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## Library spotlights **KARAOKE** party

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Public Library hosted a karaoke party last Saturday, Jan. 25.

The event went for three hours and was run by Marisah Helems, also known as DJ PRL.

Helems wanted to bring some fun and confidence to the Holyoke community through her karaoke program. People were welcome to get up and sing or just dance along to the music.

Helems especially enjoyed seeing all of the kids come in excited to sing to their favorite pieces of music.

“I look forward to seeing the kids and what songs they pick, especially those who have never done karaoke before,” Helems said. “Watching someone do their first karaoke song is always very special.”

Throughout the event, kids and their families grew more confident with singing in front of an audience and they all had a fun time jamming out to some of their favorite songs.

One thing Helems felt was important about having this kind of event was that it allowed people to find their confidence in a safe space like the library.

“No one has to be perfect when they come up to the mic, it is okay to be scared or a little



Families could come up and sing songs together for the karaoke party.



River Matos and Sophie Miller had a great time singing “We Don’t Talk About Bruno.”  
Turley photos by Quinn Suomala



Ella Pearson loved singing different Imagine Dragons songs.

shy,” Helems said. “I feel it is especially important to let people know that. It is important to have a voice but if it isn’t the biggest voice, that’s still okay.”

Helems was last at the library in July where she ran a similar karaoke party for families. She had fun then and was excited to be back in the city.

“I recently moved out of Holyoke and it is so nice to be

back in that community,” Helems said.

Initially she had come to HPL due to an invitation from Children’s Librarian Rene Pellissier and Helems was delighted to be asked back for another program.

Helems has been running karaoke events for about four years now, and she has greatly enjoyed her time as a DJ.

She was inspired to begin her work as she had always enjoyed music and wanted to give that joy to others.

“I have always loved singing karaoke ever since I was in middle school,” Helems said. “I love to sing and when the opportunity came up for me to host a karaoke night I just took it because it is so fun and such a great experience for people.”

Additionally, Helems has found that singing can provide a therapeutic effect for people and she hopes to give people that opportunity through work.

“Singing is almost therapeutic in a way,” Helems said. “It is a good way to express yourself and...it builds confidence.”

See **KARAOKE**, page 12

## Rivera-Colón selected as vice chair of school committee

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – School Committee Member Yadilette Rivera-Colón was unanimously elected by the school committee to be the new vice chair.

Rivera-Colón feels prepared to take on this role as Holyoke continues to move toward their provisional date to exit receivership.

“I love to serve and I am always ready for the challenge, and I love serving the Holyoke community and being able to help out,” Rivera-Colón said.

Her previous work in leadership both within the school committee and outside of it has prepared her for this role.

During her time on the school committee she has chaired many boards and sub-committees, at one point leading three at once.

Additionally, she has a

lot of leadership experience in her day to day work.

“I am the chair of the board for MassHire Holyoke, I am the former chair of the board for Girls Inc. of the Valley and I am the chair of the department for my job at Bay Path University,” Rivera-Colón said. “We jokingly say this, but I am basically never

*“I love to serve  
and I am always ready  
for the challenge,  
and I love serving the  
Holyoke community and  
being able to help out,*

- **Yadilette Rivera-Colón**

just a member, wherever I am when there is a role that is calling for a leader, I end up there.”

Moreover, Rivera-Colón is a scientist outside of her work on the committee. She believes that the dedication to detail and data that she learned in that role will transfer well into her work on the school committee.

She was honored that her fellow committee members voted her into the position unanimously.

“It was really good that they trust me for this role,” Rivera-Colón said.

During her time as vice chair, Rivera-Colón hopes to focus on ensuring that the voices of the community are heard.

“My biggest goal is to highlight the voice of the community,” Rivera-Colón said. “The community at large, but especially the school community. Listening to the people in the buildings; the students, the families.”

She hopes that this will

See **VICE CHAIR**, page 8

## City council unanimously supports resolution

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE –

In a rare unanimous vote, the city council approved the resolution put forward by Councilor Juan Anderson-Burgos condemning the statement about Puerto Rico made by Comedian Tony Hinchcliffe at a Trump political rally held on October 27, 2024.

During this rally, Hinchcliffe made a joke that called Puerto Rico a “floating island of garbage.”

Anderson-Burgos, who is Puerto Rican, wanted to take a stand against this joke that was derogatory to his heritage as well as the heritage of many in Holyoke.

“The statement made by Tony Hinchcliffe...is an offensive and malicious disrespect of our Puerto Rican neighbors, friends, community members, fellow citizens, and most



Juan  
Anderson-Burgos

importantly, fellow humans,” Anderson-Burgos wrote in the resolution.

Holyoke has the greatest number of Puerto Ricans per capita of any community outside of Puerto Rico, and Anderson-Burgos wanted to ensure that the people of

Holyoke felt heard and supported by their city council.

He proposed this resolution as a way to combat this joke and brought it forward at the Department and Government Relations committee meeting on Jan. 13.

During the meeting he spoke with the committee on why he felt it important to create and pass this resolution. He wanted to ensure that people knew it was not okay to make jokes degrading a group of people.

“I don’t find it funny when

See **RESOLUTION**, page 8

# School committee discusses timeline for superintendent search

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – The school committee received and discussed the timeline for the superintendent search at their meeting on Jan. 27.

“This timeline can take between 2 to 5 months to complete but it does not include other factors that might come into play,” School Committee Member Mildred Lefebvre said.

This timeline does not include the procurement of a consultant nor does it include the preparation for the beginning of the search.

Before the search can begin the school committee is waiting to receive information from the community advisory committee.

The community advisory committee is a group made up of various community members that are invested in seeing Holyoke Public Schools thrive moving forward.

This committee is working on getting input from the community on what they want to see in the future superintendent

of HPS.

They will conduct various community forums so that stakeholders can put forward information on what they want as qualifications for a superintendent.

The school committee hopes to hear the recommendations from the advisory committee in May or June.

Once they have received recommendations, they can decide on when they want to begin the search process for a new superintendent.

Within the search there are five phases: leadership profile development, candidate recruitment, candidate screening, committee evaluation of finalists and appointment.

The leadership profile development will focus on creating a description of what the school committee, the search committee and the community advisory committee would like to see in a superintendent.

For the candidate recruitment, the search committee will begin advertising the position, creating candidate files, coordinating applications and conducting reference checks.

During the candidate screening process the search committee will select semi finalists for the position and refer them to the school committee.

The school committee will then evaluate the finalists by conducting reference checks and interviews.

From there they will appoint the new superintendent and begin contract negotiations.

Currently, the school committee has appointed Superintendent/Receiver Anthony Soto as the interim superintendent until the search process is complete.

Soto is invited to apply for the superintendent position should he be interested.

The school committee does not plan to have a new superintendent for the anticipated July 1 end date of receivership. They instead want to conduct the search in fiscal year 2026.

They made this decision as they want to limit how much transition the district is going through at one time.

“It would give us more time and it is also the fact that we are in the middle of a transition, where everything is going from under a receivership point to a local con-

trol aspect and really understanding and going through our roles,” Lefebvre said. “So conducting the search for a future superintendent in FY26 provides us more time to vet search consultants that will best fit for us...and we have more flexibility.”

Moving forward the school committee needs to decide if they want to conduct the search primarily in the fall or the spring.

Both are ideal times to post for a superintendent position, so the school committee has freedom to decide what would work best for the district.

The school committee is taking the timeline under careful consideration as they want to ensure that the search for a superintendent does not disrupt their work in transitioning back to local control.

“This transition to local control is a very delicate process and my biggest fear is as we go forward trying to understand potential instability,” Mayor Joshua Garcia said. “I want to make sure that we do this search right and not feel like we have to rush into it.”

## Affirming the rights of immigrants:

### A joint statement from Mayor Garcia and Superintendent Soto

Dear Holyoke community members,

As your mayor and as your superintendent of schools, we are affirming our commitment to ensure and protect the rights of all Holyoke residents and employees, and especially our newcomer and immigrant families whose safety and well-being are now imperiled by recent announcements at the federal level.

The Department of Homeland Security announced on Tuesday that schools and churches would no longer be considered “sensitive areas,” with the intent to allow agents from both the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agencies to enter such locations under certain circumstances.

At this time, Massachusetts and other states across the country are reviewing this announcement, as well as their own laws and regulations, to

determine what legal measures are available to us based on state and local laws. We anticipate an announcement from Massachusetts state leaders in the very near future, possibly as early as Monday, that will help provide further direction to us.

While we wait for further guidance from our state leaders, we remind all Holyokers that as a city and as a school district, we stand by our commitment to protect the rights and safety of everyone who lives or works in our community.

Earlier this week, Holyoke Public Schools shared guidance with staff that affirms the district’s commitment to upholding the rights of newcomer and refugee children of school-age.

Yesterday, Mayor Joshua A. Garcia reissued an Executive Order Relating to the Enforcement of Civil Immigration Detainers, which reaffirms a 2014 executive order made by former Holyoke

Mayor Alex B. Morse. It states, in part:

“that the Holyoke Police Department will neither honor nor enforce a civil immigration detainer requested from the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or the United States Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) when such order seeks the excessive and/or unnecessary detention of an individual in department custody at the Holyoke Police Department beyond the point at which he or she would otherwise be released.”

As Holyoke’s current mayor and superintendent of schools, we stand by these commitments. We will be in touch with our community members as soon as we receive further guidance from our state leaders. We urge everyone to look out for one another in the days, weeks, and months to come.

Mayor Joshua A. Garcia  
Superintendent Anthony Soto

Dear HPS Community,

The Holyoke School Committee is pleased to announce that Mr. Anthony Soto was appointed via unanimous vote as Interim Superintendent during last night’s school committee meeting, pending his contract negotiation and exiting receivership. The School Committee will continue its efforts to hire a permanent Superintendent - the first step of which is currently in process through the Community Advisory Team meetings.

This appointment is an important step in our capacity building plan. Stable leadership is a critical component of our district’s transition out of receivership and into local control. We are confident that Mr. Soto will provide the guidance and support needed to continue to lead our schools forward during this pivotal time. Thank you for your continued support of our students and schools.

Dr. Yadilette Rivera Colón  
School Committee Vice Chair  
Ward 3 Representative  
Mayor Joshua A. Garcia  
School Committee Chair

## COLLEGE NEWS

### University of Rhode Island fall 2024 Dean’s List

KINGSTON, RI – The University of Rhode Island is pleased to announce that several area students have been named to its fall 2024 Dean’s List. Among them are:

Caleb Lundgren of Holyoke  
Jazmine Muniz of Holyoke  
Anna Puttick of Holyoke

## Scholarship and fellowship funds available for local students

HOLYOKE – The Horace Smith Fund, located in Westfield, Massachusetts has scholarship and fellowship money available for graduates of Hampden County public and private high schools. 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 16 graduating seniors from 13 Hampden County high schools. Five scholarships were also awarded to current college students to assist them in completing their undergraduate degrees. 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 gen-

erous 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. Applications are available at local high school guidance offices, college financial aid offices, online at [www.HoraceSmithFund.org](http://www.HoraceSmithFund.org) or by phoning (413) 739-4222.

## Jewish Endowment Foundation encourages students to apply for scholarships

HOLYOKE – The Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts’s Jewish Endowment Foundation is inviting undergraduate and college-bound students to apply to its annual Common Fund and Springfield Council of Jewish Women (SCJW) scholarships through March 28, 2025. Qualified students regardless of race, religion, and gender are encouraged to apply. Scholarships are awarded based on a combination of academic, financial need and community involvement.

“The value of education is strongly embedded in our Jewish culture, which is why we are proud to award Common Fund and Springfield Council of Jewish

Women scholarships to support students on their educational journey,” said Nora Gorenstein, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts. “These scholarships are an example of one of the many ways Federation supports families in Western Massachusetts, and we look forward to receiving scholarship applications from our future leaders and professionals.”

Federation’s Jewish Endowment Foundation Common Fund grants college scholarships to all qualified high school students who are residents of Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin counties. Since 2015, Federation’s Jewish Endowment

Foundation Common Fund has awarded more than \$260,000 in scholarships to more than 240 college bound students. Approximately thirty students are selected each year to receive this scholarship.

Federation’s SCJW Scholarships are available to qualified high school students and undergraduate students residing in Chicopee, Springfield, East Longmeadow, Longmeadow, Wilbraham, Hampden, Agawam, or West Springfield. The SCJW established its first scholarship fund in 1943. Since then, the scholarship fund has grown substantially. In 1992, the SCJW transferred their funds to Federation’s Jewish Endowment

Foundation. Since 1992, it has awarded more than \$2.5 million dollars to financially assist thousands of local students in their pursuit of higher education.

Recipients for both scholarship types are chosen based on academic performance, financial need, and community involvement. Once chosen, undergraduate students are eligible to renew their awards for their full four years of college. The application deadline for Federation’s Jewish Endowment Foundation Common Fund scholarships and SCJW scholarships is March 28, 2025. To apply, visit <https://jewishwesternmass.org/grants-scholarships>.

# MiraVista offers tips on warming up to children's mental health

HOLYOKE – The post-holiday season can be a challenging time for children and families. With shorter days, colder weather, and the return to routine, many children may experience the “winter blues.” These seasonal changes can take a toll on emotional health and well-being, leaving families searching for support.

MiraVista Behavioral Health Center recognizes the unique challenges this time of year brings and is here to help. The organization's 16-bed adolescent unit (for teens 13-17, and up to 18 if attending high school) is staffed with a skilled and compassionate treatment team, providing families with a resource for comprehensive, inpatient mental health care during difficult times.

To make accessing care as seamless as possible, MiraVista offers direct admissions, reducing unnecessary and costly delays in emergency departments. This ensures children receive the care they need when they need it most.

“Adolescence is a critical time for mental health, and we know that seasonal changes can amplify the emotional challenges young people face,” said Dr. Kenneth Richmond, Medical Director for MiraVista. “It's important for families to know there are resources available, and seeking help early can make a profound difference in a young person's life.”

While professional support is essential, there are also many ways families can help promote emotional well-being during

the winter months:

**Stay Active Together:** Encourage regular physical activity to boost mood and energy levels, even with indoor options like family walks, yoga, or dance sessions.

**Create Structure:** A predictable daily routine helps children feel secure and balanced, particularly after the excitement of the holidays.

**Prioritize Connection:** Dedicate time to talk, listen, and engage in activities children enjoy. Feeling supported and heard makes a world of difference.

**Monitor Screen Time:** Reduce excessive screen use and encourage creative or interactive play instead.

**Get Outside When Possible:** A few

minutes of fresh air and sunlight can lift spirits and improve energy.

**Model Self-Care:** Demonstrate the importance of mental health by practicing self-care yourself, setting a positive example.

MiraVista is committed to supporting families during these colder months and beyond. If you'd like to learn more about our services or discuss how we can help children and families thrive, we invite you to reach out. Together, we can navigate the winter season and ensure that every child feels supported, valued, and hopeful.

For more information, to make a referral or to schedule a workplace presentation, please contact Kim Lee at 413-264-3042 or Klee@miravistabhc.care.

## HHS theater company to present 'Lord of the Flies'

HOLYOKE – Join the Holyoke High School Theater Company on Feb. 5, Feb. 6, Feb. 7 at 6:30 p.m. and Feb. 8 at 1 p.m. for four intense performances of “Lord of the Flies” to be staged at Holyoke High School North, 500 Beech St.

“Lord of the Flies,” adapted for the stage by Nigel Williams, brings William Golding's 1954 novel to life. Stranded on a deserted island, a group of British boys spiral into chaos, battling for power and survival.

“This high school production delves into themes of civilization versus barbarism, the loss of innocence, and the darkness lurking within us all,” said Holyoke High School Theater Company Director and Theater teacher Bevan Brunelle. “A

minimalistic, student-built set and custom lighting amplify the isolation and tension, drawing the audience deep into the psychological turmoil of the boys' unraveling.”

The Holyoke High School Theater Company is an after-school club that is an extension of the Performing and Media Arts Academy at Holyoke High School North. The cast and crew of this production features students in grades 9-12, including: Eila Ramoth as Ralph, Cian Callahan as Jack, Darius Baez as Piggy, Grace Bechard as Roger, Talitha Hernandez as Sam, Ivan Rivera as Eric, Fynn Maldonado as Simon, Aidan Fontanez-Courchesne as Henry, Yalializ Torres as Maurice, Gabriella Cayo as

Bill, and Linken Geddis as the Naval Officer. The production also introduces Elisabel Maldonado, a fourth-grade student from Morgan Elementary School, who is performing as Perceval.

Advance tickets are \$8 for general admission, and \$5 for students and staff. Advance tickets are available at the HHS North main office and online through the MIFA Festival website. Online ticket sales will end at 5 p.m. on Feb. 4, but same-day tickets will be available at each performance for \$10 for general admission, and \$5 each for students and HPS staff. The production is presented with permission from Faber & Faber and is generously sponsored by MIFA Victory Theater.

## Join Irish night

HOLYOKE – The Hibernians of Hampden/Hampshire Counties invite the public to attend the Traditional Irish night in Holyoke, at the Log Cabin on Saturday Feb. 22.

There will be valet parking. Tickets are only \$50 per person. Call Joe O'Connor at 413-627-7148 or Fran Hennessey at 413-785-5687 by Feb. 18 or go online to Eventbrite.com.

The event will feature the Keohane and Kenneally Irish American Band and a Corned Beef and Cabbage dinner with Ribs by Mick Corduff executive chef at the Log Cabin. The event was sold out the past 2 years so get tickets early. The Hibernians wish a Happy St. Patrick's Day to all.

## Artists needed for showcase event

HOLYOKE – All submissions must be submitted by Feb. 7. Wistariahurst Museum is seeking artist submissions for the Third Annual Women's History Month juried art showcase for the month of March. This year, the theme is Love, in all forms. Love, in all forms, aims for artists to consider how love impacts lives.

Love can be painful, a process, joyful, romantic, platonic, a feeling, an object, a memory; love, in all its forms, is beautiful. Any medium for submission is encouraged. Submissions are open to anyone who identifies as a woman and non-binary artists of any

age. Submissions should include 3 to 4 quality images with information (title, date, medium, and size), an artist statement (approximately 300 words about your art and its relationship to the theme), and an artist bio (approximately 150 words about you as an artist) in one PDF.

Wistariahurst is an artist-friendly space that encourages creativity and supports the growth of this region's artists. All questions are welcome and encouraged. Five artists will be selected and awarded a \$100 stipend. Submissions are due Feb. 7, please send them to info@wistariahurst.org.

## Red cross training now available

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Parks and Recreation Department is offering a lifeguard Red Cross certification training course at the Holyoke Boys and Girls Club, 70 Nick Cosmos Way. Session 1 will take place Feb. 15, Feb. 16 and Feb. 23 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Session 2 will take place May 10, May 11 and May 18, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Participants only need to attend one full session, (one Saturday and two Sunday's). Applicants must be 16 years of age. Strong swimmers are encouraged to apply. Participants must pass a pre-skills test at the start of class. \$175.00 for Holyoke residents and

\$275.00 for non-residents.

Lifeguard Re-Certification Classes will also be offered on Feb. 23 and May 18. Participants only need to attend one class. Classes will run from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Holyoke Boys and Girls Club, 70 Nick Cosmos Wa. Update skills while also extending certification for another two year. \$125 for Holyoke residents and \$225 for non-residents.

Please register at the Holyoke Parks and Recreation Department, 413-322-5620.

Participants must register and be paid in full before attending the class. Limited space available.

## Holyoke Community College announces scholarship season now open

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Community College Foundation will begin accepting scholarship applications for the 2025-2026 academic year on Tuesday, Jan. 21. The application deadline is Friday, March 14.

Last year, the HCC Foundation awarded 388 scholarships worth about \$350,000 to 323 incoming, current, and transferring HCC students. Some students received multiple scholarship awards. The average scholarship award is typically around \$900.

“Awarding scholarships to deserving students has been a cornerstone of the work of the HCC Foundation since its founding,” said Amanda Sbriscia, vice president of Institutional Advancement and executive director of the HCC Foundation. “Scholarships established

by donors celebrate academic achievement, community service, and civic engagement, and, most importantly, these funds ensure hundreds of students have the resources they need to complete their college degrees.”

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

“While the recent launch of MassEducate, the state's free-community-college-for-all program, has made HCC accessible to more individuals, that only means we have a greater responsibility to ensure students make it to the finish line,” Sbriscia said. “Tuition and fees represent only a portion of the cost of being a college student today, and, oftentimes, a donor scholarship can truly

change a student's life.”

Applicants need only 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.

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

Last January, HCC opened a dedicated Scholarship Resource Center to help current and incoming students navigate the process of applying for schol-

arships and filling out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). The office, located on the first floor of the Donahue Building (Room 158) is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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](mailto:scholarships@hcc.edu).

## United Congregational Church serving Polish food at monthly community meal

HOLYOKE – The United Congregational Church of Holyoke will be serving Polish food at their monthly Community Meal, which falls on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14. Dinner will be served at 5 p.m. and will feature rolled stuffed cabbage, pierogies, salad and des-

sert. A family movie will immediately follow at 6 p.m.

The Community Meal is hosted on the second Friday evening of each month at the church at 300 Appleton St. All are welcome to attend, and the meal is completely free of charge. The menu changes

monthly; past meals have featured lasagna, Thanksgiving dinner, corned beef and cabbage, breakfast for dinner, steak sandwiches, and more. Parents must accompany their children. The United Congregational Church of Holyoke is an open and affirming congregation of the United Church of

Christ. We welcome all individuals, regardless of where they are on their journey. If you'd like to learn more about UCCH, please visit our website at [www.uccholyoke.org](http://www.uccholyoke.org), find us on Facebook or Instagram, or call our office at 413-532-1483 Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Guest Column



## Reader seeks clarification of Medicare IRMAA and MAGI

Dear Rusty:

I am confused by an article in my local newspaper which said that Modified Adjusted Gross Income, on which my Medicare Part B premium is based, is my Adjusted Gross Income, plus any non-taxable interest, plus 50% of the social security I received.

The part that is confusing is the 50% part. When I look at my tax return my Adjusted Gross Income includes the taxable portion of my Social Security benefit which, in my case, is 85% of my total benefits. Why must 50% of benefits be added to my AGI if it is already included in my total AGI?

Signed: Confused

Dear Confused:

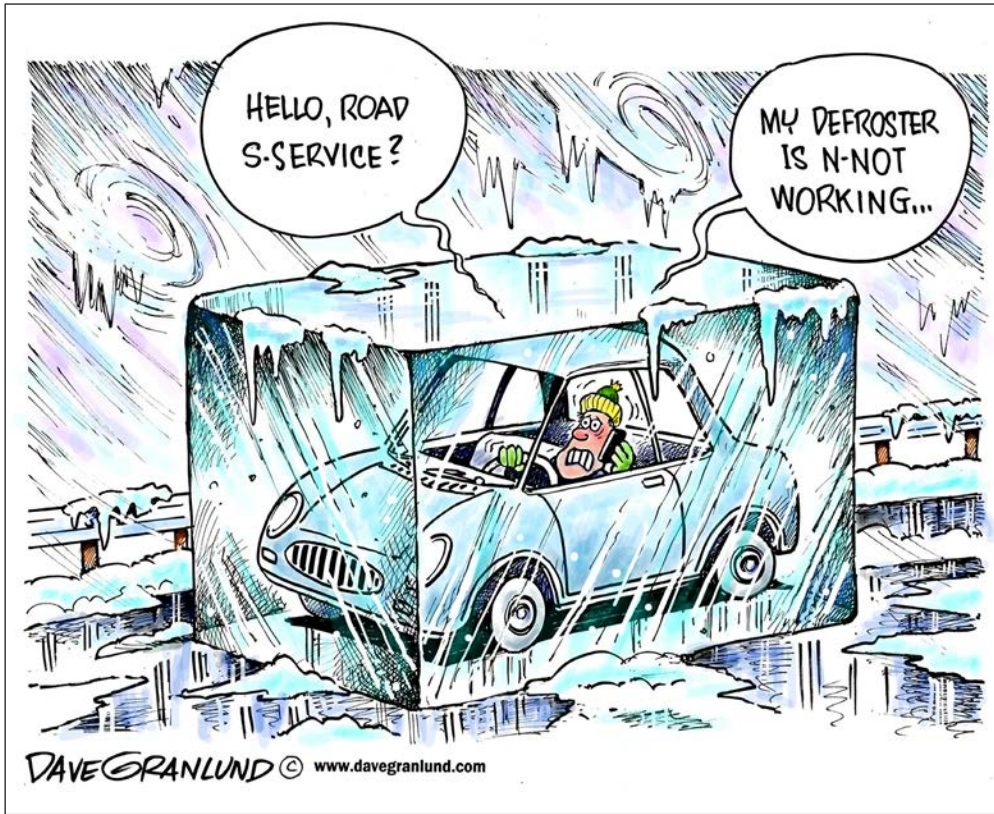
The article you refer to was misleading for stating that the Modified Adjusted Gross Income used to determine your Medicare premiums includes your normal Adjusted Gross Income from your income tax return, plus any non-taxable interest you may have had, plus 50% of the SS benefits you received during the tax year. What the article should have said was that the MAGI, which determines your Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount to your Medicare premiums consists of your normal AGI from your tax return, which includes the taxable portion of your Social Security benefits, plus any non-taxable interest you may have had.

For additional clarity, the Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount is a supplemental amount added to the standard Medicare premium for those with higher incomes. The thresholds at which the IRMAA supplements apply depend on your IRS filing status, and your MAGI determines the amount of supplement which will be added to the standard Medicare premium.

Single filers with MAGI over \$103,000 or married filers with MAGI over \$206,000 will see an IRMAA supplement added to their Medicare premium. Those whose MAGI is under the first IRMAA threshold pay the standard Medicare premium, but those whose MAGI exceeds the first IRMAA threshold above will pay more.

How much more depends on how much their MAGI exceeds the first IRMAA threshold by. The IRMAA supplement (the additional premium amount) could be anywhere from \$69.90 to \$419.30 per month for Medicare Part B (coverage for outpatient services) or an additional \$12.90 to \$81.00 per month to the Medicare Part D (prescription drug plan) premium - again dependent on how much over the initial MAGI threshold the person is for their IRS filing status. You can see the MAGI

See SECURITY, page 5



Guest Column

## Creating a “wow” factor at home



This past week I've been hard at work trying to come up with new and exciting garden ideas for the entrance areas of Old Sturbridge Village.

It's a job I've done for decades now, and maybe I take for granted how cool it is to work for a place that many people visit each year. I want to give visitors something to rave about with my color combinations and plant selections!

Read on, straight from the archives, to bring some of this “wow factor” attitude home to your own landscape.

How often have you visited an outdoor museum, amusement park or resort and felt inspired by the gardens or container plantings used to adorn the property? Chances are you may have even used an especially delightful display as a backdrop for a family photo or two.

Tourist attractions such as these put “their best foot forward” each season of the year to awe their customers with spectacular combinations of unique plants, so that no matter when the visit is planned, the guest leaves with the feeling something special was done in their honor.

We can treat our home gardens in a similar fashion. Why not? Certainly we deserve to have exceptional plantings, for our own enjoyment and for the compliments they will elicit from our friends.

So instead of utilizing border plantings that provide only glimpses of color in the spring, summer and fall, devote entire beds to the showiest plants available for the time of year and change them with the seasons.

These types of gardens don't have to be

very large, but they do have to be situated for optimal effect. Think “location, location, location!”

If you have a long driveway, consider placing a “welcome garden” just as you turn down the path. Since it will be viewed from a distance, and from a single vantage point, make the bed more wide than narrow, and raise the height of the soil in the back of the bed a bit for a multidimensional appearance.

Utilize large, bold flowers, bright colors, and strong foliage forms- these will capture the eye en route.

Which door do you or guests normally use to enter and exit the house? Plant a small garden nearby, one that can be admired up close, each time you pass by it.

Here, the intricacies of color and form can be fully appreciated, whereas in the garden out front they would be lost. Experiment with a variety of flower and foliage shapes and color schemes.

Don't be afraid to use delicate or small flowers, or those that are mottled or two-tone. Likewise, variegated and cut-leaf foliage can make for interesting inspection if properly paired with surrounding plants.

Similar beds or container plantings can be planned for patio or pool-side, or for other areas within the landscape that might be suitable for entertaining. Simply tailor the gardens to the timeframe in which these locations are used most often, and choose your plants accordingly.

Next week we will get into the “nitty-gritty” of each of the three seasons: spring, summer and fall, and how to capture the essence of each in your plantings. You too can have museum quality gardens within your home landscape!

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.

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the Sun  
TEAM



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## Letters to the Editor Policy

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.

## 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 news-

paper plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor's Council during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers.

Candidates who wish to further publicize their candidacy, beliefs and events may contact advertising, 413-283-8393 about paid advertising in The Holyoke Sun.



**SECURITY**, from page 4

levels and corresponding IRMAA supplements by visiting this Medicare website at [www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/2024-medicare-parts-b-premiums-and-deductibles](http://www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/2024-medicare-parts-b-premiums-and-deductibles).

IRMAA and MAGI can be confusing. If people have questions about their Medicare premiums, help is available by emailing [SSadvisor@amac-foundation.org](mailto:SSadvisor@amac-foundation.org) or calling 1-888-750-2622.

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I received an email from a Hampden resident on Dec. 6. She reported a bald eagle perched in tree in her backyard. She said, "The adult bald eagle sat in the tree for a while, then swooped over my house to the north. This was the first time I had a sighting of a bald eagle in my yard."

I saw an adult bald eagle perched in a tree by a field along Route 67 in New Braintree on Jan. 17. It is always a thrill to see an eagle.

The bald eagle is a large 31 inch long dark bird with a white head and white tail. Immature eagles have dark feathers with white mottling on the wings and tail and variable amounts of white on the belly. They keep their immature plumage for four years.

Eagles eat mostly fish and birds. They also will eat carrion and some mammals



Bald eagle

like rabbits. The female lays one to three bluish white eggs in a massive platform nest of sticks and vegetation lined with moss and grasses. These nests are placed on cliff ledge or in the fork of a tree.

Eagles congregate at feeding areas in late winter and early spring. They inhabit coasts, lakes and large rivers. The eagle has a repeated piercing scream given between a pair and a rapid series of chirps given at the nest. Eagle populations are recovering from series declines due to the use of DDT, which caused thinning of their egg shells.

**Bluebirds**

A North Brookfield resident had half a dozen bluebirds at his feeder on Jan. 9. Another Hampden resident reported the bluebirds were back in a Jan. 17 email. He said, "He puts out a container of warm water every morning and puts a scoop of critter food on the ground every morning."

**Great blue heron**

The same Hampden resident with the bluebirds said in Dec. 5 email a great blue heron "has been visiting my fish pond early mornings and late afternoons for the past couple of weeks. It has consumed over 20 goldfish in the three foot deep pond."

**Pine warbler**

A reader some time ago had a bird with a lot of yellow. She identified it as a pine warbler. She said she never had a pine warbler come to her nugget feeder before and she has lived there for 40 years. She also included a photo of a mocking bird sipping sap from a maple tree after the yellow bellied sapsucker made multiple holes in the bark.

**Rescue of iced in loons**

The Loon Preservation Committee

reported, "On Dec. 14, [they] responded to a report from Weare Reservoir (aka Horace Lake) in Weare, New Hampshire. As the reservoir froze, a juvenile loon became trapped in a small (15 foot diameter) hole of open water. Fortunately, the opening was not far from shore and LPC Senior Biologist, John Cooley, was able to make his way out across the newly-formed ice to capture it. LPC staff then evaluated the loon, taking blood and x-rays. No problems were detected, and the loon was released onto the ocean that afternoon." The loon received two bands per leg in a unique color combination that will enable us to identify it if it returns to a New Hampshire lake in the future.

The LPC also reported, "That same night [Dec. 14], we received a call from volunteers on Franklin Pierce Lake. There, too, a juvenile loon was icing-in and with cold temperatures predicted overnight, its situation was not likely to improve. On Dec. 15, LPC staff headed to the lake. The loon was much further from shore than the loon on Weare Reservoir had been, but the ice was solid and we were able to capture the loon. The loon was given a physical examination on site and no obvious problems were detected. Because it was late in the day and we wanted to make sure the loon had plenty of daylight to explore and get acquainted with its new surroundings, we opted to have the loon stay overnight with wildlife rehabilitator Maria Colby of Wings Wildlife Rehabilitation Center. We banded it and released it onto the ocean at Odiorne Point the following morning."

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

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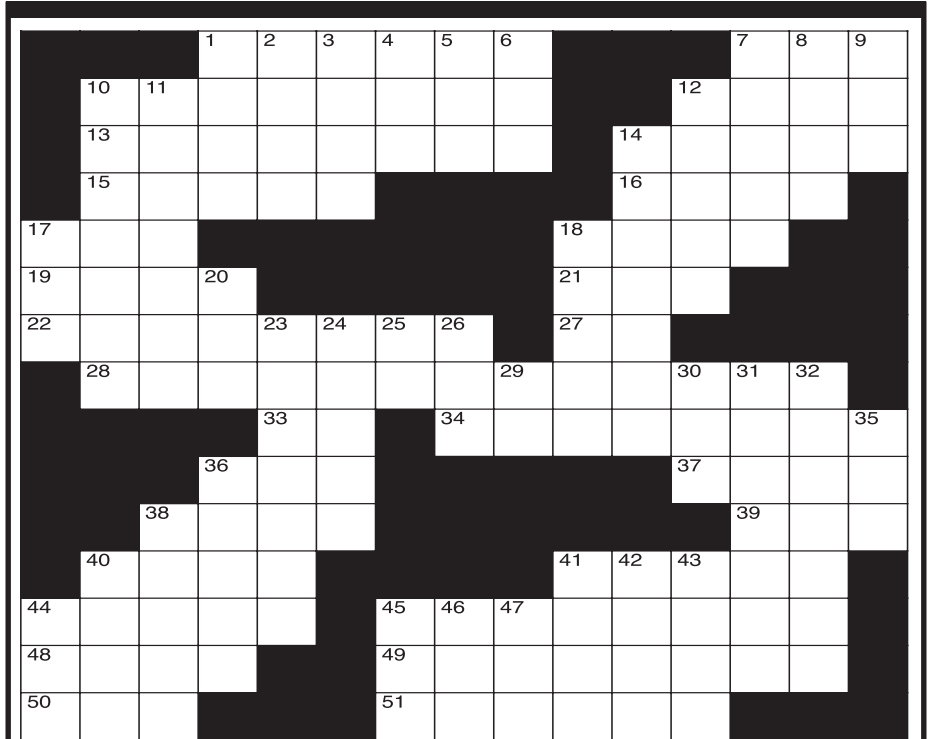


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Monday - Friday: MASS 6:45 a.m.  
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Legal Holidays: MASS 8 a.m.  
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**First Baptist Church**  
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[firstbaptistchurchholyoke@comcast.net](mailto:firstbaptistchurchholyoke@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.

**St. Peter's Lutheran Church**  
Rev. Debora Stein  
34 Jarvis Ave., Holyoke  
Office: (413) 536-3369  
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Monday - Wednesday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.,  
Thursday 2 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. (Call first)  
Worship: Sundays at 9:30 a.m. (also on Facebook Live) & Thursdays at 7 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  
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Sunday: 10 a.m.  
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- |                                     |   |                                       |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>CLUES ACROSS</b>                 | park  | <b>CLUES DOWN</b>                     | director Michael                   |
| 1. Where entertainers perform       | 36. One point south of due east                 | 1. Supreme god of ancient Egyptians   | 23. Criminals who steal            |
| 7. Miller beer variety              | 37. Assist in a crime                           | 2. Nevada city                        | 24. Genus of leaf-footed bug       |
| 10. Ageless                         | 38. Greek mythological personification of Earth | 3. Energy, style and enthusiasm       | 25. Music product                  |
| 12. River in SE Europe              | 39. A major division of geological time         | 4. Bird's beak                        | 26. "Talk to you"                  |
| 13. Able to be repaired             | 40. German courtesy title                       | 5. Language                           | 29. Santa says it three times      |
| 14. Type of wrap                    | 41. English family dating back to Norman times  | 6. Midway between south and southeast | 30. Doctors' group                 |
| 15. Atomic #54                      | 42. Discounts                                   | 7. Punjab village                     | 31. African nation                 |
| 16. Type of tent                    | 43. South American nation                       | 8. Small biting flies                 | 32. Ageless                        |
| 17. U.S. Treasury position          | 44. Former Milwaukee Buck Michael               | 9. Sportscaster Patrick               | 35. When you hope to get somewhere |
| 18. Opposed to                      | 45. Hostile                                     | 10. A way to get around               | 36. Worn                           |
| 19. Protective covering             | 46. Passports and drivers licenses are two      | 11. Repeat                            | 38. Deprives of vigor              |
| 21. Bridge building degree          | 47. Discourages from doing                      | 12. A way to cook with fat            | 40. Used to have (Scottish)        |
| 22. Clouding of the lens            |   | 13. Temporary loss of consciousness   | 41. Where you live                 |
| 27. Priestess of Hera loved by Zeus |   | 14. Reciprocal of a sine              | 42. Muslim ruler title             |
| 28. Unacceptable                    |   | 15. Fir tree genus                    | 43. Basics                         |
| 33. Mr. T's "The A-Team" character  |   | 16. "Transformers"                    | 44. Type of drug (abbr.)           |
| 34. American national               |   |                                       | 45. Spanish soldier                |
|                                     |   |                                       | 46. It precedes two                |
|                                     |   |                                       | 47. Illuminated                    |

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 9

**In The News**

# Dakin Humane Society recognizes long-time employees

SPRINGFIELD – Dakin Humane Society recently honored several current employees who had reached work anniversaries ranging from 10 to 20 years at a team ceremony held at the Springfield nonprofit. The 13 employees were given gift bags that contained, among other items, a personalized zip-up hoodie with the Dakin logo as well as their first names followed by the title “Dakin Legend.”

“We’re so grateful to have so many long-term team members at Dakin,” said Kayla Begnoche, human resources manager. “Shelter work takes more than skill; it takes heart. Every day, our team brings



Dakin Humane Society honors long-time employees.

Submitted Photo

Those team members honored recently are:

**20 Years:**

**Alanna Regan**  
Adoption Center Manager

**15 Years:**

**Betsy Bernard**  
Animal Resource Counselor  
**Eliza Fischer**  
Animal Resource Counselor  
**Dr. Sherri Therrien**  
Spay & Neuter Veterinarian

**13 Years:**

**Rachel Murphy**  
Animal Caregiver

**12 Years:**

**Brenda Forsell**  
Spay & Neuter Clinic Administrator

**11 Years:**

**Abigayle Bogdan**  
Veterinary Technician  
**Meghan Delaney**  
Veterinary Technician  
**Mary Jane McGuire**  
Veterinary Services Manager  
**Megan Tolpa**  
Foster Coordinator

**10 Years:**

**Lee Chambers**  
Media Relations & Development Specialist  
**Debbie Massarelli**  
Finance Coordinator  
**Kayla Thibodeau**  
Veterinary Technician

compassion and dedication, whether they’re working directly with pets and their people, keeping vital programs and services running, handling essential administrative tasks behind the scenes, or collaborating with partner organizations. They have an unwavering dedication to this work, and we’re incredibly fortunate to have staff who bring their whole hearts to it every single day.”

More than 20% of Dakin’s staff have worked for the nonprofit organization for at least 10 years, while 44% were hired five or more years ago. According to Dakin’s Executive Director Meg Talbert, “We are delighted to recognize this incredible group of long-term employees in a special way and look forward to making it an annual tradition to celebrate our newest Dakin Legends. Dakin is a special place and each and every one of our team members, new to the field or legends, give of themselves daily to advance our mission and uphold our core values: integrity, compassion, and innovation.”



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## Polish Junior League offering scholarships

REGION – The Polish Junior League of Massachusetts has announced that it will be awarding scholarships again this year for college students of Polish Heritage.

Scholarships will be awarded to undergraduate students, and one scholarship will be granted to a graduate or returning student. Application informa-

tion and forms may be obtained at [www.polishjuniorleaguema.org/applications](http://www.polishjuniorleaguema.org/applications).

Deadline for receipt of application materials is May 1, 2025.

Selection is based upon financial need and academic achievement.

Applications are available online at [www.polishjuniorleaguema.org/applications](http://www.polishjuniorleaguema.org/applications).

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# SPORTS

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## Knights take care of Putnam

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke High School boys basketball team defeated Putnam last Tuesday 64-52. Holyoke trailed early, but the offense eventually got going and the Knights took the lead and had a strong finish to the game. In the win, Jordan King-Perilli had 24 points to lead the team. Calvin Godbolt had 15 points. Chauncey Ruiz had 14 points. Later in the week, Holyoke suffered a setback on the road at Central, falling 90-70. Holyoke boys basketball is 10-2 on the season and next face Northampton on the road at 7:30 p.m.



Jaycob Andujar attempts a three-pointer.



Calvin Godbolt fights for a layup.



Chauncey Ruiz shoots from the foul line.



Jordan King-Perilli goes for the free throw.



Aden Cabrera gets some air while keeping the ball away from his opponent.

*Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli*

## Knights girls swimming defeats Renaissance

HOLYOKE – It was a dominant win on the road for Holyoke High School girls swimming as the Knights defeated Renaissance 112-16. Adaline Woods pick up the

win in the 200 freestyle as well as the 500 freestyle. Hannah Raymond also had two wins. Holyoke's three relay teams all picked up wins. Kiersten St. Lawrence won the 50 freestyle

for Holyoke. Holyoke girls swimming is 5-1 this season.

Boys swimming, which boasts the same 5-1 record defeated Renaissance 77-52. Ibrahim Salloum and Steven

Plotniak each turned in two event wins.

The Knights were scheduled to face Renaissance against at home this week.



Kylie Blaha hustles down the court.



Evangeline Cauley looks to pass the ball away.



Kiara Perez attempts the three-pointer.

## Central's offense too much for Holyoke

HOLYOKE – Last Thursday night, Holyoke High School girls basketball fell behind 15-4 early, and went on to lose 66-32 against Central High School. In the loss, Kiara Perez had 15 points to lead the Knights. Holyoke is 1-10 this season.



Luz Rivera attempts a three-pointer.



Genesis Rivera fakes, then drives to the hoop.



Michaela Guzman attempts to pull in a rebound.

*Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli*

# Thunderbirds fall in shootout against Providence Bruins

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (18-17-2-2) got a combined eight points from their top line but ultimately fell in a shootout by a 4-3 score to the Providence Bruins (23-13-3-1) last Saturday night before a seventh sellout crowd this season at the MassMutual Center.

T-Birds captain Matthew Peca got the capacity crowd energized just 3:48 into the first period, taking a slip pass from Matt Luff in the high slot and wiring a shot over Brandon Bussi's blocker to give Springfield the 1-0 advantage.

Springfield carried over their strong special teams night on Friday by dispatching the Bruins' lone power play of the first period, but the Providence attack kept pressing the issue. Georgii Merkulov evened the slate at 13:35 with a one-touch finish from just outside the blue

paint, beating Vadim Zherenko upstairs to tie the score 1-1.

Neither team generated much offense in the closing minutes of the period, and the tie game carried into period two, with Providence outshooting Springfield 10-6 in the opening 20 minutes.

The Bruins vaulted to their first lead just 1:59 into the second period when Frederic Brunet found a home with a point shot off a faceoff play, making it 2-1. The T-Birds had a golden chance to get back in the game as they went to a 4-on-3 power play shortly after the Brunet tally, but Bussi and the Providence penalty killers held the fort.

Later in the frame, with Providence on a power play, Ian Mitchell rocketed a one-timer past Zherenko, and the visitors' lead grew to 3-1 at 11:04 of the frame.

In desperate need of a spark, Peca and the top line provided one at 15:32 when the captain entered the zone and lifted a shot over the net. Fortunately enough, the puck careened right to the side of the goal, where MacKenzie MacEachern jabbed it through Bussi to bring Springfield back to within a goal, 3-2. With the good fortune, the veteran winger picked up his fifth goal in his last nine games.

On the very next shift, MacEachern and Peca were at it again, with the captain spotting MacEachern behind the net, and the winger blindly throwing a perfect pass in front of the goal to Luff, who mashed it home before Bussi could position himself and, thanks to two goals in just 18 seconds, the game was tied, 3-3, heading into the third.

Springfield kept pressing in the final

period, but Bussi and the top defensive squad in the AHL kept the home side from gaining the advantage. Zherenko was also up to the challenge, stopping five shots in the third, including a dangerous close-in chance for Fabian Lysell in the dying minutes.

3-on-3 overtime proved to be a showcase of the two netminders' skills, as Bussi and Zherenko traded spectacular saves during the frenetic five-minute frame. Each team had four chances to ice the game, but thanks to the goalies, a shootout would be needed.

Merkulov ultimately made the difference, beating Zherenko in the opening round of the skills competition, while Bussi turned away Tanner Dickinson, forced Luff to hit a post, and then stonewalled Dalibor Dvorsky to earn the extra point for Providence.

## Worcester's point streak ends in loss at Maine Mariners

PORTLAND, Me. – Worcester's eight-game points streak, second-longest in team history, ended here Friday night via a 4-2 loss to the Maine Mariners. The Railers fell behind very early, eventually trailed by 3-0, and were never able to summon the energy to come all the way back.

"I thought they were flat," coach Nick Tuzzolino said. "I thought they were emotionless in the first period. It was not my favorite game with that group."

The defeat was part of a bad standings night for Worcester. Two teams trailing them in the battle for the fourth playoff spot both won. Maine closed to within five points of Worcester and has three games in hand. Reading, suddenly very hot, also won.

The Royals are 5-0-1 in their last six games. They are just one point behind Worcester. Both teams have played 40 games.

Griffin Luce and Jordan Kaplan had the Worcester goals. Luce's was his fifth of the season, extending a career high.

Jacob Hudson, Tristan Thompson, Owen Pederson and Nick Jermain scored for Maine. Hudson made it 1-0 a mere 67

seconds into the game as the Railers got off to a tentative start.

Once again a Railers game was stagnated by goal reviews. There were two. Both went against Worcester. One was an overturn of a floating shot by Kaplan that went over goalie Maine goalie Ryan Bischel's glove with Griffin Loughran in front in the first period.

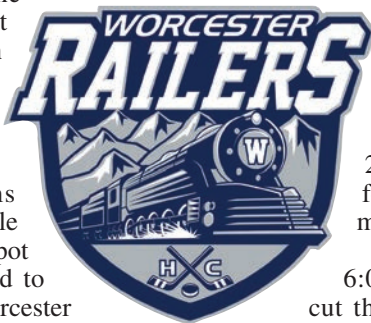
Right after that, Thompson scored a power play goal that looked like Michael Bullion was interfered with. That goal held up.

It was a game of hard feelings. There were 23 penalties called good for a combined total of 84 minutes, a season high.

Luce's goal came at 6:07 of the third period. It cut the Maine lead to 3-1 and was scored only 21 seconds after Pederson's goal. Kaplan scored on a pretty wraparound at 14:40 for the game's final goal.

Bischel got the win as he stopped 27. Bullion made 28 saves for Worcester.

Recent Railers games have been overrun with goal reviews and it really takes away from the flow and momentum. Worcester's last eight games have averaged 2 hours, 37 minutes. That is well above standards from past seasons.



## Jack Baldwin to take part in modified tour this season

Tommy Baldwin Racing announced Wednesday that Jack Baldwin will pilot the historic 7NY in over 20 Tour-Type Modified events during the 2025 season.

The bulk of the races will come on the SMART Modified Tour - as Baldwin will compete in the full 14-race calendar driving the 7NY. Jack has two SMART Modified Tour starts to his credit, scoring 5th and 8th place finishes in 2024.

Jack will also compete in the Tour-Type Modified events at New Smyrna Speedway's World Series of Asphalt Stock Car Racing from February 10-14, along with end of the season events at Riverhead Raceway (Islip 300) and Wall Stadium Speedway (Turkey Derby). Additional events may be announced at a later date.

Jack is the reigning 602 Modified champion at New Smyrna and has

multiple 602 Modified wins. In 2025, he will chase his first career Tour-Type win.

"Jack has run select events the last few years but we're excited to have him a full season in the Tour-Type Modifieds to continue to gain experience and refine his skills behind the wheel," team owner Tommy Baldwin Jr. said. "He will be running against stout competition in every race he runs."

"I'm definitely excited to get the chance to race on the SMART Modified Tour full-time," Jack said. "Watching the series the last few years, you can tell the racing is tight and the competition is unlike anything else when it comes to Modified racing in the south. Driving the 7NY and working with our family team all year will be special. Excited to kick it off with Speedweeks at New Smyrna."

## How to contact the Sports Editor

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

## RESOLUTION, from page 1

you take to a national stage, where the world is watching, and you make such a disgusting joke about a people, culture, the island from where we come from," Anderson-Burgos said. "We've had enough of those jokes."

Anderson-Burgos pointed out that the United States is a country full of different people and cultures and that someone who represents the country should not allow such a joke to be made.

He also brought attention to how harmful these kinds of jokes can be to the people they are about, especially the children of different cultures, backgrounds or groups.

"Growing up I heard enough jokes about Puerto Ricans," Anderson-Burgos said. "They're not funny, especially to a child growing up in a city like Holyoke...when you're growing up and your people are being made fun of, it really does some damage to that child. You start looking at yourself differently."

Fellow committee member and Councilor Patti Devine agreed with Anderson-Burgos' statement.

"I remember listening to that that night and it was despicable," she said. "I

don't care that it was a comedian."

With this in mind, the DGR committee unanimously supported the resolution and sent it to the city council for their approval.

During the council meeting, Councilor Kocayne Givner made it clear that she thoroughly supported this resolution.

"I thought it was very helpful and very important to the times," Givner said.

Devine agreed that the resolution was key, and she believed that any Holyoke community member could get behind it.

"Many of our parents many, many years ago...saw 'no Irish need apply,' so this has got to stop," Devine said.

It was with this sentiment in mind that Devine called for a roll call vote for the councilors to approve this resolution, so the city council could show their support.

The council agreed to the roll call and they unanimously voted to support this resolution.

"I'm happy with the result that the city council did the right thing and that we don't tolerate this behavior in this city," Anderson-Burgos said.

## VICE CHAIR, from page 1

help ensure that the community feels confident in their schools, especially as they work to transfer out of receivership.

As the school committee works on preparing to transfer out of receivership, Rivera-Colón has identified deciding how to select a superintendent as one of their top priorities.

The committee has been working on deciding how to evaluate and hire a superintendent, and Rivera-Colón plans to continue so the committee can solidify what they want in a superintendent and what the timeline should be for hiring one. She also wants to ensure that the community's thoughts are heard throughout the process.

"We have a community advisory team and we have an outside vendor facilitating those conversations so we can learn about how to better approach the community and what things people think should be the qualities and characteristics of our new leader," Rivera-Colón said.

The school committee is also working on learning how to best bud-

get for the district and to learn the other aspects of finance.

"We have had the opportunity to contribute information to the budget in the past, but this time it was a more formalized approach where the receiver got out feedback for the budget," Rivera-Colón said.

The final large goal Rivera-Colón mentioned is the process of looking at all of the school committee's policies.

"Ellie Wilson and the policy subcommittee have been doing a huge overhaul of all our policies," Rivera-Colón said.

The school committee wants to ensure that all of their policies are up to date and will be what is best for the city.

As the school committee goes through this work, Rivera-Colón encourages anyone in the community to reach out if they have ideas, questions or concerns.

They are welcome to come to a committee meeting and participate in the public comment section or they can email or call one Rivera-Colón at 787-557-7122 or [yriveracolon@hps.holyoke.ma.us](mailto:yriveracolon@hps.holyoke.ma.us).



**City of Holyoke  
PUBLIC HEARING  
NOTICE**

Pursuant to MGL Chap. 131 §40 and the Holyoke Wetlands Protection Ordinance, the City of Holyoke Conservation Commission will hold a Public Hearing on **Thursday, February 13th, 2025, at 6:15 p.m. remotely via Zoom** at <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83520771903> on a Notice of Intent filed by R Levesque Associates, Inc. on behalf of the Applicant, Antonio Olivera for the clearing of trees in order to install a fruit orchard and other agricultural purposes at 0 Mountain Rd (MBP 190-00-011). The proposed project includes work within the Buffer Zone to Bordering Vegetated Wetland.

Signed,  
Jeffery Horan, Chairperson  
01/31/25

**City of Holyoke  
Notice of Public Hearing**

The Holyoke License Board will be holding a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, February 5, 2025, at 5:15 pm.** You can join via Zoom.com; ID: 83974921923 CALL IN: \*67 646 558 8656, or in person at City Hall Annex 20 Korean Veterans Plaza Room 403 regarding the application for a **Transfer of an On-Premise All Alcohol License for F&M Hideaway, Inc. DBA Schermerhorn's Seafood Restaurant**, at 224B Westfield Road pursuant to M.G.L. Ch.138.

Applicant:  
F&M Hideaway, Inc.  
License Board:  
Jose Correa, Chairman  
01/24, 01/31/2024

**City of Holyoke  
PUBLIC HEARING  
NOTICE**

The Holyoke Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.** via Zoom.com; ID: 836-3939-8493; CALL IN \*67 646 558 8656 to hear, pursuant to the Holyoke Zoning Ordinance, a Large Scale BESS Site Plan Review (Sec 10A); Holyoke Landing Modification (File 144-B), submitted by Amanda Henry/Convergent Energy & Power, LLC to be located at 44-54 Holyoke Street, Holyoke MA (117-00-005A).

A complete copy of the application may be seen in the Office of Planning and Economic Development at 20 Korean Veterans Plaza, 8:30 am-4:30 pm, M-F.  
APPLICANT: Convergent Energy & Power, LLC, Amanda Henry  
PLANNING BOARD:  
Mimi Panitch, Chairperson  
01/24, 01/31/2025

**City of Holyoke  
PUBLIC HEARING  
NOTICE**

The Holyoke Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.com**; ID: 836-3939-8493; CALL IN \*67 646 558 8656 to hear, pursuant to the Holyoke Zoning Ordinance, Special Permit to Exceed Fence Height in a front yard (Sec 4.6.3.2); Proposed Parking Lot Repaving (2025-2), submitted by 740 High Street, LLC c/o Mark Rehbein to be located at O High Street, Holyoke MA (009-03-001).

A complete copy of the application may be seen in the Office of Planning and Economic Development at 20 Korean Veterans Plaza, 8:30 am-4:30 pm, M-F.

APPLICANT: 740 High Street, LLC c/o Mr. Mark Rehbein  
PLANNING BOARD:  
Mimi Panitch, Chairperson  
01/24, 01/31/2025

**City of Holyoke  
PUBLIC HEARING  
NOTICE**

The Holyoke Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.com**; ID: 836-3939-8493; CALL IN \*67 646 558 8656 to hear, pursuant to the Holyoke Zoning Ordinance, Special Permit for an Increase in Sign Size (Sec 6.4.6.4); Whiting Farms Laundromat Signage (2025-3), submitted by Chuck's Sign Co to be located at 2217-2291 Northampton Street, Holyoke MA (116-00-005)(115-00-016).

A complete copy of the application may be seen in the Office of Planning and Economic Development at 20 Korean Veterans Plaza, 8:30 am-4:30 pm, M-F.

APPLICANT:  
Chuck's Sign Co  
PLANNING BOARD:  
Mimi Panitch, Chairperson  
01/24, 01/31/2025

**Holyoke Community  
Preservation Act Committee  
Notice of Public Meeting**

The Holyoke Community Preservation Act Committee will hold a public meeting on **Wednesday, February 12th at 6:00 pm over zoom.** The committee will be making their recommendations to the City Council for funding. The public is invited to offer their input. For the zoom link, please city the city website calendar page <https://www.holyoke.org/calendar/> or email CPA Administrator Naomi Klayman at [klaymann@holyoke.org](mailto:klaymann@holyoke.org).  
01/31/2025

**Request for Proposals  
RFP 2025-26DPW  
Issue date January 23, 2025  
FACILITY OPERATION  
AND MAINTENANCE  
FOR WASTEWATER  
TREATMENT PLANT,  
COLLECTION,  
STORMWATER, CSO,  
FLOOD CONTROL  
SYSTEMS AND  
INDUSTRIAL  
PRETREATMENT  
PROGRAM FACILITIES**

The City of Holyoke's Department of Public Works is soliciting proposals for a Treatment Facilities Contract Operator to provide full-service operations and maintenance of the City's Wastewater Treatment, Collection, Stormwater, CSO, and Flood Control System, and Industrial Pretreatment Program as an independent contractor to the City.

The Request For Proposals (RFP) is issued under the provisions of the laws, including statutes, ordinances, resolutions, and rules, of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the City, invites qualified firms to submit their Proposals to provide the services described.

The City's objectives for the contracted operation and management of its wastewater collection and treatment system include providing the City with professional, cost-effective operations of the plant, collection system, stormwater, flood control operations, and all related assets that meet or exceed industry standards, comply with all permits, anticipate future needs, and effectively respond to both threats (emergencies) and opportunities.

Subject to approval by the City, the contract term is (10) years plus one additional five-year optional extension, which will be mutually agreed upon.

Copies of the RFP may be requested electronically from the Director of Public Works, Carl Rossi, through Mr. Christopher Dunphy, serving as the designated contact person at [dunphyc@holyoke.org](mailto:dunphyc@holyoke.org).

RFP documents will be available starting January 23, 2025 after 10:00 AM EST. SEALED PROPOSAL SUBMISSIONS ARE DUE NO LATER 2:00 PM EST on MARCH 27, 2025. **No late submissions will be accepted.** Technical Proposals & Price Proposals MUST be in separate envelopes. No electronic submission allowed. The City reserves the right to reject any and all submissions at its discretion.

NOTE: The City will conduct a **mandatory** pre-proposal meeting and tour of the facilities on February 12, 2025. All proposers interested in attending must email the designated contact to confirm

attendance by 4:00 PM EST on February 10, 2025. This meeting is mandatory to allow for questions and clarifications concerning the City's RFP process, the scope of services, and the subsequent award of the contract. A walk-through tour of each facility will be held immediately following the meeting.  
01/31/2025

**City of Holyoke  
Notice of Public Hearing**

The DGR Committee of the Holyoke City Council will hold a public hearing to hear a special permit application of F & M Hideaway, Inc to reconstruct and renovate Schermerhorn's Restaurant and retail store per sec 4.7.3 at 224 Westfield Road (157-00-072). Hearing will take place on **Monday, February 10, 2025 at 6:30 pm** at Holyoke City Hall 536 Dwight St and can be accessed remotely via [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us) Meeting ID 852 6455 1161 Meeting Passcode 477688 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 Jeffery Anderson-Burgos at [Anderson-BurgosJ@holyoke.org](mailto:Anderson-BurgosJ@holyoke.org) or by phone 413-322-5525.

DGR Chair  
Kocayne Givner  
01/24, 01/31/2025

**City of Holyoke  
INVITATION TO BID  
2026-21W  
Bids Due  
March 6, 2025  
by 2:00PM**

The City of Holyoke invites Bidders to submit sealed Bids for 2025-21W - Sealed bids for Wistariahurst Retaining Wall Rehabilitation (Rebid), Holyoke, MA, which includes: rehabilitation of a section of historically significant masonry retaining wall on Pine Street. The project consists of mapping the existing masonry wall stones as they are in place, removal of wrought iron fence and coping, deconstructing the existing masonry wall and marking each stone with unique identification, staging and storing the wall stones on site, earthen excavation to subgrade, construction of a steel-reinforced cement concrete strip footing, reconstruction of the masonry wall with exact stone per location in bed of mortar, perforated pipe subdrain, clean out, free-draining crushed stone backfill, geosynthetic reinforcing in horizontal layers, backfill with compaction, fine grading, reinstall coping and wrought iron fencing, loam and seed, 5-foot wide hot-mix asphalt sidewalk, drain manhole, ADA com-

pliant cement concrete curb ramps with detectable strips including several cement concrete panels, temporary security fencing, temporary traffic control signs and lane or road closures, and clean up. The project is anticipated to include 150 linear feet of continuous wall rehabilitation and sidewalk replacement from the intersection of Pine Street and Hampshire Street, northward along Pine Street.

The bidder Contractor shall be MassDOT, Highways Division, Prequalified in the classes of work, DRAINAGE and HIGHWAYS-SIDEWALK and CURBING. The bidding and award of the Contract shall be in full compliance with Section 39M inclusive of Chapter 30 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as last revised. This project shall also comply with Sections 39F, 39K, 39N, and 39O of Chapter 30 of the General Laws of Massachusetts as last revised.

Bids will be received at the City of Holyoke, Office of Procurement, 536 Dwight Street, Room 3, Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040 until March 6, 2025 at 2:00PM EST and publicly opened at that time.

Copies of bid documents may be obtained by emailing Victoria Houle, Assistant City Engineer, at [houlev@holyoke.org](mailto:houle.v@holyoke.org).  
01/31/25

**LEGAL NOTICE  
CITY OF HOLYOKE  
GAS & ELECTRIC  
DEPARTMENT  
HG&E LNG VAPORIZER  
REPLACEMENT**

Sealed bids for the above contract will be received by Holyoke Gas & Electric Dept. until **2:00 p.m., February 28, 2025**, at the Office of the Manager, 99 Suffolk St, Holyoke, MA 01040, at which time the bids will be publicly opened and read.

**Bid Deposit:**  
A bid deposit equal to 5% of the total value of the bid must accompany all bids and may be in the form of a certified, treasurer's, or cashier's check payable to HG&E from a responsible bank or trust company; cash; or a bid bond from a licensed surety payable to HG&E.

**Prevailing Wage Rates:**  
Rates, which are to apply to the work, are set by the Mass Dept of Labor & Industries.

Additional information may be obtained from:  
Chi Wong  
Holyoke Gas & Electric Dept  
99 Suffolk St  
Holyoke, MA 01040  
[cwong@hged.com](mailto:cwong@hged.com)  
(413) 536-9308

The right is hereby reserved to reject any or all bids, or to accept any bid that in the opinion of the Manager may be in the best interest of the City of Holyoke.

Please mark sealed envelopes **"Bid for HG&E LNG Vaporizer Replacement"** and address them to:

**James M. Lavelle, Manager**  
Holyoke Gas & Electric Dept  
99 Suffolk St  
Holyoke, MA 01040  
01/31/2025

**City of Holyoke  
PUBLIC HEARING  
NOTICE**

The Holyoke Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, February 11, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.com**; ID: 836-3939-8493; CALL IN \*67 646 558 8656 to hear, pursuant to the Holyoke Zoning Ordinance, a Site Plan Review Amendment (Sec 10); Holyoke Landing Modification (File #144-C) and Special Permit Amendment (Sec 6.1.7); Holyoke Landing Telsa INC (2025-1), submitted by Telsa INC, Ed Noseworthy to be located at 12-44 Holyoke Street, Holyoke MA (117-00-005).

A complete copy of the application may be seen in the Office of Planning and Economic Development at 20 Korean Veterans Plaza, 8:30 am-4:30 pm, M-F.

APPLICANT: Telsa INC, Ed Noseworthy  
PLANNING BOARD:  
Mimi Panitch, Chairperson  
01/24, 01/31/2025



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# Habitat for Humanity introduces new virtual program

HOLYOKE – Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity is thrilled to introduce its newest virtual program, “Habitat Home School.” Get it, “home” school.

Habitat Home School is a monthly interactive online class that teaches its participants how to become financially ready to apply for Greater Springfield Habitat’s homeownership program. The inaugural class “Building Strong Credit” will be held in English on Wednesday, Feb. 12, at 5 p.m.; and Tuesday, Feb. 18, at 5 p.m. for Spanish speakers. There is no cost to attend, but registrations are required. To sign up for the English class, visit: bit.ly/40CmjRS. For the Spanish class, register here: bit.ly/4avadNC

“I would like this series to be a pre-application course so people are more

prepared from the financial review aspect of the application process,” said Olga Callrigos, GSHFH Homeowner Programs coordinator and the creator of this project. “It’s not mandatory, but highly recommended as it’s a positive stepping stone for anyone interested in homeownership and it’s definitely a good idea to attend all of them so there is no missed information.”

Each Habitat Home School session will last one to two hours and tackle a different topic each month. Attendees should expect to participate in engaging activities and ask questions.

The courses will be taught by Operation HOPE representatives. Operation HOPE is a nonprofit that offers financial literacy, coaching, and advocacy

for low and moderate-income individuals and communities.

GSHFH is a housing ministry dedicated to strengthening communities by empowering low-income families to change their lives and the lives of future generations through homeownership and home repair opportunities. This is accomplished by working in partnership with diverse people, from all walks of life, to build and repair simple, decent, affordable housing. Habitat’s mission to provide homeownership opportunities to low-income families is unique as we offer a hand up not a hand out, requiring partner families to work alongside the community they will live in. GSHFH has helped roughly 100 local families realize their dream of homeownership over the last 38 years.

For more information, contact Olga Callrigos, Homeowner Programs coordinator, at callrigos@habitatsofspringfield.org or (413) 739-5503 x1003.



## The Artery to feature Dr. Caballer Arce

HOLYOKE – The Artery is thrilled to invite the community to a Gallery Opening Reception celebrating the vibrant and thought-provoking works of Dr. Gloria Caballer Arce, a renowned artist, educator, and community leader. The event will take place on Saturday, Feb. 1, from noon to 3 p.m. at the Artery, 289 High St.

Caballer Arce, a retired Springfield School District educator with over 30 years of service, has dedicated her retirement to artistic exploration. Her exhibition, “Astonishing Inspirations,” showcases her diverse creative journey, featuring an array of paintings, prints, and her signature jewelry.

This collection highlights her mastery of geometric shapes, bold lines, and intense colors while reflecting her deep engagement with themes of politics, spirituality, and

the human condition.

Born in Brooklyn, NY, and a proud graduate of SUNY Binghamton and UMass Amherst, where she earned her Doctorate in Bilingual and Multilingual Education, Caballer Arce has long been a cornerstone of the Holyoke and Springfield communities. She co-founded the Latino Scholarship Fund at her kitchen table and continues to inspire through her art and advocacy.

This special reception offers a unique opportunity to connect with Dr. Caballer Arce, explore her artistic vision, and celebrate her contributions to both the arts and the community. Guests will enjoy light refreshments and the chance to experience a collection that bridges personal expression and universal themes.

For more information, please visit Facebook Event Page.

## Sensory Friendly Sunday Fundays

HOLYOKE – Wistariahurst Museum is delighted to welcome friends and families into the halls once a month for Sensory Friendly Sunday Fundays. Starting on Feb. 9, the halls will be open to guests to stop by and enjoy from noon to 3 p.m. for an afternoon of fun activities. Discover the wonders of the first floor at Wistariahurst Museum and explore each captivating room, beginning with the elegant marble lobby and continuing to the enchanting music room, all while utilizing our informative guide pamphlets in English and Spanish.

Throughout the first floor, guests of all ages can interact with activities curated with our friends with sensory sensitivities in mind. Our music room will be filled with fun gross motor activities that will get everyone hopping, moving, and excited with hula hoops,

hopskotch, bounce balls, and so much more! Throughout the first floor, children will be able to interact with fine motor activities, puzzles, and board games to engage with and enjoy.

Staff are on the lookout for Winston the Wisty Lion and need help. Winston is sleeping somewhere in the museum, but we can’t find him. During a self-guided tour, keep eyes open for the lethargic, little lion.

The Sensory Friendly Sunday Fundays provide an excellent opportunity for families with sensory sensitivities to experience the museum in a relaxed environment at their own pace. Wistariahurst is thrilled to host these monthly open hours, allowing families to explore, discover, and connect with the museum. This is why these events will be free and accessible to the public for all to enjoy.

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### HELP WANTED

#### ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR

**Council on Aging for the Town of Oakham is seeking an experienced Activities Coordinator.** Miscellaneous duties to include supporting current programs and developing new programs to increase attendance and participation of the growing aging population in the Oakham Senior Center. Up to 12 hours per week (flexible) \$20.00/hr. depending upon experience. Resume should be sent to [Admin@Oakham-Ma.gov](mailto:Admin@Oakham-Ma.gov), or mailed to **Board of Selectmen, Town of Oakham, 2 Coldbrook Road, Oakham, MA 01068.**

**COA COORDINATOR** for Town of Westhampton. Description available online at [www.westhamptonma.gov](http://www.westhamptonma.gov). Applications accepted until position filled.

**HAMPDEN POLICE DEPARTMENT** is now accepting applications for a **FULL-TIME police officer.** Review of applications begins immediately. Visit [www.hampdenpolice.com](http://www.hampdenpolice.com) for more information. EOE

#### TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

**Middlefield, MA.** Part-time, ~960 hrs/yr, \$36-40,000 range. Email resume+ cover letter highlighting strengths/ flexibility to Administrative Assistant: [middlefield.assistant@gmail.com](mailto:middlefield.assistant@gmail.com)

### HELP WANTED

#### TOWN OF BARRE

##### Cemetery Clerk

The Town of Barre is seeking qualified applicants for the part-time position of Cemetery Clerk. This position is approximately 10 hours per week and the minimum hourly rate is \$15.00/hour and the maximum hourly rate is \$18.02/hour. A full job description is available upon request. Applicants must have HS Diploma or GED, with a minimum of two to three years’ experience in office setting, or equivalent combination of education and experience.

Interested applicants should submit a letter of interest to: **Tammy Martin, Town Administrator, 40 West Street, Suite 697, Barre MA 01005** or [townadmin@townofbarre.com](mailto:townadmin@townofbarre.com).

For further information, please contact the Board of Selectmen’s Office at (978) 355-2504 x135. A.A. / E.O.E.

**WILBRAHAM UNITED CHURCH** is hiring a sexton three evenings, 7-10 hours per week, \$16 per hour. Additional compensation for hours needed for weddings and funerals.

Please send resume to [admin@wilbrahamunitedchurch.org](mailto:admin@wilbrahamunitedchurch.org)

More information found at [www.wilbrahamunitedchurch.org/about-us-2/](http://www.wilbrahamunitedchurch.org/about-us-2/)

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## Obituary

### Gerald “Gerry” LaVerne Paist

Gerald LaVerne Paist (“Gerry”) passed away peacefully at Harrisburg Hospital on January 24, 2025. He was a resident of Country Meadows Mechanicsburg since April 2024.

Born in Williamsport, PA, Gerry was the son of Thomas Holland Paist, Jr. and Ethel Ann (Hubbell) Paist. He grew up in Willow Grove, PA and attended the Upper Moreland School District, where he graduated Valedictorian of the class of 1957.

Gerry was very active in Scouting and attained the rank of Eagle Scout. During his senior year, Gerry was selected to tour Europe with the World Friendship Organization. While there, he visited 18 European countries and received the Queen’s Scout Badge, the highest award in English Scouting.

Following high school graduation, Gerry earned a B.S. in Mathematics from Lafayette College and Masters and Doctoral Degrees in Educational Administration from Harvard University.

After teaching Mathematics at Stoneham and Framingham School Districts, Gerry served as Assistant Dean of Westfield University in



Massachusetts. He then became the Superintendent/ Director of Pathfinder Regional Vocational Technical High School, where he served for 47 years. Currently he is the longest running School Superintendent in the United States.

Gerry will be remembered lovingly by his sister, Susan Hubbell Whyte (Howard) of Carlisle, niece, Kimberly Eshbach Barger (Chad) of Mechanicsburg and grand nephews, Alec Barger and Chase Barger. Burial will be private at West Laurel Hill Cemetery in Bala Cynwyd, PA.

The family would like to thank Country Meadows Mechanicsburg and UPMC Harrisburg for the excellent care given to Gerry. Also, the family would like to express their gratitude to Greg Salois, Eric Duda, Jim Jyz, Dan Whaley, Scott Moynihan, Mark Moynihan and Tim Moriarty for their ongoing support and friendship.

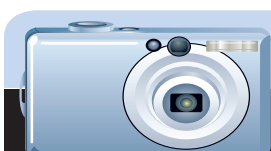
Memorial donations can be sent to: Pathfinder Vocational Technical High School, 240 Sykes Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

Services will be private and at the convenience of the family.

**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 and may include a photograph. Death Notices & Paid Obituaries should be submitted through a funeral home to: [obits@turley.com](mailto:obits@turley.com). Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

### DEATH NOTICE

**PAIST, GERALD “GERRY” LAVERNE**  
Died Jan. 24, 2025  
Burial will be private at West Laurel Hill Cemetery Bala Cynwyd, Pennsylvania



Send Us Your Photos!

Email: [thesun@turley.com](mailto:thesun@turley.com)

## In The News



Marisah Helems, also known as DJ PRL, got the audience excited to sing with a performance of her own.



Families gathered in Holyoke Public Library to enjoy the karaoke party.



River Matos performed a beautiful rendition of "Love is an Open Door".



Sophie Miller enjoyed singing a variety of songs in other languages at the Holyoke Public Library karaoke party.

*Turley photos by Quinn Suomala*

### KARAOKE, from page 1

The library has many more fun plans and programs lined up throughout the month of February.

Teens are welcome to come to the library every Monday at 4 p.m. for a game night. They can also come by on Thursdays at 4 p.m. for a craft afternoon.

Additionally, the library is planning to begin some adult movie nights. The

first one is planned on Feb. 18 beginning at 4 p.m. If adults want to vote on the movie, they can come by the library to submit their ballot.

There is also an adult chess club that happens every Tuesday from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

To keep updated on all of the different programs the library offers, go to their website at <https://www.holyokelibrary.org/>.

### Dream Designers ignite STEM creativity

**HOLYOKE** – Join us for exciting and interactive STEM activities designed to ignite curiosity, creativity and critical thinking in children 2.9 to five years old and their families. Explore, experiment and discover the wonders of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math through hands-on experiences.

**Location:** Tuesdays at H.B. Lawrence Elementary School, 156 Cabot

St., Holyoke  
Thursdays at Szetela Early Childhood School, 66 Macek Dr., Chicopee

**Time:** 4 to 5 p.m.  
**Dates:** Tuesdays: Jan. 28 through March 11 and Thursdays: Jan. 30 through March 13

Children must attend with an adult. To learn more, call Shane at 413-310-1632.

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<p><b>#4</b> One Party Size Cheese Pizza, 20 Buffalo Wings &amp; 2 Liter Soda <b>\$43.50 +Tax</b></p>	<p><b>#16</b> Large 1 Topping Pizza, Small Cheese Calzone, 2 Liter Soda &amp; 10 Wings <b>\$42.50 +Tax</b></p> <p style="text-align: right; color: red; font-weight: bold;">FAMILY SPECIAL</p>

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<p><b>#10</b> One Large 1 Topping Pizza, 20 Wings &amp; FREE 2 Liter Soda <b>\$39.99 +Tax</b></p>	<p><b>#14</b> One Medium 1 Topping Pizza, 10 Wings &amp; FREE 2 Liter Soda <b>\$29.99 +Tax</b></p>

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# CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

I wanted to let you know that it has been a pleasure working with you. I couldn't be happier with the experience of you guiding me while I purchased my dream home.

From start to finish, you were professional, knowledgeable, and incredibly attentive to my needs. What stood out the most was your dedication in doing everything you could to get the perfect home for me. You were always available to answer any questions, no matter how big or small. You guided me through every step of the process, from viewing the home to making an offer, and finally, closing the deal.

One of the things I appreciated the most was your ability to make the entire process feel smooth and stress-free. You went above and beyond to ensure everything was handled efficiently and effectively. I always felt like I was top priority, and that level of care made all the difference.

Thanks to you Maureen, I am now in my dream home and I couldn't be more grateful. If anyone is looking for a realtor who is knowledgeable, trustworthy, and truly cares about their needs, I would highly recommend you. You will make their home-buying experience a positive and memorable one, just like you did for me!

- Cheryl S.



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