a package you didn't order, including how to protect your identity and report the scam

In a "brushing" scam, you receive a package you didn't order, often without a return address. This is often a setup by unscrupulous companies who found your address online. After the company ships the product to you, they can post a fake, positive review on your behalf to improve their store's ratings and get more sales.

Reports to BBB Scam Tracker over the last few months show a twist on brushing scams where the package contains a QR code. The code comes with instructions to scan it to find out who sent the package or how to start a return. Scanning the QR code can lead to a phishing website or download malware onto your device.

In a recent BBB Scam Tracker report, a consumer shared this experience, "I received a small package at my door marked UNIUNI from: LEO This person/company has my name and address - when I googled

them the information states this is a brushing scam and that someone has obtained my personal information from either AliExpress, TEMU, or Amazon. I have an Amazon account but have not used those other sites. The label has a tracking number, QR code, customer number, and reference number. I have not opened the package, nor do I wish to - this is highly suspicious. I did not order anything from this company/person."

In one BBB Scam Tracker report, a consumer received a package of pasta via Amazon in her name. Thinking it was a gift from a friend, she scanned the QR code that came with the package. The QR code took her to a website that appeared to be Amazon. The consumer said she has received a higher-than-normal amount of

scam emails since scanning the QR code.

In another BBB Scam Tracker report, a consumer received a ring in the mail that he did not order. The ring came with a QR code. The consumer checked BBB Scam Tracker before scanning the code, and after reading other reports about brushing scams, he decided not to scan it.

It might seem like there are no downsides to a free package, but it could be a sign that someone is using your personal information for their own gain. If this happens to you, BBB recommends checking the security of your accounts and notifying the retailer who sent you the package.

What to do if you receive a package you didn't order:

- Don't scan QR codes. They might take you

to a phishing site that steals your personal information or download malware onto your device.

- Protect your identity. If you did scan the QR code and enter personal information, change your passwords for any compromised accounts and enable two-factor authentication. Also, keep a close eye on your credit reports and credit card bills after you receive the package.

- Notify the retailer. If you can tell where the package is from, go directly to the retailer's website to get their contact information and report the package as a scam. Retailers like Amazon have policies banning brushing and fake reviews, and they will investigate your report.

- Check for fake reviews. If you can identify the company that sent you

the packages, look for false reviews in your name and report them to the retailer.

- Pause deliveries. One package is no big deal, but some targets of brushing scams are overwhelmed with a floor of unordered packages, creating a serious problem. If this happens, you may want to consider temporarily refusing package delivery at your home address and directing your real orders to a package acceptance service.

- Keep the package. The one silver lining of brushing scams is that you get to keep the gift - the Federal Trade Commission says you have a legal right to keep unordered merchandise. Don't try to return it, especially if there are instructions to scan a QR code or enter information. It could needlessly compromise more of your personal information.

BHA to host murder mystery dinner

BELCHERTOWN - The Belchertown Historical Association is holding its annual murder mystery dinner on Saturday, Feb. 7 at Tony and Penny's Restaurant in Ludlow. The show will begin at 6:30 p.m. followed by the dinner buffet at 7 p.m. Guests can arrive as early as 6 p.m.

This year's show, written

by Paula Hilton, is entitled: Death by Cupcake. We look forward, as always, to the hilarious antics of the BUCC Players from the Belchertown United Church of Christ.

Plan a night out of dinner and entertainment while supporting our historical association, the United Church of Christ, Belchertown and a favorite

local restaurant business.

The tickets are \$47 each and include the show, dinner and dessert. There will be a cash bar.

Tickets are available at Cold Spring Discount Liquors (on the Belchertown Common) or by contacting Sally Shattuck 413-230-2022 or sallyshattuck54@gmail.com.

FIRST, from page 1

ly the ones that are not out here voting, or are at these meetings asking questions. So I think for me that's one of the strongest points I want to advocate moving forward during my tenure as Vice President."

Romboletti discussed the importance of the role and why she and her colleagues felt Rivera earned the distinction.

"It's more parliamentary because there has also been a gray area on what happens when the President needs to take an extended period of time or miss a meeting, and I'm proud to say through my first term, I only missed one meeting because I was in Ireland and time differences didn't align," Romboletti noted. She then continued her thoughts by noting that having a VP among the council offers a sense of relief.

"And I want it known their is so much that goes in the job of being president and having extra support is beneficial, and councilor Rivera is really good at running contentious meetings, he is good at running at public comment and he has a ton of skills when it comes to running meetings, and that's what this position needs, so I'm looking forward to that."

Echoing additional comments was Garcia, who discussed clarity about the expansion of a VP, while also addressing the concerns of the city council, just "rubber stamping" - going along with



Newly Appointed Holyoke City Council VP Israel Rivera and Holyoke City Council President Tessa Murphy-Romboletti.

Turley photos by Brendan Rooney

just the mayor says, which he acknowledged as "simply not true".

"I think being the council president is a little bit more difficult than being the mayor," Garcia said. "And I think with having a vice chair the intended purpose there is to be able to fill that gap when the president is absent, and again it comes down to making sure that government is functioning; covering our bases so that this isn't a liability to slow things down, and I think it's a great idea one that the council has been talking about at length and are now putting into practice." He then responded to his second thought, "I can tell you right now, and understand

that this council, working with many of the members that have come back, is all about accountability," Garcia said. "These guys do their own homework, they make their own decisions, and when it comes to election time of when we are running on a platform their is alignment, and it just happens that alot of things that are on my agenda as an executive administration is aligned with what the majority of the council members want to see and get done in the city, and that's where you see alot of the collaboration that many are calling as rubber stamping which is far from the truth. So I have to give it to this council, and you know, where we are now."

Paint party fundraiser set for Jan. 23

AGAWAM - A Winter Aurora Borealis Wonderland Paint Party fundraiser to benefit Agawam's Community House will take place on Friday, Jan. 23 at the historic Captain Charles Leonard House, 663 Main Street, Agawam, Mass. from 5:30 to 9 p.m.

Following the step-by-step directions of your art project to learn acrylic painting techniques, attendees will paint a beautiful winter wonderland on canvas while sipping and snacking with friends.

Tickets are just \$40 per person, which includes all materials needed to create your masterpiece, with proceeds benefiting the historic Captain Charles Leonard House.

Space is limited! Reserve your seat today at <https://www.facebook.com/share/ICAHu4Ufze/>

Built in 1805 as a stage tavern to service travelers on



The Winter Aurora Borealis.

Submitted photo

the Hartford/Boston/Albany route, the Captain Charles Leonard House is considered Agawam's finest Federal-era building. The house was restored by Mrs. Minerva Davis, who established a Board of Trustees to oversee the operation of the house as Agawam's Community House, the role it has served since 1939.

The Captain Charles Leonard House was featured in/photographed for The White Pine Series, Vol. XI,

No. 4 (1925); recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey (1934); and featured in Some Old Homes of the Lower Connecticut Valley (1988). The Captain Charles Leonard House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

The Captain Charles Leonard House is available for holiday parties, business functions and social events. For rental information, please call 413-786-9421. Please follow us on Facebook.

Suffield Players holding eight-week playwriting workshops

SUFFIELD, CT - The Suffield Players are pleased to announce Drafting the Drama, an eight-week, in-person playwriting workshop running March 3 through April 21 taught by theatre artist and educator Matt Bessette.

Designed for both emerging and experienced writers, Drafting the Drama is an intensive, hands-on course that explores the craft of playwriting from concept to page. Each class is structured to open new creative horizons while introducing

practical, advanced, and nuanced techniques used by professional playwrights. Participants will build confidence in their writing voice while developing original work in a supportive, collaborative environment.

Bessette returns to The Suffield Players to lead a second round of classes, guiding participants through a focused playwriting workshop designed for writers at all levels of experience. The course emphasizes storytelling craft, professional techniques, and creative confi-

dence, helping students bring their ideas to life on the page in an engaging and supportive setting.

A unique feature of the workshop is its connection to The Suffield Players' acting curriculum. Selected scripts developed during Drafting the Drama will be used in the Stepping into the Spotlight acting class that immediately follows the workshop. At the conclusion of that class, students will perform the selected scripts for a live audience, offering playwrights the opportunity to see their work

fully realized on stage.

Who Should Enroll:

- Aspiring playwrights exploring dramatic writing for the first time

- Experienced writers looking to refine their craft
- Actors, directors, and theatre-makers interested in original storytelling

- Anyone interested in developing scripts for the stage in a structured, encouraging environment

Registration & Information:

Enrollment is now open. Full details, tuition

information, and registration are available through The Suffield Players website. Space is limited to ensure an interactive classroom experience.

Westfield Athenaeum offers American Revolution Series

WESTFIELD - The Westfield Athenaeum Children's Library will present a series of programs about the Revolutionary War for children 8 - 12 each month January through May. The kickoff event, Henry Knox's Noble Artillery Train featuring Owen Lourenzo and his trained oxen, will be presented on Wednesday, Jan. 14 at 4 p.m. Owen will talk about the Noble Train and how the oxen were integral to its success. The event is open to all ages and will be held on the Court Street lawn. This event is free to all attendees.

COUNCIL, from page 1

where the mayor stands as well," she said. "I also feel the vibe among the new city council feels different, and I don't think that means we are always going to agree, but as I said today disagreement is healthy and necessary, but I do think we will be able to do this in a respectful way, where the people of Holyoke deserve that, and we figure out how to compromise, due to us having the potential that we can show the community that we can get things done, whether or not we are always on the same page, and I'm excited about that."

ERROR, from page 1

the incorrect calculation will see a credit reflected on their updated bill.

We apologize for the confusion caused by this oversight. While understandably frustrating, we anticipate that this error will have minimal impact on the overall collection of taxes.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or require additional information.

Stanley Park history program to explore the park's origins

WESTFIELD - Stanley Park of Westfield in collaboration with the Westfield Athenaeum invites the community to step back in time during a special Stanley Park History Program on Thursday, Feb. 19, from 3 to 5 p.m. The program will be held at the Westfield Women's Club, 28 Court Street, Westfield, MA.

Local historian Robert Brown will lead an engag-

ing discussion on the origins of Stanley Park, tracing its beginnings in 1949 and highlighting the people, vision, and preservation efforts that shaped the park into the cherished community space it is today. Brown's dedication to uncovering and sharing Westfield's history earned him a Westfield Preservation Award from the Westfield Historical Commission in 2023.

Attendees will also enjoy a screening of the 8-minute documentary, Stanley Park: Rooted in the Past, Growing for the Future, which captures the park's history, mission, and enduring impact. Stanley Park staff will be on site to answer questions about the park, upcoming programs, and ways to get involved during the upcoming season. Light refreshments will

be served.

This free program is open to the public and offers a meaningful opportunity for longtime supporters and new visitors alike to deepen their connection to Stanley Park.

For questions or additional information, please contact the Development Office at 413-568-9312 ext. 108 or email development@stanleypark.org.

SPORTS

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www.turley.com

Wrestling scores dominant win

HOLYOKE – With the Granby wrestling program suffering a numbers problem, Pioneer Valley Chinese Immersion Charter School has become the host of a co-op program. Last Wednesday, PVCIC visited Holyoke

for a dual meet, with the Knights having no trouble getting past the Dragons 66-10. The Knights faced Smith Voke in dual meet action earlier this week and next face Franklin Tech on the road on Jan. 21 at 7 p.m.

T-Birds stunned by Phantoms

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (13-15-4-2) were snake-bitten by a three-goal third period rally as the Lehigh Valley Phantoms (19-11-2-2) came away with a 3-2 win on Saturday night before a sellout crowd of 6,793 inside the MassMutual Center on Indians Throwback Night.

Entering the game having allowed only two total goals in their prior three victories, the Phantoms and their netminder, Carson Bjarnason, made it clear goals would not come easily for the T-Birds, as the rookie backstop turned away all 10 first period attempts from the home side.

At the other end of

the rink, Georgi Romanov had a relatively quiet first period, making all seven saves asked of him in the Springfield crease. Neither team could connect on a power play chance, and each goalie came up with a timely save off an odd-man attack, with Romanov stoning a Phil Tomasino 2-on-1 bid and Bjarnason rejecting a Juraj Pekarcik breakaway.

The T-Birds' power play wasted little time getting to the lead in the opening minute of the second, as Calle Rosen gathered a pass from Matthew Peca at the top of the left circle and picked the top

See T-BIRDS, page 8

Knights fall to rival Terriers

HOLYOKE – Last Friday night, Holyoke High School girls basketball suffered a loss to rival West Springfield 49-24.

The Knights had some big struggles on offense as

only scored 14 points in the first three quarters of the game. Their only bright spot was Julianna Pirela with nine points. Holyoke fell to just 1-5 on the regular season.

Brownies offense pulls away from Holyoke

HOLYOKE – Last Monday night, Agawam High School boys basketball picked up a 67-50 win over Holyoke. Playing on the road, Agawam got a 24-point performance from Trevor Moynihan along with 17 points from Gavin Cruz

and 10 points from Brody Sheehan.

The Knights, who are just 1-5 this season, got 17 points from Michael Medina and 16 points from Gian Cora. Agawam is 5-5 so far this season, but Holyoke is a disappointing 1-5.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Michael Medina holds the ball for the Knights.



Georlee Aponte is pressured as he tries to get a shot off.



Julian Fasoli gets the three-point shot off.



Cosmo Bond gets a shot over the opposition.



Gian Cora overcomes a couple of blocks and heads for a shot.



Julianna Pirela goes for the easy shot in the middle.



Michaela Guzman gets the three-point shot away.



Isabella Lachat squares up to take a shot.



Janessa Torres is pressured as she tries to shoot.



Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com
Genesis Rivera goes for the shot.

Throwback jerseys help Railers grab win over Florida

WORCESTER – The IceCats have been gone from these parts for more than 20 years but they keep winning anyway.

They kept their Railers victory streak alive Saturday night in the most compelling fashion possible, as the home team won one of the most dramatic victories in team history as they wore Cats uniforms.

Down, 2-0, to the powerful Florida Everblades with a little more than five minutes to go in the third period, Worcester came back to make it 2-2 and send things into overtime. For the fourth time this season, the Railers came away with the

OT victory.

Max Dorrington scored the winner at 4:23 with Worcester on a power play. He tipped home a shot by Jesse Pulkkinen, who scored the Railers first goal of the game. It was the first professional goal of his North America career.

With the crowd of 8,025 roaring for most of the night, and with Worcester's Parker Gahagen and Florida's Cam Johnson both playing superbly in net, the building had a playoff atmosphere.

The Railers have never lost a game in front of a home crowd larger than 8,000. They are 8-0-0 in those games.

Pulkkinen got Worcester's first goal at 14:36 of the third period on a sizzling slap shot from 55 feet. Ryan Miotto made it 2-2 at 17:00 as he tipped a shot by Michael Suda.

After Friday night's defeat, Worcester coach Nick Tuzzolino compared coming back from a two-goal deficit to climbing two mountains. His team could not do it Friday. Saturday night the Railers scaled Wachusett and Monadnock.

"I think we had a little bit better mindset," Tuzzolino said, "more positivity on our bench, myself included, trying to keep to our game plan."

The victory snapped a three-game losing streak during which Worcester was always playing from behind. Getting the game into overtime was just what the Railers wanted to do given how well they have played in the fourth period.

Saturday's triumph improved their overtime record to 4-1 this season. Worcester is 8-2 in its last 10 overtime games going back to last season.

There was no denying the energy in the DCU Center and both teams responded.

"If we're ever gonna talk about being a post-season team," Tuzzolino said,

"and playing post-season hockey, that's what we've got to get out of this. They're a great team."

Craig Needham and Reid Duke scored for Florida. Needham scored at 4:52 of the second period, one second after an Everblades power play ended. Duke made it 2-0 at 2:41 of the third.

The triumph was Worcester's second-ever over Florida. The Railers are 2-6-0 all-time versus the Everblades. It was just the second time they have beaten Johnson in six games. One victory is in overtime, one in a shootout.

As was the case Friday

the first period was scoreless, although Worcester had a 10-7 edge in shots on goal. The home team took a while to get going and created its best scoring chances in the final minutes.

Riley Piercey had a re-direct from just outside of the crease that Johnson turned aside at 18:11. Shortly after that Worcester had several fine chances that did not go in, but as the buzzer approached Anthony Callin had a good look from the left and some net to shoot at but missed to the far side.

It took the Railers a while to stop missing, and that set up a great finish.

Registration set to open for baseball league

SOUTH HADLEY – On Sunday, Jan. 11, the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, an over-28 recreational league, held its first meeting of 2026 to prepare for the upcoming season.

At the meeting it was determined registration for players will open up on Sunday, Feb. 1.

For the 2026 season, the cost will be \$215 and will include a 16th game added to the regular season schedule.

During the 2025 season, the league experimented with playing on Mother's Day Saturday as well as a week-

night game to allow players an opportunity to play under the lights. While the night games were very successful, the Mother's Day Saturday games were rained out.

Those elements will return along with a 16th game with an opponent to be determined as the league's board explores possibilities for interleague matchups with another league in the region.

For returning players to the league, the deadline is Mar. 22 at 12 noon to be registered for the 2026 season in order to be guaranteed a ros-

ter spot. There will be open practices for all players but specifically targeted at new players scheduled for March 29 and April 4 at times and locations to be announced. The draft is currently scheduled to take place on April 4 following that practice.

The season is currently slated to start on Sunday, April 19 and following the success of the six-team fall league last year, the league will also have a fall league in September and October this season.

The registration link will be live on Feb. 1 at www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org.

Players must register and then pay the league dues via Venmo or contact the league leadership if an alternate form of payment is needed.

Aside from the week-night and Mother's Day games, other games take place Sundays at 10 a.m. outside of Mother's Day, Memorial Day and July 4 weekends. Playoffs will be in August.

This is the 30th season for the league and league officials are looking to celebrate the anniversary with a couple of events.

T-BIRDS, from page 7

corner over Bjarnason's glove to make it a 1-0 Springfield lead just 52 seconds into the frame.

That same man-up unit added to their tally at 16:53 on a gorgeous three-man passing play, as Alek Kaskimaki slid a pass to Chris Wagner at the left post. From there, Wagner stuffed a perfect between-the-leg pass over to Matt Luff, who fired home his team-leading 12th goal to make it a 2-0 game into the intermission.

The third period began at 4-on-4, and the Phantoms finally got on

the board as Lane Pederson curled to the middle of the ice before snapping a perfect shot upstairs over Romanov at the 27-second mark, cutting the Springfield lead to 2-1. On a power play just 2:40 later, Christian Kyrou dissected the T-Birds' defense and chipped a forehead over Romanov's glove, bringing Lehigh to a rapid tie, 2-2.

The 2-2 tie made it all the way to the game's final seconds, but a bad-angle shot from Anthony Richard at the bottom of the left circle somehow found its way home with 11.9 remaining, and Lehigh Valley escaped with the victory.

Public Notices

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No.
HD26P0064EA
Estate of:
James M Canata
Date of Death: 10/25/2025
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by James Canata of Deland, FL requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.
The Petitioner requests that James Canata of Deland, FL be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve Without Surety on the bond in unsupervised administration.
IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 02/17/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE ACT
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the ad-

ministration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court.
Date: January 13, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
01/16/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Division
Docket No.
HD26P0021EA
Estate of:
Desiree Cossette
Date of Death: 11/30/2025
INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petitioner Emma Lao of Holyoke MA

a Will has been admitted to informal probate.
Emma Lao of Holyoke MA has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve without surety on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets

and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.
01/16/2026

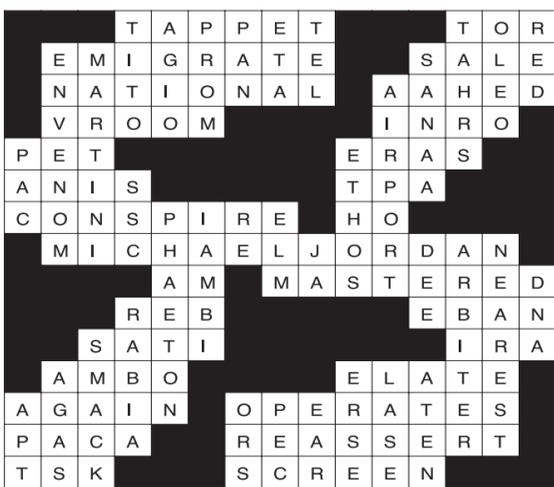
Notice of Public Hearing
The DGR Committee of the Holyoke City Council will hold a public hearing to hear a Special permit for a driveway in a front yard application of Cindy Ely to add a driveway/parking pad at 17 Myrtle Ave (112-00-100) per sec 6.1.8.1. Hearing will take place on **Monday, January 26, 2026 at 6:30 pm** at Holyoke City Hall 536 Dwight St and can be accessed remotely via www.zoom.us Meeting ID 889 3042 4947 Meeting Passcode 652755 or by call in at 1-646-558-8656 with same Meeting ID and Passcode. For a copy of the application or to provide comments, please contact City Council Admin Asst Jeffrey Anderson-Burgos at Anderson-BurgosJ@holyoke.org or by phone 413-322-5525.
DGR Chair Israel Rivera
01/09, 01/16/2026

City of Holyoke Office of Purchasing Invitation to Bid
IFB 2026-19SD Kelly School
The City of Holyoke, 536 Dwight St, Holyoke, MA 01040, the Awarding Authority, invites sealed bids for IFB 2026-19SD the **Kelly Elementary Building Updates Project** located at 216 West St, Holyoke, MA 01040. The work is estimated to cost \$6,650,000. Construction Schedule anticipated to start June 22,

2026, and substantially completed by September 1, 2026. Bids are subject to M.G.L. c.149 §44A-J & to minimum wage rates as required by M.G.L. c.149 §826 to 27H inclusive.

Filed sub trades must be certified by DCAMM in the categories of ROOFING, DOORS AND WINDOWS, PAINTING, FLOORING, MISC METALS, ELEVATOR, PLUMBING, HVAC and ELECTRIC. All Bidders must include a current DCAMM Certificate of Eligibility and a signed DCAMM Update Statement. Filed Sub Bids will be received until January 23, 2026, at 2:00 PM and publicly opened, forthwith online. Prime Contractors must be certified by DCAMM in the category General Building Construction. Bidders must include a current DCAM Certificate of Eligibility and a signed DCAM Update Statement.

General Bids will be received until January 30, 2026, at 2:00 PM and publicly opened, forthwith online. **Only pre-qualified General Bidders may submit bids.** General bids shall be accompanied by a bid deposit that is not less than five (5%) of the greatest possible bid amount (considering all alternates), and made payable to the City of Holyoke. Bid Forms and Contract Documents are available electronically at www.biddocs.com (**BDO# B25-HQ8P**) or in person at Nashoba Blue, Inc. at 433 Main Street, Hudson, MA 01749 (978-568-1167). Questions due by January 15, 2026, at 2:00 PM. The city reserves the right to reject any and all bids if in the city's best interest.
01/09/2026, 01/16/2026



Tuesday Night 6pm
Pitch Night
\$5 per person

Wednesday Night 6:30pm
Bar Bingo

Thursday Night 7-10 pm
Karaoke by New England Disc Jockeys

Friday Night starts at 7:30 pm
Trivia Night \$5 per person

Saturday Night 5-7 pm
Spaghetti Dinner

7 Days A Week
Queen of Hearts Raffle
\$1 per ticket - unlimited tickets
Drawing Wednesdays at 5 pm

February 21st 7-10pm
Live Music by Kitchen Jam

AMERICAN LEGION POST 325
22 Sycamore Street, Holyoke, MA
Find us on Facebook Paper City Post 325

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 \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice (with a word limit of up to 500 words) 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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CAREER Education

HCSS: Empowering students for a brighter future

Are you searching for a school where academic excellence meets a supportive community? Hampden Charter School of Science (HCSS) is a top-ranked, tuition-free public charter school serving grades 6-12 in Western Massachusetts. Since its founding in 2009, HCSS has been dedicated to preparing students for college, careers, and a lifetime of success.

Why Choose HCSS?

HCSS stands out as a premier choice for families because of its unique combination of academic rigor, personalized attention, and community spirit. Our two campuses—the Middle School in West Springfield (Grades 6-8) and the High School in Chicopee (Grades 9-12)—offer students a seamless transition from middle school to high school and beyond. Here's what makes HCSS truly exceptional:

Academic Excellence: Our rigorous curriculum is guided by the College Board's AP standards and the Common Core. With honors courses beginning in 7th grade, 15 AP offerings in high school, and innovative programs like Project Lead The Way (PLTW), students are challenged to reach their full potential.

Comprehensive College and Career Preparation:



HCSS begins college and career readiness as early as 6th grade, including SAT/PSAT prep, dual enrollment opportunities, and experiential college campus visits. With a 100% college acceptance rate and over \$49M in scholarships awarded in 2025, our graduates are set for success.

State-of-the-Art Technology: Students benefit from one-to-one Chromebook access, SMART Inter-

active Displays, and hands-on science labs, preparing them for a tech-driven world.

Award-Winning Extracurriculars: From robotics, drone, and science olympiad clubs to competitive athletics and social activities, students thrive outside the classroom as well.

Join Us for an Open House

Explore what HCSS has to offer during our upcoming Welcome Saturday Open

House events. Meet our dedicated staff, tour our campuses, and learn how HCSS can help your child achieve their dreams. Interested families can also join a Virtual Information Session for an in-depth look at our programs from the comfort of home.

What Parents and Students

Love About HCSS
Parents and students consistently praise HCSS for

its nurturing environment, where every student feels valued and supported. The school's commitment to diversity and inclusion fosters a vibrant community that celebrates different perspectives and cultures. Families also appreciate the convenience of free transportation and extensive tutoring services, ensuring all students have the tools they need to succeed.

Student Success Stories

HCSS alumni have gone on to attend prestigious universities, including Ivy League institutions like Harvard, Columbia, and Dartmouth. Our students' achievements are a testament to the school's dedication to academic and personal growth. With a consistent college matriculation rate of over 95%, HCSS prepares students not just to attend college but to excel once they get there.

How to Apply

Applications for the 2026-2027 school year are now open. Rising 6th-10th graders should apply no later than March 1, 2026, to secure a spot in our admission lottery. Visit www.hampdencharter.org to apply and take the first step toward a brighter future.

At Hampden Charter School of Science, we believe every student deserves a world-class education. Join our community of learners, achievers, and leaders today—because your child's future begins here.

HCSS High School

20 Johnson Rd.
Chicopee, MA 01022
Tel. 413-593-9090

HCSS Middle School

511 Main Street
West Springfield, MA 01089
Tel. 413-278-5450
hampdencharter.org



HAMPDEN CHARTER SCHOOL OF SCIENCE

ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR GRADE 6-10



Why Hampden Charter School of Science?

- NO COST
- FREE TRANSPORTATION
- COLLEGE-PREP EDUCATION
- TECHNOLOGY IN CLASSROOM
- EXCELLENCE IN ACADEMICS
- ATHLETICS
- ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES and CLUBS
- 100% COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE

WELCOME SATURDAYS

11:00 AM - 1:00PM

January 10th
January 24th
February 7th
February 28th

VISIT:

WWW.HAMPDENCHARTER.ORG

APPLY NOW / DEADLINE



MARCH 1, 2026





CAREER Education

St. Joan of Arc School offers comprehensive education

Located in Chicopee, MA, St. Joan of Arc (SJA) School is a private Catholic institution serving students from Pre-K through Grade 8.

St. Joan of Arc School provides a comprehensive educational environment focused on physical, intellectual,

and spiritual wellness.

In the fall the school community welcomed Mrs. Ashley Mahan as the new principal. A lifelong Chicopee resident and former educator in the local public school system, Mrs. Mahan brings extensive experience and a personal connection to the community.

Students can engage in several new and returning enrichment opportunities this year, including:

- Creative Arts: Liturgical Dance Troupe and Choir.
- STEM & Literacy: Robotics, 3D Printing, LEGO,

- Book and Newspaper Clubs.

Innovative offerings include foreign language instruction through tools like Duolingo.

- Our Preschool program for ages 3 and 4 offers full and part-time care, geared toward preparing your child for Kindergarten. Children learn Kindergarten readiness and pre-reading skills through a developmentally appropriate teacher-created curriculum designed to hold your child's interest and spark their curiosity.

- Extended Care: Affordable extended care and extracurricular programs are available to support families.

- Language Learning: The school will be holding an Open House on Saturday, Jan. 31 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. (no appointment needed). Appointment only tours for families will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 3 and Thursday, Feb. 5 from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Please call Janine or Chris in the Business Office at 413-276-4608 for registration information, or to make an appointment. To learn more visit www.sjachicopee.org.

We look forward to meeting you.

The school will be holding an Open House on Saturday, Jan. 31 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. (no appointment needed). Appointment only tours for families will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 3 and Thursday, Feb. 5 from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Please call Janine or Chris in the Business Office at 413-276-4608 for registration information, or to make an appointment. To learn more visit www.sjachicopee.org.

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ST. JOAN OF ARC SCHOOL

Pre-K to Grade 8

587 Grattan Street, Chicopee ~ 533-1475

sjachicopee.org

Learning Rooted in Christian Values



OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, January 31st, 9am-12 noon

No Appointment Needed

Tuesday, February 3rd & Thursday, Feb 5th, 3pm-7pm

By Appointment Only



Affordable Tuition & Extended Care ~ Free Breakfast & Lunch

Extracurricular Programs ~ Technology ~ Physical Education

Music ~ Library ~ Duolingo

Welcoming, Safe & Secure School Community

Social, Physical, Spiritual & Intellectual Wellness Tuition Assistance

Easy Access to I391 & I90



St. Stanislaus School students shine as servant leaders

St. Stanislaus School proudly announces the success of its recent community service initiatives, exemplifying its motto: "Servant Leaders for Today and Tomorrow."

In a spirited effort to support those in need, Student Council organized a can drive that collected an impressive 3,500 items, surpassing their original goal by 1,000 donations. The drive demonstrated the school community's commitment to service, teamwork, and making a tangible difference in the lives of local families.

Building on this momentum, St. Stanislaus students also gathered toiletries, diapers, and other personal items to fulfill the wish lists of The Gray House and Christina's House in Springfield. These organizations provide critical support and safe spaces for individuals and families facing challenging circumstances.

"This can drive is run by our Student Council in grades 4-8," said Mrs. Katherine Rorrio, Principal of St. Stanislaus School. "This drive aligns with the state-

ment that we believe our students are servant leaders for today and tomorrow. It assists our school community in understanding the global community, where we are all neighbors and members of God's family. Our school theme this year is 'Go Make Disciples of All Nations.' Our students are wonderful examples of disciples going out and making a difference in the community. We are so proud of all of our students and families for being so generous to those in need."

St. Stanislaus School remains committed to fostering a culture of compassion, responsibility, and service, preparing students not only for academic success but also for meaningful engagement in their communities.

Founded over 125 years ago, St. Stanislaus School has a rich history of serving families in Chicopee and surrounding communities. Although the original building was lost to fire, the school will celebrate the 50th anniversary of its current building on Saturday, Jan. 31, beginning with Mass at 4 p.m., followed by an Open House and

Celebration. Families interested in scheduling a private tour at another time may call the school at (413) 592-5135.

St. Stanislaus School is a Roman Catholic, Franciscan, co-educational Pre-K through 8th grade school. Students are assisted in developing their potential spiritually, physically, and socially within a safe and diverse community. A foundation of academic excellence is created to prepare students to become contributing members of a global society.

The school has a welcoming Franciscan environment, modern air-conditioned facility, strong core curriculum, enrichment classes, certified faculty, full-day preschool (PreK 3 & 4) and Kindergarten, free breakfast and hot lunch, before and after school program, and one-to-one use and integration of iPads and Chromebooks into curriculum. Financial Aid is available. Interested students are invited to spend a day with us. To learn more please visit www.saintstansschool.org.

We can't wait to meet you.

ST. STANISLAUS SCHOOL

SERVANT LEADERS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW



PREK - 8TH GRADE SCHOOL

PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL, AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Welcoming Franciscan environment
- Strong core curriculum
- Enrichment classes
- Certified faculty
- Full day Preschool & Kindergarten
- Free breakfast and hot lunch
- Before & After school program
- One to one use and integration of iPads & Chromebooks into curriculum
- Modern facility - full gym, full cafeteria, air conditioned, carpeted classrooms.



To learn more



Call us for more information and to schedule a tour. We welcome the opportunity for you to experience St. Stanislaus School! Interested students are invited to "spend a day with us."

www.saintstansschool.org
534 Front Street, Chicopee, MA 01013
413-592-5135





CAREER Education

HCC opens registration for Spring 2026 noncredit classes

Holyoke Community College has opened registration for its Spring 2026 catalog of noncredit personal enrichment and professional development classes.

The spring calendar begins Jan. 12, with individual classes running on different schedules throughout the semester.

New next semester is a series of classes for seniors focused on basic technology. Each one-hour class is available for just \$20 and cover a wide range of subjects, including Windows 11, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint, Canva (for graphic design), Artificial Intelligence, Zoom, smartphone use (Android or iPhone), managing and editing photos, document storage, web browsers, and computer scams.

Other classes for spring include cooking (Caribbean, charcuterie, Puerto Rican, Southern), wine tasting (winter reds, Tuscany, New Zealand, Rose, summer wines), sewing (for beginners), sewing (machine), watercolor painting, acrylic painting, drawing, piano, conversational French, conversational Spanish, music technology, voiceover coaching, financial literacy, retirement planning, K-12 education (professional development), writing and publishing (fiction, nonfiction,



tion, screenwriting, short stories, query letters, mysteries, travel, blogs), ChatGPT, how to launch a pet-sitting and dog-walking business, and Quickbooks.

Most classes meet in the Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development on the main HCC campus, 303 Homestead Ave. Cooking and wine-tasting classes meet at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, 164 Race St. Some classes meet over Zoom.

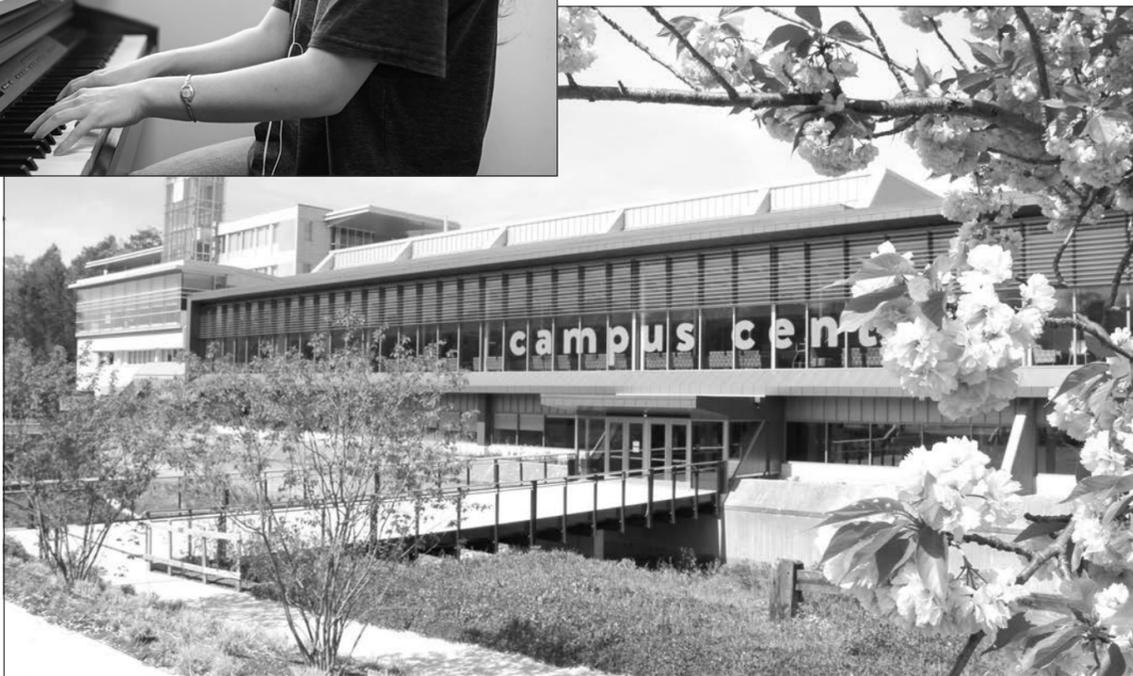
To see complete spring course listings and schedules, or to register, please visit hcc.edu/bcs.

More classes will be added as spring approaches.

The Commonwealth's oldest community college, Holyoke Community College opened its doors in 1946 as the first two-year college in Massachusetts. In the decades since, the college has paved the way for generations of learners from western Massachusetts and beyond, a beacon of hope and opportunity for people

seeking better lives. Please visit us at hcc.edu.

HCC's Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development is the Pioneer Valley's premiere resource for workforce training, professional development, and personal growth. It provides innovative and affordable programming that helps businesses, organizations, and individuals achieve their goals.



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CAREER Education

Jump Start Preschool invites families to learn, play, and grow together

Two Locations in Feeding Hills and West Springfield

Jump Start Preschool is proud to welcome families to a nurturing, play-based learning environment where children are encouraged to explore, grow, and develop essential life skills. Serving children ages 2.9 to 5 years old, Jump Start Preschool focuses on learning through play while fostering independence, creativity, and confidence.

At Jump Start Preschool, social-emotional learning and communication are key components of each age group's curriculum. Children learn how to problem-solve with peers, practice self-regulation strategies, and build the foundational skills that help them succeed academically and socially. By supporting emotional growth alongside academics, Jump Start helps children thrive both in and out of the classroom.

Family and community partnerships are at the heart

of the Jump Start Preschool mission. In support of this commitment, Jump Start Preschool will host a 5K Run/Walk on May 30, bringing the community together to raise funds for Autism Allies and the children of Jump Start Preschool. Sixty percent of all donations will benefit Autism Allies. The event will feature live music, local businesses, exercise, and great company. Community members are encouraged to participate and support children and families.

Event information and registration: <https://Milesof-hopeforautism.eventbrite.com>

Jump Start Preschool offers a wide range of perks designed to support both children and working families, including:

- Open year-round
- Reasonable tuition
- Family-friendly hours
- Feeding Hills: 7:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
- West Springfield: 7:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.
- Free healthy morning and afternoon snacks
- Community and in-

house field trips

- Family engagement activities throughout the year
- EEC-certified staff trained in CPR, First Aid, and medication administration
- State-of-the-art playground
- Preschool graduation with a professional photographer
- School photos twice per year
- Free occupational therapy and speech screenings twice annually

“Timeless moments come from learning through movement, creativity, and connection,” said Jump Start Preschool. “We invite families to come dance with us and experience the joy of early learning.”

Families interested in enrolling are encouraged to visit www.jumpstartpreschoolma.com and complete an interest form. Jump Start Preschool is currently enrolling preschoolers ages 2.9 to 5 at both the Feeding Hills and West Springfield locations.

Watch out — learning is happening.

Various ways newspapers are good for kids

Newspapers have long been part of the fabric of the communities they cover and serve. Whether it's a big-city daily tabloid or a small town weekly, newspapers keep readers and residents up-to-date on the latest goings-on in their communities and across the globe.

Newspapers have been linked to a range of benefits for adults that include greater civic engagement and stronger voter turnout. Such benefits are indispensable, and it's equally important to recognize ways in which newspapers benefit children.

• **Reading and discussing newspaper stories can foster stronger language development.** A 2022 study published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* noted that parents who provide newspapers at home for their children to read and then discuss stories with young readers can help kids develop strong language skills, which could ultimately benefit them in the classroom and in their personal interactions. The study also noted that discussing newspaper stories with youngsters creates opportunities for children to explore their thoughts.

• **Newspapers can help children develop their critical thinking skills.** A meta-analysis examining ways to teach students critical thinking skills published in the *Review of Educational Research* noted that critical thinking skills are vital because they bolster students' ability to interpret, analyze, evaluate, and make inferences. Newspapers are an invaluable resource for educators aiming to bolster kids' critical thinking skills, as they can be used to teach students to recognize why stories were written, how information in a given story was learned and gathered and how to verify information in a news story. Each of those lessons requires interpretation, analysis and evaluation, ultimately instilling in students vital critical thinking skills that can serve them in the classroom and beyond.



• **Newspapers help students develop vital communication skills.** A 2024 study published in the *Elementaria Journal of Educational Research* found that reading newspapers helped student participants in the study improve their vocabulary, enhance their writing skills and more effectively articulate their ideas. Authors behind the study ultimately characterized newspapers as valuable educational tools, a conclusion that has been reached by researchers across a range of academic disciplines.

Newspapers are part of the fabric of the communities they cover, and children have much to gain from being granted access to their local papers in the classroom and at home.

Jump Start Preschool

Enrolling Now for the **2026-2027** School Year!



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Research-based curriculum that builds confidence & excitement about learning

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provides a safe, loving, nurturing and high-quality childcare and education that promotes and enhances each child's development with the assurance of our parents' peace of mind.

Ages 2.9 to 5 years old



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For more information, call or visit our website:

www.JumpStartPreschoolMA.com

- Feeding Hills: 413.789.4987
- West Springfield: 413.301.5694



Interested in a Career with Jump Start Preschool? Please Contact Us



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You will also be on track to:

- Know how to plan engaging activities and lessons
- Have CPR & First Aid certification
- Experience awesome internship opportunities



Visit: www.grsd.org for more information!



CAREER Education

Well-rounded education benefits students

Academic environments have undergone quite a change over the last several decades. Technological advancements have changed the way educators teach and how students learn, but there's also been a notable shift in what students are learning.

Science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) has become a point of emphasis in twenty-first century classrooms, and for good reason. The U.S. National Science Foundation notes that a workforce educated in STEM is vital to a country's prosperity and security. Opportunities in STEM fields are on the rise as well, as the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates STEM occupations will grow by roughly 11 percent between 2022 and 2032.

The value of STEM is undeniable. However, students and parents also should recognize the many ways a well-rounded education that includes math and science but also the humanities and social sciences facilitates strong academic performance.

Critical thinking skills

A well-rounded education can instill important and useful critical thinking skills in students. When students direct the bulk of their attention to a single subject or



category of subjects, they're less likely to understand how interconnected coursework, and indeed the world, can be. A well-rounded education can instill in students a more nuanced way of looking at problems and potential solutions. That ability can positively affect students' personal lives and ultimately their professional lives when their formal schooling ends, as they will be in position to better assess situations.

Comprehension

Tests are designed to gauge students' grasp of material. Students' ability to comprehend lessons taught in the classroom is a big part of that, and a well-round-

ed education fosters strong comprehension skills. A 2018 report from the New York State Education Department noted that research has found that students are better readers after they have been exposed to the language and vocabulary of the natural world, the sciences and social studies.

Crossover benefits

A well-rounded education can help students perform better in all of their subjects. In 2021, a University of Buffalo academic and researcher studying children and dyslexia made a startling discovery regarding the value of reading and how it affects performance in subjects like math. The research found that reading proficiency crosses academic domains and actually guides how students approach various tasks and solve problems. That means a well-rounded education that includes reading-heavy subjects, like those in the humanities and social sciences, could actually improve how students perform in STEM classes.

A well-rounded education pays a number of dividends for students. Recognition of those benefits might compel parents to support a curriculum that includes a wide array of subjects and academic disciplines.

Gateway announces expansion of career pathways, Chapter 74 vocational opportunities

Gateway Regional School (GRS) is proud to announce the expansion of its personalized learning model, featuring anticipated openings in its premier Chapter 74 Vocational Programs for the fall of 2026. Designed as a "launchpad" for student success, GRS continues to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world career readiness for students in grades 6-12.

Innovative Middle School Exploration

The journey begins in the middle grades (6-8), where students engage in an expansive exploratory program. With 26 unique course options—ranging from Intro to Tourism and Woodshop to Data and Statistics in Sports and Sociology—students are encouraged to uncover their passions early.

By the eighth grade, students can gain a head start by accessing Gateway's Chapter 74 vocational programs, providing hands-on introduction to high-demand fields before they even enter high school.

Challenging Chapter 74 Vocational Programs

Gateway's commitment

to excellence is anchored by two flagship programs that prepare students for immediate entry into the workforce:

- **Welding & Metal Fabrication:** This program offers real hands-on experience in state-of-the-art facilities renovated in 2022. Students learn on modern equipment, including a robotic arm, and participate in both on-site and off-site internships.

- **Early Education and Care (EEC):** Starting in 9th grade, students in the EEC program are put on a track to become certified professionals. The curriculum includes lesson planning for young learners, CPR and First Aid certification, and immersive internship opportunities.

A Personalized Path to the Future

As students reach the 10th grade, they participate in a "demonstration of learning" to chart their specific goals for their final two years. This tailored approach allows for meaningful experiences, including:

- **Internships and Co-ops:** Real-world placements in students' fields of interest.
- **College Credits:** Through dual-enrollment and concurrent enrollment

partnerships with universities across the country.

- **Work-Study Placements:** Providing a practical balance between education and professional experience.

"At Gateway Regional School, education is more than coursework—it's a launchpad," Dr. Will Sullivan, GRS Principal, states. "We empower our students to excel in life after graduation through intentionally personalized learning pathways crafted to foster achievement and community impact."

Join the Gateway Community

Gateway Regional School welcomes students from its six member towns and surrounding communities. Families interested in exploring these opportunities for the Fall 2026 semester are encouraged to apply today.

For more information on programs and how to apply, please visit www.grsd.org.

Media Contact: Gateway Regional School District Website: www.grsd.org

Gateway Regional School District is located at 12 Littleville Road, Huntington, MA 01050.

WELCOME TO GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL



"AT GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL, EDUCATION IS MORE THAN COURSEWORK – IT'S A LAUNCHPAD."

Gateway Regional School (GRS) is proud to educate and welcome students from the six member towns and surrounding communities in a vibrant, forward-thinking learning environment designed to prepare students for life beyond the classroom.

Serving students in grades 6-12, Gateway Regional School is built around one central goal: helping every student discover their interests, develop their strengths, and chart a clear path toward future success. That journey begins in the middle grades, where students in grades 6-8, participate in an expansive exploratory program offering 26 unique course options. From *Intro to Tourism and Woodshop* to *Data and Statistics in Sports, Financial Literacy, Engineering, and Sociology*, students are encouraged to explore new ideas, uncover passions, and start thinking about possible career pathways early on. Eighth-grade students can take that exploration even further by accessing Gateway's Chapter 74 vocational programs in *Early Education and Care* and *Welding*, giving them a hands-on introduction to high-demand fields before they enter high school.

Once students reach high school, Gateway shifts into a highly personalized learning model. In grade 10, students complete a demonstration of learning, sharing their goals and aspirations for their final two years at GRS. These plans guide meaningful experiences such as internships, co-ops, and work-study placements, allowing students to gain real-world experience in fields they are excited to pursue.

Gateway's strong partnerships with colleges and universities across the country further expand student opportunities through dual-enrollment and concurrent enrollment programs, helping students earn college credit while still in high school. Looking ahead, Gateway Regional School is excited to announce anticipated openings in its Chapter 74 Vocational Programs for fall 2026, creating new opportunities for students interested in *Early Education and Care* and *Welding*.

GATEWAY REGIONAL'S COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE AND TO EXCELLENCE:

AT GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL, STUDENTS ARE EMPOWERED TO EXCEL IN LIFE AFTER GRADUATION THROUGH INTENTIONALLY PERSONALIZED LEARNING PATHWAYS AND OPPORTUNITIES, CRAFTED TO FOSTER A FUTURE OF ACHIEVEMENT, CONTRIBUTION, UNDERSTANDING, LEADERSHIP, AND COMMUNITY IMPACT.



CAREER Education

PVPA continues to invest in Arts-focused education



At a time when many public schools are trying to manage difficult budgets by cutting Art programs, Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Public Charter School continues to invest in Arts-focused education for students in Grades 7 - 12.

With an extensive Course Catalog of challenging Academic and Arts courses, PVPA employs 15

full-time Arts teachers, and now has five Arts Departments: Music, Dance, Theatre, Visual Arts and new this year, Technical Design and Production.

Students are encouraged to find their artistic voice through a range of introductory courses and audition level course options, with multiple performance opportunities, all integrated with

their core academics.

PVPA students consistently show that incorporating the arts into education creates, not just better artists, but better students who are equipped to be active participants in their future.

Visit for an Open House on Thursday, Jan. 22, and see why PVPA is consistently voted one of the Best Charter Schools in the Valley.

As a public charter school, admission to PVPA is free and open to all Massachusetts students by lottery; no tuition or audition required.

Now accepting applications for the 2026/2027 school year for Grades 7-12 at pvpa.org/admissions.

For more information, please email admissions@pvpa.org.



Pioneer Valley Performing Arts
Charter Public School
15 Mulligan Drive, South Hadley
413-552-1580

Apply Now!

Grades 7-11

2026/27 school year



PVPA Open House

Thursday, Jan 22
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www.pvpa.org/admissions

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This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about discrimination call The Department of Housing and Urban Development "HUD" toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. For the N.E. area, call HUD at 617-565-5308. The toll free number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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Bexley, 7, and Kenzley Moulton, 4, enjoy the children's museum.



Some of the best dressed costume contestants.



Moana and Spiderman make an appearance.



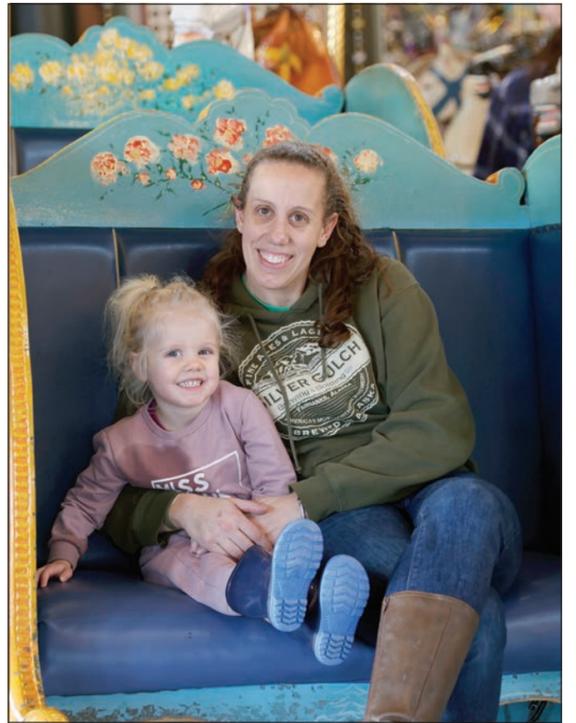
Adalina Alves gets a glitter tattoo from Ava Bergeron.



Mayor Joshua Garcia poses with costume contest winners.

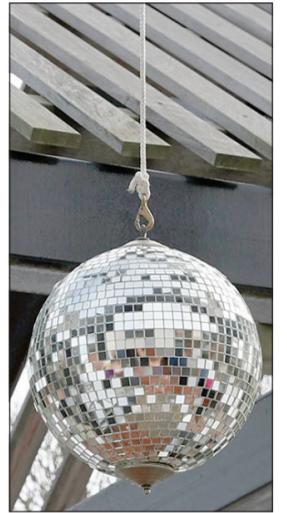


Mac and Maille McGee on a forklift.



Cadence and Danielle Roy in a merry-go-round chair.

FIRST NIGHT FUN



The ball begins to drop.
Turley photos by David Henry
www.sweetdogphotos.com



Mateo Lopez gets his face painted.

HIKING from page 5

weeks ago, continued to do the same.

It's minus 2 degrees when we start up the trail toward the summit of Mt. Jackson at 4:15 a.m. The sky is black and the beams of our headlamps pierce the darkened forest. When we lift our heads upward, our lights illuminate the trees, and they appear like figures standing guard over the landscape. The snow-laden evergreens groan under the weight, pressing closer to the ground, seeming to bow to us as we pass. The silence is full, broken only by the crunch of our boots on the hard-packed snow.

When we break treeline, everything changes. We brace ourselves against the onslaught of howling wind. The sheer force pushes our bodies backward. We slam our trekking poles into the hard-packed snow to steady ourselves, while hoping that our spike-clad boots anchor us to the icy granite. The final steep pitch makes

my heart tremble. Adrenaline is coursing through my body. I grab onto rocks and pull myself upward, eyes watering, skin pierced with the sting of icy needles. I breathe a sigh of relief when we reach the plateau, and we rush to the leeward side to escape the wind's torment.

We find a partially sheltered ledge and quickly spread our bright green sleeping bag over our sleep pads atop several feet of snow. We crawl inside of the double-wide down bag and snuggle close together. Based

on the weather, we know we can't remain immobile for long. Movement keeps the body warm. Stillness allows the cold to penetrate the numerous layers of clothing we are wearing. Today, even the trees are shivering.

We sip hot apple cider in an attempt to warm our insides while waiting for the sun to crest the distant horizon. The cold kisses our cheeks and the wind fills our ears. We inhale the frigid mountain air and watch plumes of vapor rise as we exhale. We remain snuggled

in our lofty sleeping bag on this snowy perch for over an hour, unwilling to leave in spite of the cold settling into our bones. For we don't want to miss ONE. SINGLE. MINUTE. of this unforgettable moment that is unfolding before us.

The earth itself seems to be holding its breath, waiting for the show to begin. With eyes focused eastward, we watch the black of night turn into the blazing red of dawn. The stars above are being replaced with an inferno of fiery reds and

blazing oranges-like molten lava spreading as the horizon slowly burns.

And there it is. The shimmering golden sphere we have been waiting for, spreading its golden light down the mountainside and awakening the earth from its slumber. The brilliant rays stretch from the heavens and dance upon the earth, giving life to everything they touch.

This experience is just one of the many that will burn in our hearts and memories for as long as there is breath in our lungs.

An experience that we may never have witnessed had we not decided to chase a dream ten years ago. Had we waited until we retired. Had we waited for 'some day' to arrive.

I implore you to not allow your age, fitness level, current circumstances, past failures or ANYTHING ELSE dictate what you are capable of! I encourage you to chase the dream, seize the opportunity and never live regretting what could have been if only you had taken the chance. We have but one wild and crazy life. TODAY is the day to go out and LIVE it.

Tom and I have lived life to the absolute fullest over the past 10 years. Adventuring on weekends and vacations from work. But for one of us, at least, life is opening up to even more possibilities and opportunities. I'm thrilled to announce that after dedicating fifty years of his life to his career, Tom completed his final day as a working man on the last day of 2025. See you in the wild places, my friends.

