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City works to dig out of snowstorm

Holyoke is working with short-staffing

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

HOLYOKE – Earlier this week, the region was caught in a massive snowstorm that left the Paper City with more than a foot and a half of snow, which brought school closures, parking bans, and first responders coming together to assist, and through it all, the community looks to turn the page as the month draws to a close.

The storm was due to a traveling storm that affected a majority of the country, which started early Sunday morning, and carried well into Monday, culminating in a two-day blizzard that stretched cleanup and restoration efforts into Tuesday.

Reflecting on the ongoing restoration efforts was Interim Holyoke DPW Director Mike Gallagher, who noted it was a work in progress that yielded a positive outcome despite admitting the department was short-staffed, among other lingering issues.

“We had several issues, such as employees who carried CDLs being out on injury, or sick leave, and on top of that, we also had a lot of newer employees, which was a product of these past few years,” Gallagher explained. “We have also experienced major turnovers and retirements, resulting in a point of inexperience among our workforce, and another issue we dealt with was having the fewest number of private contractors in



Holyoke High School's wrestling team and students help dig out on Locust Street.

Submitted photos

recent years.” He then continued his thought by noting, “Most winters, we do not have enough snow to make it worthwhile for contractors to carry the necessary equipment and insurance to be on call for the city of Holyoke, which results in fewer and fewer contractors being available to assist when we need the extra help,” Gallagher added.

In addition, Gallagher noted that this latest storm has proved to be a challenge and confirmed that cleanup is still ongoing, citing the inclusion of parking bans that were put in place by the

mayor’s office to help facilitate and speed up restoration efforts, along with trucks being out on the roads, before offering a point of praise towards Mayor Garcia.

“The efforts of the mayor’s office were outstanding,” Gallagher said. “During the storm, the mayor was out on the streets, assisting us in helping locate areas that needed improvement. The mayor was also very boots on the ground through this whole operation, and we commend his leadership.”

Also, to add, Gallagher

did later note that one of the main challenges was the lack of space accessible in the Paper City. To help alleviate this concern earlier this week, Garcia took to social media throughout the blizzard to relay that the parking garages were open to all, which did help, but Gallagher did admit that it was a temporary fix, as throughout his tenure among the DPW, the influx of cars and households continues to multiply, despite the lack of space he touched upon earlier.

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Rivera resigns leadership positions

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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HOLYOKE – After being named the Holyoke City Council’s first-ever vice president, Israel Rivera is already out after serving in the capacity for less than a month.

There was flurry of activity last Friday after Rivera’s court appearance was moved up to accommodate the massive snowstorm that took place last weekend.

In that court appearance on Friday, Jan. 23, Rivera submitted to facts that would have resulted in a conviction. As a result, Judge Danielle Williams entered a continuance without a finding and ordered Rivera to pay fines and as well complete a 16-week program. He also will lose his license for 45 days, mandatory under state statute.

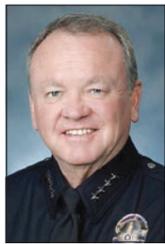
This essentially resolves his case, and as promised, Rivera released a statement where he confirmed he would be resigning as City Council Vice President as well as resigning from the Development and Governmental Relations Committee Chair. He was previously removed as a member of the Public Safety Committee amid outcries from the police department unions.

Rivera was arrested in December by the

See RIVERA page 6

California police chief to receive JFK award

HOLYOKE – The St. Patrick’s Committee of Holyoke is proud to announce that Jim McDonnell, nationally respected law enforcement leader and public safety innovator, has been selected as the 2026 recipient of the esteemed John F. Kennedy National Award. This honor recognizes individuals whose achievements and commitment to service reflect the enduring legacy of President John F. Kennedy.



Jim McDonnell

tenure, McDonnell served as Chief of Police in Long Beach, California, where he expanded community engagement efforts and oversaw notable reductions in crime.

In 2014, he was elected the 32nd Sheriff of Los Angeles County, leading the largest sheriff’s department in the United States with a focus on accountability, constitutional policing, and partnership with federal, state, and local agencies.

In 2024, McDonnell was sworn in as the 59th Chief of the Los Angeles Police Department, becoming the first individual to hold senior executive leadership roles in three of Los Angeles County’s largest law enforcement agencies. In this role, he continues to champion public safety, transparency, and community trust.

“President Kennedy challenged us to serve others and work for the common good,” said Jim Wildman, Parade President. “Jim McDonnell’s distinguished career exemplifies those ideals. His leadership, integrity, and lifelong commitment to communi-

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Blessed Sacrament to close at conclusion of school year

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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HOLYOKE – After years of declining enrollment, officials at Blessed Sacrament School has made the decision to close its doors at the conclusion of the 2025-2026 school year in June.

Rev. Fr. Duy Le notified the school community of the decision last week in a letter sent out to parents.

According to information he provided, the school has seen a sharp decline in enrollment since 2010. The school had an enrollment of 304 students in 2010. That number is not about a third of that in 2025 at 112.

“Over the past 15 years, enrollment has steadily declined, from more than 300 students to 112 students today,” Le said. “Following the sale of our former school building several years ago, the school’s maximum operating capacity is now 275 students. Even at this reduced capacity, we are operating at less than half of what is required to remain sustainable.”

He explained the school operates at a deficit of more than \$275,000 each year.

“Despite years of parish subsidies, fundraising efforts, and cost controls, the gap has continued to grow,” Le said. “To sustain the school with our current enrollment, tuition would have need to rise to well over \$9,000 per student. I do not believe this is reasonable for families, nor



Submitted photo

Blessed Sacrament School will close at the conclusion of the school year. The closure is due to steep declines in enrollment.

would it realistically address the enrollment challenge.”

Le said multiple options were considered in an effort to keep the school open, including grade reconfiguration, staffing structures, and financial assumptions. No matter which scenario explored, there were significant financial challenges and would cost families more to send their students to the school.

The school has also had to reduce various services, and that has reached an untenable level.

Le has said that school operations will be normal

for the remainder of the school year and there will be no noticeable changes. The superintendent of the school, Maria Wagner, will be available through the end of the school to assist families with the transition.

A parent meeting will be scheduled soon in order to offer guidance and support, especially for those families who wish to continue their children’s education in a Catholic-based environment.

“Making this decision now is not about giving,” Le said in his letter to parents. “It is about being faithful stewards, honest with our-

selves, and protective of the community we have built. It allows us to finish this school year well, with dignity, stability, and gratitude.”

Social media sites in Holyoke have already begun filling with comments.

Mayor Joshua Garcia commented the that school closing in a loss for the community. He pledged to support families who will go through a transition.

“Please know that the Holyoke Public Schools stands ready to support every child and family affected,” Garcia stated in a social media posting.

Six parents graduate from career readiness program

HOLYOKE – Holyoke, Chicopee, Springfield Head Start (HCS Head Start) proudly celebrated the graduation of its sixth Building Blocks for Future Careers (BBFC): Career Readiness Program cohort. The program reflects HCS Head Start's continued commitment to strengthening families through career development, economic mobility, and holistic support.

The Building Blocks for Future Careers program began as a community collaboration with HCS, Springfield Works and Dress for Success Western

Massachusetts, utilizing a Two-Generation Approach to careers. The program was designed to help families build economic assets, access employment pathways, and enhance overall health and well-being through workshops, resources, and strong community partnerships. The initial pilot cohort launched in April 2019 and quickly demonstrated meaningful impact for participating families. Due to its success, HCS Head Start established an internal model to offer the program annually.

Today, the career read-

iness program continues to empower parents to advance along their career pathways while balancing personal and professional goals. Recently, the sixth Building Blocks for Future Careers cohort graduated and included Terryann Wallace, Jozette Irizarry, Rebecca Athis Lara, Tanisha Gannett, Pamela McKissick, and Nikson Athis. During the course, participant Pamela McKissick demonstrated extraordinary commitment, returning to class when her new son, Elijah, was just five days old, reflecting the dedication and resilience of the families served through the

program.

The program is delivered as an eight-week training experience held from 9 a.m. to 12 noon on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Programming includes career readiness instruction, parenting education, healthy relationships, financial wellness, coaching and mentoring, and peer support. Career readiness instruction was facilitated by Shawnsti Baret, with parenting and healthy relationships workshops led by Yasmin Ibrahim. Participants also received digital literacy training through Tech

Foundry and financial wellness education through United Way Thrive.

Upon completion of the program, participants receive four certificates of completion, a professionally developed resume, professional attire provided by Dress for Success, and continued guidance to support their next steps along their career journey.

Parents who participated in the program shared powerful reflections on their experience. One participant shared, "I really appreciate this program. I am more confident, more disciplined,

and more responsible. I really like the trainers. I learned a lot, thank you all, especially Head Start." Another participant expressed, "Amazing teaching skills. I learned a lot." A third participant added, "I'm really happy to be part of this group. Thank you to the instructors for helping me grow and overcome my shyness."

Holyoke, Chicopee, Springfield Head Start remains committed to supporting families through innovative programs that strengthen career readiness, confidence, and long-term stability.

City to observe Black History Month

HOLYOKE – February is Black History Month, a designation that will be observed in Holyoke with a flag-raising ceremony and a performance of Gospel music, both on Monday, Feb. 2. The public is invited.

The year 2026 marks a century of national commemorations of Black history.

The flag-raising will take place outside City Hall at 3:30 p.m. The Rev. Bernard Smith, pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, will give an invocation. Willie Spradley Jr., chair of the church's Public Awareness Committee, will speak on the creation of the commemoration by Dr.

Carter Godwin Woodson, one of the founders, in 1915, of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. Holyoke Mayor Joshua A. Garcia will read a proclamation.

Later that evening, at 7 p.m., Bethlehem Baptist Community Church will host a choir performance under the direction of Terrence Haynes, director of Voices of Praise, a Christian Gospel music choir. Spradley will deliver remarks on "100 Years of Empowerment." This event is free and open to the public.

Bethlehem Baptist is located at 304 Elm Street.

Mayor Garcia named president of Massachusetts Mayors' Association

HOLYOKE – Mayor Joshua A. Garcia on Saturday assumed the post of President of the Massachusetts Mayors' Association. His appointment was announced at the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Municipal Association held at the Menino Convention & Exhibition Center in Boston.

Forty-seven of the Commonwealth's 351 municipalities are administered by mayors. The Massachusetts Mayors' Association, established in 1945, helps mayors network and share ideas, pursue educational opportunities, meet with state leaders and participate in the advocacy work of the MMA.

In the role of President, Mayor Garcia will plan the month-

ly meetings of the association over the course of year. He will also continue his service on the MMA Board of Directors by virtue of his role serving as President of the Mayors' Association.

Adam Chapdelaine, Executive Director & CEO of the MMA said he looked forward to working with Mayor Garcia.

"I am excited to have Mayor Garcia assuming this important role within the governance structure of MMA. Mayor Garcia is a tireless advocate for the



Joshua Garcia

needs of cities and towns and brings a great perspective from Western Massachusetts that will serve the association well in the year ahead."

Garcia said he appreciates the opportunity to work with the state's mayors to address their common interests.

"This is an honor and a significant opportunity for me to share information about Holyoke's experiences and initiatives with my fellow mayors, and to learn about their strategies to best serve their constituents," Garcia said. "We're all in this together."

Father Daughter Valentine Dance

HOLYOKE – On Saturday, Feb. 7, Mater Dolorosa School in Holyoke will hold a Father Daughter Valentine Dance. This dance is for fathers/fathers at heart and daughters of all ages. Doors open at 6 p.m.

Tickets are \$5 per person and may be purchased at Mater Dolorosa School, Nick's Nest and Holyoke Sporting Goods.

For more information, call 413-532-5661. No tickets will be sold at the door.

Women empowerment brunch returns

HOLYOKE – At a time when women are balancing rising economic pressure, caregiving responsibilities, and increasing burnout, The Becoming Initiative is bringing women together for something many say they rarely experience. A moment to pause, reconnect, and be supported.

On Sunday, March 1, The Becoming Initiative will host the She Decides Women's Empowerment Brunch at Wyckoff Country Club in Holyoke. The event is expected to serve more than 200 women from across Western Massachusetts and will launch a yearlong series of empowerment and personal development programming.

She Decides was created in response to what organizers describe as a growing need for spaces that support women beyond the workplace. Many women are leading families, contributing to the workforce, and holding communities together while quietly carrying emotional, financial, and personal burdens. The brunch creates a space

where women can be seen, supported, and reminded of their value.

Last year's event sold out within two weeks. Attendees shared stories of renewed confidence, meaningful connection, and a sense of clarity they had been missing. The response revealed a clear demand for continued programming focused on growth, leadership, and wellness.

This year's event will serve as a cornerstone fundraiser for The Becoming Initiative, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing skill-based training, personal development, and transformational experiences for individuals at all stages of life. Funds raised will directly support workshops, community gatherings, and leadership focused initiatives throughout the year.

Women attending the brunch will participate in guided conversation, storytelling, and moments of reflection designed to encourage personal growth and connection. Organizers say the goal is not just inspiration, but

impact that extends long after the event ends.

"We created She Decides because women are constantly giving to everyone else and rarely have space to be poured into," said Nicole Polite, Founder and Executive Director of The Becoming Initiative. "This brunch is a reminder that women matter, their stories matter, and when women are supported, entire communities are strengthened."

The Becoming Initiative is currently seeking community partners, sponsors, and supporters who want to invest in women and help expand access to these experiences. Sponsorships help offset the cost for women who may not otherwise be able to attend and ensure the organization can continue its programming throughout the year.

Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are now available.

For more information about the She Decides Women's Empowerment Brunch or partnership opportunities, visit: <https://www.thebecominginitiative.org/events>.

HCC scholarship season open for 2026-2027

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Community College Foundation is now accepting scholarship applications for the 2026-2027 academic year.

The application deadline is Friday, March 13, 2026.

Last year, the HCC Foundation awarded 410 scholarships worth about \$364,000 to 379 incoming, current, and transferring HCC students. Some students received multiple scholarship awards. The average scholarship award is typically around \$900.

"The scholarship program is the flagship initiative of the HCC Foundation, and it reflects the incredible generosity of our donor community," said Amanda Sbriscia, vice president of Institutional Advancement and executive director of the HCC Foundation. "Every scholarship tells two stories – one of a donor who believes in the power of education, and one of a student whose path forward is made possible by that belief."

Students must be currently enrolled at HCC or have been accepted for the upcoming academic year to be eligible for scholarships.

Applicants only need to fill out a single online form

to be automatically matched with the scholarships they are most qualified to receive. There are scholarships for new students, current students and students transferring to other institutions, scholarships based on financial need, scholarships for students in specific majors, scholarships for residents of certain communities, and scholarships that recognize academic achievement.

"Last year's 410 scholarship awards represent 410 opportunities for students to focus on their studies rather than financial stress," said Sbriscia. "We're proud to continue this tradition of supporting HCC students as they work toward their goals."

To view scholarship opportunities and begin the application process, please go to: www.hcc.edu/scholarships.

The HCC Scholarship Resource Center, on the first floor of the Donahue Building (Room 158), is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., to help current and incoming students navigate the process of applying for scholarships.

The HCC Foundation is a 501(c)(3) that works to advance the college's mission,

vision, and values. Founded in 1968 as the Friends of Holyoke Community College, in response to a devastating fire that forced the college to rebuild on a new campus, the Foundation now manages assets of more than \$20 million, the largest community college foundation endowment in Massachusetts.

Questions should be directed to the HCC Foundation office at 413-552-2182, or by email to scholarships@hcc.edu.



Submitted photo
HCC students Nataly Gonzalez, Erykka Rocha celebrate their scholarship awards at the HCC Foundation's annual scholarship and donor reception.

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HMC to offer diabetes support group

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Medical Center will host an ongoing bilingual Diabetes Education and Support Group for community members with diabetes. Diabetes education will be provided at each meeting with a Certified Diabetes Care and Education Specialist or member of the HMC Endocrinology & Diabetes Center team. The group will meet every Wednesday from 9am – 11am in the Holyoke Medical Center Medical Office Building Conference Room located at 11 Hospital Drive, 3rd Floor, in Holyoke.

“Being educated and having a better understanding of diabetes enables people to be more successful in controlling or even reversing the progression of their disease. Support group members will be able to discuss struggles and solutions they have found while managing their diabetes with others going through similar experiences,” said Corina Valvo, RN, BSN, CDCES, Diabetes Program Coordinator for HMC Endocrinology & Diabetes Center.

For more information or questions regarding the Diabetes Education and Support Group, please contact the HMC Endocrinology & Diabetes Center at 413.534.2820.



Holyoke History Room is holding a Valentine workshop on Feb. 7 at 12:30 p.m.

Submitted photo

Come to the history room for a Valentine workshop

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke History Room is hosting a free folding Valentine workshop for teens to adults on Saturday, Feb. 7 at 12:30 p.m. in the Holyoke Public Library Community Room (250 Chestnut St.). Led by book arts specialist Kate Ouimette and Eileen Crosby, the workshop will guide participants through the making of a ‘puz-

zle-purse.’ Originating in medieval Japan, puzzle purses became a popular paper-folding craft in 18th- and 19th- century America. They fold to a small square and unfold to reveal artwork and messages. They can even contain small gifts for their recipients. Participants will learn with plain paper and printed templates. Each can then make additional unique

folded Valentines to embellish and decorate with materials supplied at the workshop. Refreshments will be served. Pre-registration recommended (413-420-8107).

A selection of historic paper Valentines from the History Room’s collection will also be on display.

The event is made possible by a grant from the Holyoke Local Cultural Council.

Women artists wanted for exhibit

HOLYOKE – Wistariahurst Museum is seeking artist submissions for the Fourth Annual Women’s History Month juried art showcase for the month of March. This year, the theme is women’s labor and community.

“Liberty and Labor” is an exhibit that corresponds with Massachusetts’ 250th anniversary and Liberty and the Learning initiative. This exhibit urges artists to consider the efforts

women have made throughout history through labor and community building.

Historically, Women’s labor has been undervalued and overlooked. Oftentimes, the work women have done in areas such as homemaking, community building, and parenting, has not even been viewed as work. “Liberty and Labor” aims to highlight these efforts, and others, that showcase the hard work and dedication of women throughout history.

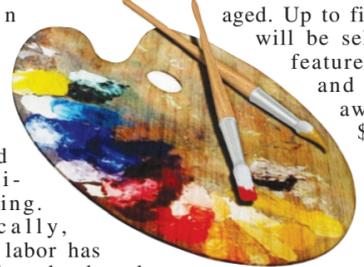
All mediums are welcome for submission. Submissions are open to

anyone who identifies as a woman and non-binary artists of any age. Artists are welcome to submit 3-4 pieces, with high-quality images. Artists can submit their work through the online submission form linked below. Submissions are being accepted through Feb. 10.

Wistariahurst is an artist-friendly space that encourages creativity and supports the growth of this region’s artists. All questions are welcome and encouraged. Up to five artists

will be selected as featured artists and will be awarded a \$100 stipend. This program is funded in part by a grant from the Holyoke Local Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

Submissions are accepted through the submission form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLS-fjaHj4eiWOEXmRZnCd_23WGA8WQAW-6otMFLYCFXzH5BUNew/view-form?usp=publish-editor



HCC Taber Art Gallery exhibit imagines ‘River Radical Valley Futures’

HOLYOKE – A new exhibition at Holyoke Community College’s Taber Art Gallery asks visitors to imagine a future Pioneer Valley 100 years after the fall of capitalism.

“River Valley Radical Futures” runs until Thursday, March 12. The gallery will host a closing talk from project lead and curator Alix Gerber and book launch on Thursday, March 12, from 5 to 7 p.m.

The show features the work of eight area artists and

has its origins in the Making Radical Futures Lab at Smith College in Northampton. Gerber is a post-doc fellow and associate director of Smith’s Design Thinking Initiative.

“The lab uses participatory and speculative design practices to explore collaborative ways of imagining futures without capitalism,” Gerber said in a statement about the show. “Worker co-operatives, mutual aid networks, and other community groups came together through a series

of workshops throughout the Pioneer Valley to imagine how their values and current work might lead to future, alternative economic systems.”

Those sessions led to the creation of an illustrated map of the Connecticut River Valley 100 years beyond the fall of capitalism.

In “River Valley Radical Futures,” the map is brought to life by paintings and sculptures and other artwork – “artifacts excavated from the future we imagined,” says Gerber.

Gallery visitors will see body extensions and creature masks, cow brushes and bells made from local materials, a floating house design, a tool sharing station, a secret-baring mural, a flood system made from local clay, and an apothecary, among other pieces.

The exhibition includes the work of artists Sunny Allis, David von Dufving, Andrea Hairston, Mary Kate Cleary, Bo Kim, Sharon Leshner (a.k.a. Sharona Color), Michael Madeiros, and Laura Torracco.

“Imagination is at the core of this exhibition, and I hope visitors will be inspired and energized to continue imagining what kind of future we all hope to create, together,” said gallery director Rachel Rushing.

The Taber Art Gallery, located off the lobby of the HCC Library on the second floor of the HCC Donahue Building, is free and open to the public Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. during regular school sessions.

Love starts with you: MiraVista Behavioral Health Center’s call for self-love this Valentine’s Day

HOLYOKE – When Valentine’s Day arrives each February, chocolates, dinner reservations, and flowers naturally come to mind—especially flowers, as Valentine’s Day is the biggest day of the year for floral sales in the U.S., with Americans spending nearly \$3 billion on blooms alone. These gestures are often how we show love to others. But what if this year, Valentine’s Day became just as much about showing care and compassion for yourself as it is about celebrating someone else?

Self-love is not a trendy buzzword—it’s a foundational element of mental and emotional wellness. This February, MiraVista Behavioral Health Center is using the holiday to remind us that loving yourself deeply and intentionally is as important as any romantic relationship. Rather than seeing Valentine’s Day only as an outward-fac-

ing celebration of partners, MiraVista encourages the community to pause, reflect, and honor the relationship we have with ourselves.

At its core, self-love means giving yourself the same compassion, patience, and care that you freely give others. It means acknowledging your worth not because someone else validated it, but because you recognize it. Mental wellness experts agree that this inner kindness fuels resilience, supports emotional balance, and strengthens our ability to connect with others. For example, practices like mindful self-compassion are shown to diminish harsh self-judgment and support emotional well-being.

For many, this Valentine’s Day is an invitation to shift perspective. Instead of focusing solely on outward expressions of love, we can look inward and intentionally choose to nurture our own

mental and emotional needs. After all, how we treat ourselves sets the tone for all other relationships in our lives.

Karyn Rossacci, Chief Nursing Officer at MiraVista and TaraVista Behavioral Health Centers, knows well the connection between self-care and overall wellness. In her role leading nursing practice across the behavioral health facilities, she has seen firsthand how self-attunement can be transformative.

“Self-love isn’t selfish,” Rossacci says. “It’s a vital part of staying mentally well. When we honor our own needs—our thoughts, emotions, boundaries, and health—we cultivate strength and clarity that radiate outward into every part of our lives.”

Rossacci emphasizes that self-love doesn’t mean perfection or constant happiness. Rather, it’s about acceptance—recognizing that you

are worthy of care even on your hardest days.

“True self-love begins with listening,” she explains. “Listen to your body when it needs rest, your mind when it needs calm, and your heart when it needs reassurance. Those are not signs of weakness—those are signs that you are human and deserving of care.”

So just how does one practice self-love this Valentine’s Day? Here are a few tips grounded in mental wellness principles:

- 1. Start with Kind Self-Talk.** Instead of focusing on flaws or failures, rehearse affirmations that acknowledge your strengths. For example: “I am worthy of peace and joy.” This shifts internal dialogue from criticism to compassion. Reinforce all those characteristics that make you, you and what it is you love about yourself.
- 2. Prioritize Your Well-**

being

Schedule time for activities that restore and nurture you—whether that’s a walk outside, journaling, meditating, or simply sitting quietly with a warm cup of tea or cocoa. Making time for these things isn’t indulgence—it’s self-respect.

3. Set Healthy Boundaries. Self-love means protecting your energy. Saying “no” to extra obligations when you’re overwhelmed is not rude—it’s necessary. Respecting your limits helps prevent burnout and preserves your emotional reserves.

4. Connect Authentically. Reach out to friends, family, or a community that supports you—but do so in ways that feel nourishing. Genuine connection matters, but it should uplift, not drain, your spirit.

5. Celebrate Small Wins. Maybe today you woke up on time. Maybe you

reached out for help. These small actions are worthy of acknowledgment. Self-love happens in the everyday as much as in the big moments.

Rossacci reminds us that caring for ourselves is not a one-day event but an ongoing practice.

“Loving yourself is like tending a garden,” she reflects. “It needs steady attention, patience, and trust that what you’re doing feeds growth. Some days will bloom beautifully—and some days will not. And that’s okay. Love remains.”

So, as this Valentine’s Day approaches, encourage yourself to see the holiday as an opportunity not just to give love, but to receive it from within. Whether you celebrate with others or spend a quiet evening on your own, the most enduring love you can nurture is the one you give yourself. Sometimes, the best person to spend time with, is you.

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Guest Column

Let's talk protein: The big food craze of 2026

First it was low-calorie. Then it was fat-free. Then high fiber and low carb. Then gluten-free and zero sugar.

And now, it's protein. Walk down the aisle of your favorite store and you'll see shelves packed with protein powders, shakes, chips, bars, coffee, cereal, even protein soft drinks, alcoholic drinks and ice cream.

Food giants such as PepsiCo, Kellogg and Pop-Tarts maker Kellanova have rolled out protein-boosted versions of their products. Starbucks and Kroger are offering protein-fortified

coffees and French toast sticks. The global market for protein-fortified foods is projected to hit \$100 billion by 2030, according to Grand View Research.

What's going on? These companies hope to profit off a key concern of consumers: Getting more protein in their diets. According to a 2025 survey from the International Food Information Council, 70 percent of Americans said they're trying to eat more protein, up from 59% just three years ago.

We've always known that our bodies need protein

to build and maintain lean muscle, hair, bones, connective tissues and general health. But what's driving the current fad, and how much protein do we need anyway?

The protein push seems to be partly the result of the boom in semaglutide (GLP-1) medications, such as Ozempic, Wegovy, Mounjaro and the like. They are helping people lose weight and maintain it, but users are also losing muscle because "every pound is water, fat and muscle," registered dietitian Kim Shapira said in an interview.

"This has just boomed an entire industry of protein," she said.

The problem is that a good deal of these protein-packed foods may not be good for us. A 2024 survey by Spanish researchers, posted on the National Institutes of Health website, that found 91% of foods with "protein" marketing claims (PCs) were less healthy overall because they are ultraprocessed and often have added sugar, fat

and sodium.

"The perception that foods with PCs are healthy is incorrect, and consuming them may pose an additional health risk," the researchers wrote.

The protein we need everyday varies with age, weight, level of activity and other factors. To estimate your minimum recommended daily allowance (RDA), multiply your weight in pounds by 0.36 grams. For a 140-pound sedentary woman, that comes to about 50 grams a day.

Pregnant women and active adults benefit from more protein, but researchers really don't know how much is too much. (The USDA has a nutrition calculator on its website at myplate.gov.)

They do recommend spacing out protein consumption throughout the day rather than consuming most of it at dinner, as most Americans do.

Jumping on the protein bandwagon takes careful

consideration. It's not just a question of jacking up protein consumption, but doing it in the context of healthy eating. In other words, eating six protein bars a day is not likely to help your overall health.

If you're ready to boost your protein intake, here are some tips:

Turn to protein-rich unprocessed or lightly processed foods, which you may have in your pantry and fridge. According to the USDA, some of the best are:

- Tuna: 21 grams of protein in 3 ounces
- Cooked chicken or turkey: 19 grams in 3 ounces
- Plain Greek yogurt: 17 grams in 3 ounces
- Cottage cheese: 14 grams in 1/4 cup

Other good sources are beans, nuts, low-fat dairy and eggs.

Don't translate "eat more protein" as "eat more beef and cheese." The saturated fats in these foods are not good for cardiovascular

health.

To avoid weight gain, cut back on other foods. If you're consuming more calories as protein, reduce the calories you get from breads, sweets and alcohol. Rather, up your intake of fruits, veggies and legumes.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, R.N., a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. A Monson, MA resident, she is the author of "How to Be a Healthcare Advocate for Yourself & Your Loved Ones" and her new book, "Advocating Well: Strategies for Finding Strength and Understanding in Health Care," available at Amazon.com. Contact her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com to set up a free phone consultation.

GARDEN, from page 4

gardeners opt to grow "short day" types.

Long day onions bulb up when day length reaches 14-16 hours per day; short day begin at 12-13 hours. If we plant short day in our locale we'd end up with fat scallions, but not much more, so choose accordingly.

Reputable seed companies will list the type of onion it is next to the variety name, or feature them under appropriate headings.

Choose your method

There are three ways onions can be grown: by seeds sown directly in the garden, from transplants started indoors, or from sets, which are tiny onions. One huge advantage of utilizing seeds is the variety at your disposal as compared to sets.

They are also less expensive. Some folks even argue that onions sown from seed store longer. The rest of this article will be devoted to starting onion seeds indoors, which is best accomplished

in late January through Valentine's Day- good news for those of you itching to get your hands "dirty!"

Onion seeds are sown indoors in small flats filled with moist soilless growing medium. Spacing can be a little closer than prescribed for outdoor germination, with sowing at 1/4" apart. The use of heat mats set at 72 degrees is helpful, but not entirely necessary; regular room temperatures will also encourage sprouting.

Supplemental lighting is vital, however, so that the onions grow straight and strong. Once onions are up, thin seedlings 1/2" to 1" apart from one another - onions hate competition, so this step is important!

I generally cut out the extras using scissors, right at the soil line so as not to dislodge the roots of those we are growing on. As the seedlings continue to grow, keep them trimmed at 3" tall; this will encourage strong roots and a straight, bulky plant.

About a month prior to

the last frost, the transplants should be hardened off for a week by gradually acclimating them to outdoor conditions. When they are ready, seedlings are sunk into 1" furrows 3-4" apart and watered carefully; they can be protected from sun and wind off and on for the first week should it seem necessary; here a floating row cover supported by wire hoops would come in handy, but old pots or trays would work fine too. Additional rows should be one foot apart.

Stayed tuned for part two of this column next week, and extra-large onions will be yours come fall!

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 4

they were rare out my way. I have not seen evening grosbeaks in some-time. Other people in Central Massachusetts have seen them recently. The Massachusetts Audubon Society reported six evening grosbeaks in North Brookfield.

Mass. Audubon sightings

Recent Mass Audubon sightings include western grebes, eared grebes, tufted ducks and sandhill cranes as well as an unusual visitors, a scissor-tailed fly-

catcher, a rare state record and a rosy-billed pochard. Other sightings include goldeneye, mergansers, horned larks, and wintering raptors like Northern harriers in Massachusetts in early January.

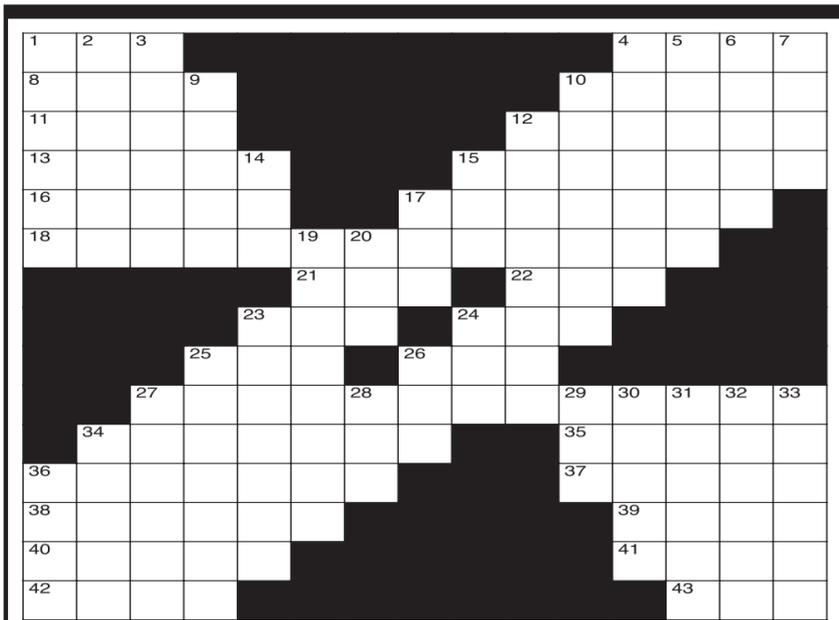
On Jan. 6 and again on Jan. 13 a male King Eider was seen among thousands of common Eiders in North Chatham. A Pacific loon and over 400 razor-bills were at Race Point in Provincetown.

Brimfield resident

A Brimfield resident sent an email on Jan. 6 that

he received a preliminary total for the Springfield Christmas Bird Count, which was 66 species, a few below the average. He also said, "We occasionally see them in the yard and sometimes hear the barred owls calling."

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.



CLUES ACROSS

1. Racket sport pros
4. Make tea
8. City South of Moscow
10. Spanish bullfighting term
11. Egg-shaped
12. Could not remember
13. French modernist painter
15. Persons
16. Painful intestinal obstruction
17. Professions
18. Is up to the task
21. Wood or metal bolt
22. Tax collector
23. A way to save for the future
24. Georgia rockers
25. Midway between

north and northeast

26. High schoolers' test
27. Does not accept responsibility
34. One who prepares
35. Gout-indicative deposits
36. Place to play games
37. Book of Genesis character
38. Cleans oneself
39. Unloaded for money
40. Genus of flowering plants
41. Take a puff
42. Congressmen
43. God of battle in Scandinavian mythology

CLUES DOWN

1. Type of bomb
2. South Pacific islands
3. Celestial body
4. Negotiates
5. Consider in a specified way
6. Type of group in organic chemistry
7. Buddhist monasteries
9. Inhabitant of Bering Sea island
10. Body part
12. Milestone birthday
14. Thyroid-stimulating hormone
15. More (Spanish)
17. Chicago ballplayer
19. Leaves a place
20. Cannot be found
23. One's internal body parts
24. Tell on
25. North American peoples of southwest
26. Soviet Socialist Republic
27. Extract used for jams and jellies
28. Greek goddess of the dawn
29. Old English letter
30. A way to exaggerate
31. Get up and leave
32. "Boardwalk Empire" character
33. More generous
34. Hanging cloth used as a blind
36. Ancient Greek sophist

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 8

CHURCH DIRECTORY



Your Community Church

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
firstbaptistchurchhollyoke@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 Chapel - 7:50 a.m.
ROSARY 8:05 a.m.
www.ourladyofthecross.com

St. Peter's Lutheran Church

Rev. Debora Stein
34 Jarvis Ave., Holyoke
Office: (413) 536-3369
Office: stpetershollyoke@gmail.com
Pastor: revdebma@gmail.com
Website: www.stpetershollyoke.org
Social media: facebook.com/stpetershollyoke
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)

Eversource warns of scams after holidays

BOSTON – While the busy holiday season has come to a close, scammers pretending to be utility company employees are not slowing down with their deceptive schemes. With customers across Massachusetts adjusting back into their routines for the new year, impostors are often looking to take advantage, posing as Eversource representatives and threatening to disconnect customers' power unless they make an immediate payment. The energy company is reminding residents and business owners to remain vigilant and always be on the lookout for the telltale signs of scams – whether it's in person, over the phone, or online.

"These scammers have their deceitful methods down to a science, and while the tactics they use may vary, the goal is always the same – to steal money and personal information from unsuspecting people," said Eversource Senior Vice President

of Customer Operations and Digital Strategy Jared Lawrence. "One of the biggest red flags to be aware of is if you are asked for instant payment over the phone or by using other untraceable methods like gift cards, prepaid debit cards or Bitcoin – that is something we will never ask of our customers and almost a sure sign you're being scammed. If you ever doubt who you're talking to is legitimate, don't be afraid to hang up and give us a call at 800-592-2000 to verify the status of your account."

"Protecting customers from scams is a top priority for the Department of Public Utilities. We urge all Massachusetts residents and businesses to stay vigilant. If something feels off, don't engage and hang up, then contact your utility directly. Our Consumer Division is here to help if you have questions or concerns," said Department of Public Utilities Chair Jeremy McDiarmid.

As customers shop for third-party suppliers to lower their energy costs, another con to be aware of is people coming to the door and using deceptive marketing tactics to convince customers to switch energy suppliers. In Massachusetts, EnergySwitchMA.gov is the only official site managed by the Department of Public Utilities where customers can safely shop for energy.

With heightened scam activity continuing into the new year, Eversource offers these additional tips to help customers avoid becoming a victim:

- Verify the caller is legitimate by asking for basic information. Eversource representatives will always be able to provide the name on the account, the account address and the exact past due balance.
- Never immediately pay, regardless of what the caller knows about the account or offers as an incentive. If the caller is

requesting an immediate payment using a third-party service, at another location or via a prepaid debit card, hang up immediately and contact Eversource.

- Eversource representatives never require customers to go to a department or grocery store to make a payment.

- Eversource does not solicit door-to-door or on the phone on behalf of third-party energy suppliers.

- All Eversource employees carry photo identification; field workers wear clothing with the company logo and drive company vehicles.

- Customers should never provide personal, financial, or account information to any unsolicited person on the phone, at the door, or online, even if they seem legitimate.

- Customers who are scheduled for disconnection due to nonpayment receive several written notices, including an alert on their bill with information on how

to maintain their service.

- Customers who doubt a call, in-person interaction, text, or email is legitimate should call Eversource directly at the number on their bill to confirm the authenticity of the contact.

- Customers should not search for Eversource's phone number or website through a search engine as scammers can manipulate results and direct customers to an incorrect number. You can find contact information, including the website, on your Eversource bill.

- Do not accept offers from anyone to pay the customer's bill or provide any other service for a fee. Even if the person claims to be an Eversource employee, it's likely a scam.

- Do not click on links or call numbers that appear in unexpected emails or texts. Clicking on a link can make a computer infected with malware, including viruses that can steal information and compromise the computer.

Make a Victorian Puzzle Purse

HOLYOKE – On Saturday, Feb. 7 from 12:30 to 2 p.m. at Holyoke Public Library, coming learn how to make a Victorian Puzzle Purse. In this free workshop, book arts specialist Kate Ouimette will guide participants as they make their first puzzle purse.

Popular in the 18th and 19th centuries, paper puzzle purses reveal designs, and messages, and even gifts to their recipients as they are unfolded. Once you learn the basics, there is no limit to how far you go. Materials will be provided.

The program is for teens and adults and seats are limited. Please pre-register by calling the Holyoke History Room at (413) 420-8107.

Rotary Club holding Murder Mystery dinner

AGAWAM – The Rotary Club of West Springfield, in conjunction with The Majestic Theater, will host a Murder Mystery Dinner Fundraiser, A Valentine's Murder Mystery, Sunday, Feb. 1 at 5 p.m. at Tansey's Catered Table, 485 Springfield St., Agawam, Mass. The evening includes a sumptuous three-course meal and the Majestic Murder Mystery performance.

The event promises an engaging evening full of intrigue, hilarity, and unscripted moments. Guests will enjoy a lively, interactive dinner and work together to solve the evening's crime, all while supporting a worthy cause. But beware! The killer is hiding in plain sight somewhere in the room, and if you aren't careful, you may find yourself a suspect...

Last year's event was sold out and interested participants are encouraged to get tickets early for the limited number of seats available. Tickets are \$75 each and can be purchased through the Club's website, www.

WestSpringfieldRotaryClub.com

Title sponsor is Teddy Bear Pools & Spas, and there are additional sponsorship opportunities available that include tickets to the event: <https://portal.clubrunner.ca/6035/page/murder-mystery-dinner>

The proceeds from the event will directly benefit the Rotary Club of West Springfield's Scholarship and Community Grants programs. The Club awards grants each year to civic organizations, educational institutions and not-for-profits that work toward the betterment of West Springfield's quality of life.

The Rotary Club of West Springfield, under the leadership of President Simon Brighenti, meets for lunch at Storowton Tavern on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month, and for an evening social on the third Thursday, at various West Side locations.

For more information on the Valentine Murder Mystery, tickets or sponsorships, contact Victoria Larriva at vlarriva@WSBGClub.com

MassHire announces February job expo

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 numbers 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

companies 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.

Suffield Players holding 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 confidence, 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

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.

Smith Scholarship applications accepted

WESTFIELD – The Horace Smith Fund will be awarding \$317,000 in scholarships and fellowships to residents of Hampden County, who have also graduated from an eligible high school or private school. This year 21 scholarships, four fellowships and one William R. Rooney Award for students with special needs will be presented to recipients at the June 18 Awards Night ceremony at Storowton Carriage House in West Springfield.

Scholarships are offered not only to graduating high school seniors but also to students already in college

or those wishing to return to college. Scholarships of \$12,000 are distributed as \$3,000 annually and renewable each year until graduation. Fellowship awards of \$15,000 are distributed as \$7,500 annually and renewable for one additional year to students pursuing a full-time graduate degree. Students must maintain at least a B average to renew.

Recipients are selected on a variety of criteria, including academic records, merit, and financial need. Of great importance is a personal written account of why the student feels deserving

of financial assistance. Applicants must submit their transcripts and, if applicable, college entrance exam scores or graduate degree specific tests, and three letters of recommendation.

Completed applications must be received either electronically or be mailed to The Horace Smith Fund at 16 Union Avenue, Suite 2K, Westfield, MA 01085 no later than March 15, 2026. Applications are available at local high school guidance offices, college financial aid offices, and on-line at www.HoraceSmithFund.org or by phoning (413) 739-4222.

AWARD, from page 1

ty make him an outstanding choice for this honor."

"Receiving the John F. Kennedy National Award is both humbling and deeply meaningful to me," said Chief McDonnell. "As a first-generation Irish American, this recognition reflects the values of service and community that my parents instilled in me. I am honored to join such a distinguished group of past recipients and grateful to the St. Patrick's Committee and the City of Holyoke for this

extraordinary honor." (Full video message can be accessed here.)

The list of past John F. Kennedy National Award honorees is a celebrated Who's Who of Irish Americans. Recent recipient Bridget Moynahan (2025) joins a prestigious roster including Pittsburgh Steelers owner Arthur J. Rooney (1980); legendary actress Maureen O'Hara (1982); NCAA coach Frank McGuire (1985); NASA astronaut Cady Coleman (2004); fatherson duo "Team Hoyt" (2014); professional

boxer "Irish" Micky Ward (2016); and longtime Boston Celtics broadcaster Mike Gorman (2024).

Celebrations recognizing Chief McDonnell will take place throughout Parade Weekend and include acknowledgment at the Holyoke St. Patrick's Road Race, a featured position in the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade, and the John F. Kennedy Award Dinner, held Saturday, March 21 at The Log Cabin. Tickets and event information are available at holyokestpatricksparade.com/events.

Stanley Park history program at Athenaeum

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 engaging discussion on the origins of Stanley Park, tracing its beginnings in 1949 and highlighting the people, vision, and pres-

ervation 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.

RIVERA, from page 1

Massachusetts State Police for operating under the influence of alcohol. He also was failure to yield and speeding. He received "not responsible" verdicts for those two charges during his pre-trial hearing.

While his legal troubles are resolved pending compliance with the court's orders, it was what he was not charged for that has caused the most controversy.

Last week, body-worn camera footage was released publicly, and showed Rivera attempting to intimidate police by threatening not to vote for their budget. He also disparaged police saying they

"don't do (expletive)." He also used racial slurs, specifically saying the "n-word" 19 times in the 20 minutes of footage that was released.

The behavior prompted a strong reaction from the Holyoke police unions. Both the patrolmen's and supervisor's unions have called Rivera to resign his at-large seat from the city council. But they specifically requested the city's law department to issue an ethics opinion about whether Rivera should be allowed to vote on any matters related to the police department.

That prompted City Council President Tessa Murphy-Romboletti to remove Rivera from the

Public Safety Committee, which makes recommendations to the full council on police-related matters.

Rivera was elected as the vice president of the council on Jan. 5, when the new council was sworn in and then convened to select a president. Per passage of a new council rule, a vice president was added to the ranks of the council and Rivera was selected to serve in that capacity. Following his resignation, the council will have to select a new vice president when it next meets in early February.

The law department has yet to issue its ethics opinion on Rivera's voting ability for police matters.

SPORTS

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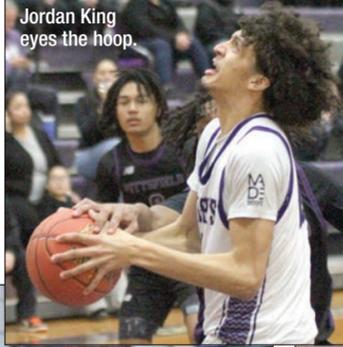
ts.turley.com



Brian Thomas gets ready to make a three-point attempt.

Holyoke boys grab second win

HOLYOKE – Last Tuesday evening, Holyoke High School boys basketball got its second win of the regular season, defeating Pittsfield 51-40. Holyoke got a big night from Jordan King with 18 points. Julian Fasoli added nine points. Holyoke improved to 2-7 on the season.



Jordan King eyes the hoop.



Julian Fasoli crosses midcourt with the ball.



Georlee Aponte makes a pass on the run.



Gian Cora hustles down the left side.



Devin Velez passes out of pressure.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Knights offense not able to match Chicopee

CHICOPEE – Last Tuesday night, the Chicopee High School girls basketball team defeated visiting Holyoke 44-27. Kiyah Price led the Pacers with 21 points, and Sophia Moreira had 11 points. For the Knights, Sujelyz Peralta led the team with nine points while Kyra Lippman with eight points. Chicopee is now 5-8 while Holyoke is now 3-9.



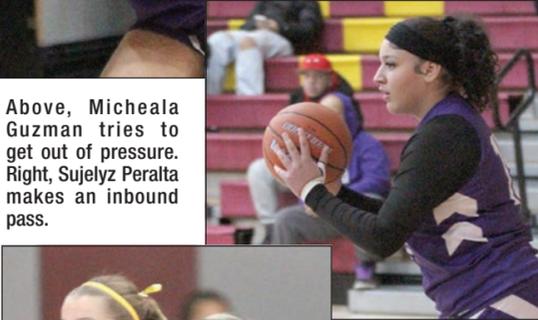
Above, Micheala Guzman tries to get out of pressure. Right, Sujelyz Peralta makes an inbound pass.



Kyleigh Dorman goes for a layup.



Julianna Pirela shuffles near the arc.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli
Kyra Lippman avoids an opponent.



Isabella Lachat grabs a pass.



Genesis Rivera starts her way down the court.

HCC Women grab win over Quinsigamond

HOLYOKE – Women's basketball travelled on Tuesday evening, earning a 76-43 win over regional opponent Quinsigamond CC. The Lady Cougars have been strong in the region this season, improving their record against fellow New England teams to 7-3.

J o h a n n y s Andrades (Springfield, MA / Putnam Vocational Technical HS) and Vivian Timmons (West Springfield, MA / Guilderland HS) took charge for Holyoke, each scoring 18 points and grabbing nine rebounds. Andrades led the way in steals with seven and assists with six. Erin Bullough (South Hadley, MA / South Hadley HS) scored 12 points in the contest, including a trio of three-pointers. Bullough has sunk ten three-pointers in the past three games. Emily McGrail (Ware, MA / Ware HS) led the Cougars in rebounds in the win, bringing down ten.

Women's basketball has an 8-7 overall record to go along with their previously mentioned 7-3 regional record. They are 7-3 against NJCAA teams. HCC's next home game is on Tuesday, Feb. 3 at 5:30 p.m. against Massasoit CC.

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

Public Notices

Holyoke Planning Board PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Holyoke Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, February 10, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.com**; ID: 870 5374 1582; CALL IN 1 646 558 8656 and hybrid in-person, to hear pursuant to the Holyoke Zoning Ordinance, a Special Permit for an Increase Fence Height (Sec 4.6.3.2) to allow a 7ft by 10 ft panel, 4 rail style black steel fence to be erected around the parking lot, submitted by Bryan Taub (2026-1), located at 61-69 Suffolk Street (012-06-004).

For a complete copy of the application and site plan, contact the Planning Department at (413) 322-5575.

APPLICANT: Bryan Taub
PLANNING BOARD:
Lauren Niles, Chairperson
01/23, 01/30/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
Docket No.
HD26P0150PM
In the matter of:
Jon Anderson
Of: Holyoke, MA
RESPONDENT
(Person to be Protected/ Minor)

CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF CONSERVATOR OR OTHER PROTECTIVE ORDER PURSUANT TO

G.L. c. 190B, §5-304 & §5-405
To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by **Holyoke Medical Center** of Holyoke, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that **Jon Anderson** is in need of a Conservator or other protective order and requesting that **Anna Judson** of West Whately, MA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Conservator to serve **With Surety** on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is disabled, that a protective order or appointment of a Conservator

is necessary, and that the proposed conservator is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 a.m. on the return date of **02/19/2026**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

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

Witness, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court.

Date: January 22, 2026
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
01/30/2026

City of Holyok
Notice of Public Hearing
The Holyoke License Board will be holding a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 5:15 pm**. You can join via Zoom.com; ID 83974921923; CALL IN: *67 646 558 8656 or in person at **City Hall, 536 Dwight St. in the Old Tax Collector Office**, regarding the application for a **New Seasonal All Alcohol On-premises License for Camellias, 116 High Street**, pursuant to M.G.L. Ch.138.

Applicant: Camellias
License Board:
Jose Correa, Chairman
01/23, 01/30/2026

City of Holyoke
Office of Purchasing
Request for Proposals
RFP 2026-21DPW
Professional Consultant
Services for Comprehensive
Safety Action Plan
Development: Safe Streets and
Roads for All

The City of Holyoke seeks proposals from engineering firms to develop a comprehensive safety action plan ("Action Plan") in accordance with the criteria established under the U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT) Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant Program.

This project will be funded in whole or part with Federal Funds. Respondents will be verified for eligibility to receive Federal Funds and must comply with all Federal Requirements including CFR Part 200.

Starting on **January 26, 2026**, RFP documents may be obtained electronically through the City of Holyoke's Purchasing Department by submitting an email request to **Jaime Morrow, Chief Procurement Officer**, at **morrowj@holyoke.org**. Responses will also be submitted by email. Proposals shall be submitted electronically to **Jaime Morrow, Chief Procurement Officer**, at **morrowj@holyoke.org** and are due on **February 24, 2026 at 2:00 PM (local time)**, based on the digital time stamp when received. Late applications will not be accepted.

Proposals submitted through any other means, such as mail or hand delivery, will not be accepted and will be rejected by the City as non-responsive.

The City intends to select a consultant within 60 days of receipt of the RFP responses. Work on the project must commence within 30 days of contract execution.

The City reserves the right to reject any and all submissions, to waive any minor informalities and technicalities, or to cancel the solicitation if it is in the public interest to do so.

The City of Holyoke is an EEO/AA/MBE employer. Women and minority owned businesses are encouraged to apply.
01/30/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
Docket No.
HD26P0096GD
In the matter of:
William Jones
Of: Holyoke, MA
RESPONDENT

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

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by **CareOne Holyoke** of Holyoke, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that **William Jones** is in need of a Guardian and requesting that **Venetia Murphy** of Brockton, MA

Karen Jones of Brockton, MA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve **Without Surety** on the bond.

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

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 a.m. on the return date of **02/16/2026**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

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

WITNESS, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court.

Date: January 16, 2026
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
01/30/2026

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.
HD22P0785EA
Estate of:

Henry Patrick Ingersoll
Date of Death: 03/08/2022
CITATION ON PETITION FOR SALE OF REAL ESTATE BY A PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE
To all interested persons:
A Petition for Sale of Real Estate has been filed by: **Edward J Tousignant**

of **Mount Holly, NJ** requesting that the court authorize the Personal Representative to sell the decedent's real estate at a private sale.

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 02/11/2026.

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.

Witness, **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: January 07, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
01/30/2026

City of Holyoke
Notice of Public Hearing

The Holyoke License Board will be holding a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 5:15 pm**. You can join via Zoom.com; ID 83974921923; CALL IN: *67 646 558 8656 or in person at **City Hall, 536 Dwight St. in the Old Tax Collector Office**, regarding the application for a **Transfer of an All Alcohol Annual On-premises License from 241 Whiting Farms DBA Fairfield Inn & Suites, 229 Whiting Farms to Japanese BBQ & Sushi, LLC DBA Daruma BBQ, 241 Whiting Farms Road**, pursuant to M.G.L. Ch.138.

Applicant:
Japanese BBQ & Sushi LLC
License Board:
Jose Correa, Chairman
01/23, 01/30/2026

City of Holyok
Notice of Public Hearing

The Holyoke License Board will be holding a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 5:15 pm**. You can join via Zoom.com; ID 83974921923; CALL IN: *67 646 558 8656 or in person at **City Hall, 536 Dwight St. in the Old Tax Collector Office**, regarding the application for a **New Annual All Alcohol On-premises License for Obie Knox 1568, 18 1/2 Spring Street**, pursuant to M.G.L. Ch.138.

Applicant: **Obie Knox 1568**
License Board:
Jose Correa, Chairman
01/23, 01/30/2026

City of Holyoke
PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Ordinance Committee of the **Holyoke City Council** as well as the **Holyoke Planning Board** will hold separate public hearings to hear a zoning ordinance text change proposal to review potential changes to operating times of cannabis dispensaries. **Planning Board public hearing will be held on Tuesday, February 10, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. via www.zoom.us** Meeting ID: 870 5374 1582 or by call in at 1-646-558-8656 with same meeting ID. **Ordinance Committee public hearing will be held on Wednesday, March 4, 2026 at 6:30pm at Holyoke City Hall 536 Dwight St and can be accessed remotely via zoom.us** Meeting ID 873 9001 6319 Meeting Passcode 613009 or by call in at 1-646-558-8656 with same Meeting ID and Passcode.

To provide comments to the Planning Board, please contact **Brianna Tejada** at **tejadab@holyoke.org**. To provide comments to the Ordinance Committee, please contact **City Council Admin Asst Jeffery Anderson-Burgos** at **Anderson-BurgosJ@holyoke.org** or by phone 413-322-5525.

Planning Board Chair,
Lauren Niles
Ordinance Chair,
Meg Magrath-Smith
01/23, 01/30, 02/06/2026

City of Holyoke
Notice of Public Hearing

The Holyoke License Board will be holding a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, February 4, 2026, at 5:15 pm**. You can join via Zoom.com; ID 83974921923; CALL IN: *67 646 558 8656 or in person at **City Hall, 536 Dwight St. in the Old Tax Collector Office**, regarding the application for a **Transfer of an Annual Wine & Malt Beverage On-premises License from Bugalu Ballroom, 120 High Street to Pedro's Sport Bar, LLC 120 High Street**, pursuant to M.G.L. Ch.138.

Applicant: **Pedro's Sport Bar**
License Board:
Jose Correa, Chairman
01/23, 01/30/2026

CITY OF HOLYOKE
Office of Purchasing
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP 2026-13DPW
Speed Management and
Traffic Calming Professional
Services

The City of Holyoke seeks proposals from engineering firms to develop a Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program and to improve safety for all modes of transportation by identifying speed management solutions appropriate for implementation in Holyoke.

Primary funding for the project in the amount of \$50,000 has been allocated to the City under the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Community Compact "Best Practices" Program. Future phase work and/or supplemental funding may be funded in whole or part with Federal Funds. Respondents will be verified for eligibility to receive Federal Funds and must comply with all Federal Requirements including 2 CFR Part 200.

Starting on **January 26, 2026**, RFP documents may be obtained electronically through the City of Holyoke's Purchasing Department by submitting an email request to **Jaime Morrow, Chief Procurement Officer**, at **morrowj@holyoke.org**. Responses will also be submitted by email. Proposals shall be submitted electronically to **Jaime Morrow, Chief Procurement Officer**, at **morrowj@holyoke.org** and are due on **February 24, 2026 at 2:30 PM (local time)**, based on the digital time stamp when received.

Late applications will not be accepted. Proposals submitted through any other means, such as mail or hand delivery, will not be accepted and will be rejected by the City as non-responsive.

The City intends to select a consultant within 60 days of receipt of the RFP responses. Work on the project must commence within 30 days of contract execution. The City reserves the right to reject any and all submissions, to waive any minor informalities and technicalities, or to cancel the solicitation if it is in the public interest to do so.

The City of Holyoke is an EEO/AA/MBE employer. Women and minority owned businesses are encouraged to apply.
1/30/2026

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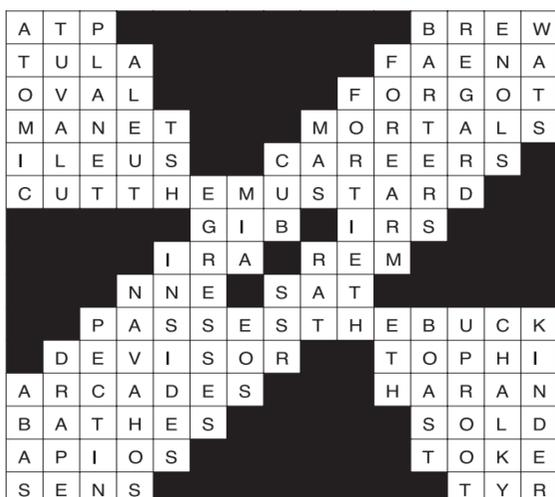
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Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.



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- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

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

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Two girls laughing as the snow drifts reach their height.



The biggest snowman, ever!



It wouldn't be the first big snowstorm of 2026 without the traditional making of the snowman.



"I can't get up!"



Cars were covered and buried under the snow.

Submitted photos



An epic wipeout from the sled and into the snow drifts.



A stunning photo of a bluejay in the snow.



Plowing a driveway in style.



Even this dog who looks like a bear had a hard time navigating in the deep snow.



This little piggy liked to tunnel in the snow.

SNOW, from page 1

"When you plow the streets we have difficulty on, we noticed that the challenge runs all year long," Gallagher said. "So, for example, when you drive down them, on a regular day, you run the challenge of realizing that you may not be able to find a parking spot on either side of the street, so now, when you take away half of the street, that creates obstacles for people trying to find a place to park their vehicle."

Cleanup and restoration efforts continue to be ongoing and will likely go into next week.



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The snow falling down on a farm.



Residents had to practice patience and kindness during this storm. Plows had a lot of space to cover. Some streets got plowed after residents cleared sidewalks and then were tasked to clear sidewalks again after the plows cleared the streets yet dumped snow back on the sidewalks.

