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Warming centers available

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – Holyoke activates the warming centers in the city whenever temperatures reach the negatives or when there are wind chills in the negatives.

These shelters are activated to provide the unhoused population with a place to sleep and keep warm in dangerous, and even potentially lethal, temperatures.

The warming centers are made possible thanks to Holyoke's partnership with Providence Ministries, which also runs Kate's Kitchen.

"It is a partnership we have with Providence Ministries that we were able to get off the ground our first year here," Garcia said.

When the warming shelters are open there are announcements on local news, phone lines and city websites. Additionally, the local police outreach teams will work to spread the word.

The city worked hard to gather the phone numbers of those who are on the streets that

See WARMING, page 6

HHS wows with 'Lord of the Flies'

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke High School Theater Company put on a wonderful performance of Lord of the Flies on the weekend of Feb. 7.

This play was chosen by the Director Bevan Brunelle, who thought it would be a good challenge for the high school actors.

"It was a really great challenge for our actors," Brunelle said. "We have several seniors graduating this year, so having them take on this challenge before they go to college and possibly not do any more theater was really important to me."

The theater company has been focusing on adaptations of different books throughout this year. Their first performance was Miss Nelson is Missing and Brunelle thought Lord of the Flies would be an interesting addition to their adaptation theme.

"It is one of those classic novels that students have been typically taught in school," Brunelle said. "It is no longer part of the curriculum but I wanted to expose the students of HHS to it."

The heavy nature of the play allowed each of the actors to explore new sides of themselves and develop a new skill set. Each of them learned to embody their character to help bring the play to life.

The actors enjoyed getting a chance to work with this new style of play.

"It was very out of comfort zone acting," Gabriella Cayo (who



The children explored a hill on the island they had crashed on.

Turley photos by Quinn Suomala

played Bill) said. "Now to play a character who is surviving off of a pig with other kids and going insane, is a very big jump. I think it was really nice because it allowed me to speak more and feel more confident."

Each of the students put hours of their time into preparing for this performance.

"In the beginning it was slower, about 10 to 12 hours per week but then when the season starts to pick up and we hit the full dress rehearsals and the tech week...it shoots up to about 30 hours a week," Cian Callahan (who played Jack) said.

They worked hard to learn about each of their characters so they could embody them on stage. Brunelle was proud of all the work each of the students put in.

"They really embodied their characters very well," Brunelle said. "Everybody has risen to the occasion for this."

The students also enjoyed the time they spent together in rehearsals. They found it to be a good way to make new connections.

"I enjoyed making new friends," Elisabell Maldonado (who played Perceval) said.

Additionally, for several of

the actors it was their senior year, so they were proud to watch this play come together as their final play at HHS.

"This is three to four years of theater coming together into our last hurrah," Callahan said. "So seeing the progression of that was interesting."

All the actors encourage people who are interested in theater to come out and give it a try.

"Just do it," Callahan said. "If you are nervous about starting or you don't know if you'll be good..."

See HHS, page 12

Community asks for backyard hens

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – Recently, City Councilor Patti Devine filed an order asking Holyoke to amend its laws around backyard hens.

Multiple Holyoke community members came forward during the city council meeting on Feb. 4 to ask that the councilors consider this order.

They believe that backyard chickens could make a big difference in sustainability and food affordability in Holyoke.

The community members brought forth the main issue for the rising prices of eggs in stores. They argued that hens could help more community members to afford this food item.

"The price of eggs has skyrocketed and this would be a great time to introduce this," Libby Hernandez said.

"It is a simple, affordable way to help families deal with high food prices, food insecurity and sustainability," Megan Hernandez said. "Fresh food is getting harder to afford and many families in Holyoke struggle with food insecurity and few hens could make a huge difference by providing a steady supply of fresh, healthy eggs."

Additionally, they mentioned that raising hens to lay eggs would be more sustainable than purchasing store bought eggs.

"Raising hens is more sustainable than buying store bought eggs," Megan Hernandez said. "Hens eat food scraps, reduce waste and their eggs don't come with all the pollution of mass production and transportation."

Moreover, they brought forward that raising chickens could help to teach children in Holyoke



A Holyoke City Councilor is looking to make backyard hens legal.

responsibility and the benefits of growing or raising your own food.

"It creates an educational component for our children to correlate the growing of food and taking care of hens in the backyard and bringing that to the table," Libby Hernandez said. "That is a really great component to it."

"Fresh food is getting harder to afford and many families in Holyoke struggle with food insecurity and few hens could make a huge difference by providing a steady supply of fresh, healthy eggs."

- Megan Hernandez

They teach kids responsibility, hard work and where our food really comes from," Megan Hernandez said. These community members also addressed potential concerns around the potential noise and mess that could come from raising chickens.

"The complaints I have heard from people are, 'those Puerto Ricans and their dirty chickens, they are going to make a mess,'" Jose Gonzalez said. "If we make a mess, deal with it then, let the Board of

Health deal with it, but for the most part that is all uninformed bias."

"Hens are quiet, quieter than dogs and they don't smell if properly cared for," Megan Hernandez said. "With the right rules in place, concerns about noise and cleanliness wouldn't be an issue."

Furthermore, these community members mentioned that there are other communities in the area that have allowed backyard chickens without any issue.

Springfield, Chicopee, Northampton and Agawam all allow community members to raise backyard chickens.

Overall, these community members believe that this ordinance change could be very beneficial for the people of Holyoke.

"It is good for families, good for the environment, and good for the community," Megan Hernandez said.

The community members hope that the Board of Health will consider this and support their efforts moving forward.

The city council will discuss this matter at a future ordinance committee meeting, and residents are encouraged to continue tuning in and bringing forward their opinions on this issue.

FinComm approves new demo supervisor position

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – The finance committee discussed hiring a property maintenance and demolition supervisor to save the city funds around demolition.

The supervisor would be able to take charge of demolition jobs in the city when the property owner is unreachable.

"If we had a demolition supervisor on staff, it would cut our demolition costs in half," Building Commissioner Leslie Ward said. "At least, that is my estimate."

The demolition supervisor would be able to go out with a crew from the DPW and do the work to take down potentially dangerous buildings.

This would prevent the city from having to pay an outside contractor to do the work, which would cost significantly more.

City Councilor Michael Sullivan emphasized how crucial this position could be for the city. He brought forward examples of dilapidated buildings in the city, such as one on Cabot Street and another on Main Street, and how a supervisor could prevent such problems.

"Over the last couple of years we have slid backwards again and we have a dozen buildings like this," Sullivan said. "We really need to take the steps to get this funded and as Leslie pointed out, the savings to the city will be enormous."

City Councilor Kevin Jourdain brought forward concerns that adding this position would cause the city to give people free demolition.

"I will certainly hope that we are not going to run around taking on other people's demo projects and letting landlords hand the bill to Holyoke taxpayers," Jourdain said.

Ward made it clear that this would not be the case.

"I agree with you, we are not in the business of just giving away free demos," Ward said. "That is certainly not what we plan to do."

Jourdain and other members of the committee brought up concerns about how the city would pay for the salary of the position.

"Some of us are concerned that this is just going to be another job added to the budget or is there going to be some other money somewhere else that we are going to save something to cover for this job?" Jourdain asked.

Currently, the city is planning to draw money from the vacant building revolving fund to pay for the position for this year.

Vacon agreed that this was plausible and asked that the city continue to cover the cost using the revolving fund in future years in addition to this year.

It is possible that this fund will not be enough to cover the salary, and if that is the case the city will look for other options so that the money will not be added to the levy.

"It [the revolving fund] is not guaranteed to have that money there," Garcia said. "That would probably be the only concern. However, there are ways to explore and be creative in covering it...It is definitely worth continuing to explore and have a conversation on and see where it goes."

Ward estimates that the annual salary for this position will be between \$65,000 and \$75,000.

She is also hopeful that, should she be approved to begin to search for this position, she would have someone selected and hired in about a month.

With these facts, the finance committee voted to approve the creation of this position. The final decision to approve was made at the city council meeting on Feb. 4.

Annual battle of the bars getting ready to rumble Feb. 28

HOLYOKE – The St. Patrick’s Committee of Holyoke will hold the fifth annual Battle of the Bars bartending event at the Holyoke Knight of Columbus Council 90 to fundraise for the Committee to offset the costs of the bands and entertainment on Parade Weekend. The event will be held Friday, Feb. 28, from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. The event will feature one bartender from each of the Bars listed below. They will battle each other to see who can raise the most tips for donations to the Parade. In addition to one final winner, each round will have a cash prize winner.

Event Chair Kelly McGivern says, “We are so excited to have these six amazing bartenders and establishments back again for another fun-filled year. With Holyoke and South Hadley a part of the Holyoke Regional Committee, we are beyond lucky for all of the support of everyone who comes out each here to kick off our green season and support us.”

This event information is as follows:



- 6 - 7 p.m. { **Donovan’s Irish Pub** - with Trista Kasperowski
Pic’s Pub & Pizzeria - with Matt Dulude
- 7 - 8 p.m. { **JP’s Restaurant** - with Mary Kate Glasheen
Halfway House Lounge - with Colleen Flanagan
- 8 - 9 p.m. { **Griffin’s Cafe** - with Ashleigh McNulty
Francie’s Tavern - with Chy Clemens

The event is open to the public and encourages them to support their favorite bar, bartender, and the Holyoke St. Patrick’s Day Parade. The 2024 winner was Trista Kasperowski with Donovan’s Irish Pub. More information on the event can be found on the website: holyokestpatricksparade.com/events/2025-battle-of-the-bars.

Dobbin Tartan party on March 1

HOLYOKE – Kick off the start of March and Parade Season by getting decked out in your favorite Holyoke tartan.

This seventh-annual event celebrates the retirement of Dobbin, the horse from the Yankee Pedlar to the Holyoke Merry-Go-Round.

All funds raised at the event go to support the St. Patrick’s Committee of Holyoke and their annual Parade Weekend. Come pick up new and favorite tartan items at this exclusive event.

Tickets for this event will only be sold at the door. They are \$5 per person or \$10

per family, cash or check only. Admission includes unlimited rides on the merry-go-round, face painting, hair braiding, glitter designs, crafts, and a photo booth.

There will also be a raffle, the White Hut food truck, and beer and wine will be available for purchase.

For more information, please visit our website at www.holyokestpatricksparade.com.

The 72nd Holyoke St. Patrick’s Parade will be held on Sunday, March 23, and the 48th Holyoke St. Patrick’s Road Race on Saturday, March 22.



Holyoke Art receives \$20,000 Flexible Funding grant

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Art is thrilled to announce that it has been awarded a \$20,000 Flexible Funding grant from the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts for 2025. This vital funding will support Holyoke Art’s mission to foster creativity, collaboration, and cultural enrichment within the community.

A portion of this grant, along with other funds raised, has been committed to unlocking a MassDevelopment Collaborative Workspace grant. Thanks to the incredible generosity of private donors and the Florence Bank Foundation, Holyoke Art successfully reached its \$15,000 fundraising goal, enabling it to unlock the full \$30,000 needed to fit out the Print Shop makerspace and classroom at 62

Main Street. This funding will allow the Print Shop to acquire new computers and state-of-the-art printing technology, including a direct-to-film printer and other essential equipment. The Print Shop will serve as a dynamic hub for artists, designers, and entrepreneurs, providing access to professional-grade tools and fostering a vibrant creative ecosystem. Holyoke Art extends its deepest gratitude to the private donors and the Florence Bank Foundation for their generosity and commitment to the arts. Their contributions have been instrumental in reaching this milestone and making the Print Shop expansion a reality.

The remaining CFWM Flexible Funding grant will support Holyoke Art’s operational costs, ensuring the continued success of its ini-

tiatives, including the ARTery gallery and marketplace at 289 High St. The ARTery serves as a platform for local and regional artists to showcase and sell their work, strengthening the creative economy in downtown Holyoke. Additionally, funds will support placemaking and programming projects, such as La Plaza, an innovative vacant lot activation project at 400 High St., aimed at transforming underutilized spaces into vibrant community gathering places. Holyoke Art extends its deepest gratitude to the private donors and the Florence Bank Foundation for their generosity and commitment to the arts. Their contributions have been instrumental in reaching this milestone and making the Print Shop expansion a reality.

Girl Day 2025 at City Hall

HOLYOKE – Girls Inc. of the Valley will host Girl Day 2025 at City Hall on Feb. 20 as part of Engineer Week. The focus of the day is to inspire and empower girls to explore STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) fields through hands-on activities, mentorship, and educational experiences.

Girl Day aligns with DiscoverE’s nationwide initiative to spark interest in engineering and encourage young girls to imagine their futures in these impactful careers.

Girl Day will start at 11 a.m. with a tour of City Hall and a gathering in the City Council Chamber where speakers will make brief presentations.

Mayor Joshua A. Garcia will read a proclamation. There will be a flag-raising followed by lunch.

According to Girls Inc., women are underrepresented in STEM careers.

Girl Day provides young girls with opportunities to see themselves as future engineers, scientists, and innovators.

By feeding their interest early and providing supportive role models, the organization states, “we help pave the way for a more diverse and inclusive STEM workforce.”

For more information please call 413-335-0059.

Children’s Museum offers special school vacation week

HOLYOKE – Children’s Museum at Holyoke is open and ready to foster learning and curiosity in children. The Museum’s engaging exhibits and interactive programs are designed specifically for young learners and it has become the go to spot to escape the cold, have some fun, and explore an educational environment outside of the classroom setting.

This year the Museum is excited for children (and adults alike) to spend school vacation week exploring the exhibits and enjoying special vacation programs with an extra whole day to do so. The Museum is traditionally closed on Mondays but thanks to the support of The Highland Street Foundation they’ll be open on Presidents’ Day, Monday, Feb. 17 and they’ve provided free admission all day.

In addition to the incredible exhibits at the Museum including the newest Paw & Play and the automotive technician center, the

week will be filled with eight days of exciting programming. Every day has an offering of activities that are free with the price of admission and run by the Museum team with a special schedule of different local artists and organizations.

While all events are free with admission, folks can support the Museum and their future programming with donations. Museum admission can be purchased on the Museum’s website to skip the lines or in-person. Tickets are \$8 per person for general admission, \$3 per person with EBT (up to 4 people per card), and Museum members are free.

Don’t miss the big finale with a free to enter LEGO competition for the whole crew. With three age categories and three styles of bricks the Museum will provide each patron with a supply bag to build a super creation, visitors will have the opportunity to make their

voice heard by voting for their favorites. The top builds by popular vote from each category will take home a brand new LEGO set tailored to their age

“We’re so excited to stay open and bring our community together while schools are closed! With plenty of family-friendly activities and exhibits at the Museum to connect kids with their community and the individuals within it, we’re especially proud to offer these events at an accessible price point,” shares Emme Geryk (she/her), Programming Coordinator at The Children’s Museum at Holyoke.

For more information about The Children’s Museum at Holyoke and a full schedule of school vacation week programs, please visit the Children’s Museum at Holyoke’ website and/or follow them on Facebook and Instagram.

COLLEGE NEWS

Clark University’s 2024 fall Dean’s List

WORCESTER – Stephen J. Gibbons, of Holyoke, was named to second honors on the Clark University Dean’s List. This selection marks outstanding academic achievement during the fall 2024 semester.

Hibernians to hold traditional 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.

HOLYOKE – Saint Jerome Parish located at 169 Hampden Street in Holyoke is once again hosting a Novena to Saint Patrick beginning on Sunday, March 9 and concluding on Monday, March 17.

Nine priests from throughout the Diocese will be serving as the celebrants of the Novena Masses.

All are invited to attend. Information about Mass times and celebrants may be obtained by contacting the Parish Office at 413-532-6381.

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United Congregational serving Polish food

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 dessert. 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 fea-

ured 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, 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.



Mall releases 2024 Community Impact Report

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Mall today released its 2024 Community Impact Report that highlights the results of the Center’s collaboration with Western Massachusetts non-profit community organizations over the past year. The Community Report is now available at Holyoke Mall Community Impact Report 2024.

In 2024, the Holyoke Mall hosted almost 200 non-profit events and partnered with over 30 local organizations that utilized

the Center for meeting space, fundraising, and awareness campaigns.

In addition to the record number of events, Holyoke Mall also welcomed an increase in visits for 2024, at 7.9 million. Guests traveled from all over New England, the Northeast, and even from Florida, South Carolina, Virginia and Arizona.

“We are honored to partner with non-profit organizations throughout the Pioneer Valley to help them make a dif-

ference,” said Kristen Hinckley, Marketing Director at Holyoke Mall. “Thank you to our partners in the community for continuing to allow us to help support their mission. We’re proud to have such a thriving hub in Western Massachusetts.”

Holyoke Mall continues to solidify its reputation as both a community cornerstone and as the premier shopping, dining and entertainment destination of the Pioneer Valley. We are pleased to work with all not-

for-profit organizations looking to benefit from the center, whether for a tabling opportunity, for fundraising and awareness campaigns, or to host a large event in the common area, our doors are always open. Together, we can make a difference.

Holyoke Mall event space and tabling are FREE for non-profit use. Groups are asked to fill out and submit the required paperwork at <https://www.holyokemall.com/community/>.

Free family fun in February

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Mall’s renowned Tykes program is back with a winter makeover. Introducing Holyoke Mall’s Tykes: Winter Break Edition—an exciting week filled with free events and activities, running from Monday, Feb. 17 to Friday, Feb. 21.

Tykes: Winter Break Edition will be held from 11 a.m. to noon in Macy’s Court, with the exception of the Teppanyaki Experience, which will be held at Sumo Japanese Steakhouse. The Swiftie Dance Party will also have some extended time, with a session from noon to 1 p.m. as well.

The schedule for the week will be:
Feb. 17: Swiftie Dance Party with Something Royal Party Company (Attendees must be registered prior to event.)

Feb. 18: The Teppanyaki Experience at Sumo Japanese Steakhouse (Attendees must be registered prior to event.)

Feb. 19: Story Time and Craft with Macaroni Kid and Belchertown PD Comfort Dog.

Feb. 20: Law Enforcement Day: Meet

& Greet with Hampden County Sheriff’s Office.

Feb. 21: “Living Dragons” with Riverside Reptile Education Center.

The program is free, open to the public, and is best suited for children ages 12 and under. Registration is required for the events on both February 17 and 18 and is encouraged for the rest of the week. Families can register at <https://www.holyokemall.com/tykes-winter-break-edition-2025/>. Everyone that attends the event will also be given an exclusive list of discounts to be used that day.

In addition to the free week of events, Altitude Trampoline Park is also excited to welcome customers for school vacation week in their recently reopened space with two brand new attractions. Free Style Duo is an exciting game with digital scoring and sound effects that test a player’s speed, agility, and reactions, and the AeroTower is a fun moving target trampoline game, where players of all skill levels can compete against each other. Another new attraction called Strike Arena, an adventure arena and indoor playground, is expected to open soon.

WestMass ElderCare announces name change to Access Care Partners

Rebrand Reflects Growth and Commitment to Care

HOLYOKE – After five decades of dedicated service to older adults, individuals with disabilities, and caregivers across Western Massachusetts, WestMass ElderCare is proud to announce its new name—Access Care Partners—effective today. The rebrand marks a significant milestone in the organization’s history, emphasizing its commitment to providing inclusive, person-centered care and support.

The organization’s new website, www.accesscarepartners.org, is now live, offering enhanced accessibility, resources, and information about available programs and services.

For 50 years, WestMass ElderCare has been a trusted resource in the community, delivering home care services, meals, care management, and other essential programs that empower individuals to maintain dignity and independence in their home and

community. With this rebrand, Access Care Partners reaffirms its mission to break down barriers to care and foster partnerships that promote healthy, fulfilling lives.

“This new name reflects who we are today and where we’re headed in the future,” said Roseann Martocchia, Executive Director. “As Access Care Partners, we remain dedicated to supporting older adults, individuals with disabilities and chronic conditions, and their caregivers with compassion and expertise.”

The rebrand includes a fresh look, updated messaging, and expanded outreach efforts to ensure that the organization continues to meet the evolving needs of the communities it serves. Consumers and partners can expect the same high-quality services, now with a renewed focus on access and collaboration.

For more information about Access Care Partners and its programs, please visit www.accesscarepartners.org or contact Lynn Wolf at lwolf@accesscarepartners.org or 413-538-9020 x 329.

HCC to recognize Black History Month with jazz celebration

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College will continue its recognition of Black History Month on Wednesday, Feb. 12, with “Rhythms Through Time: A Celebration of Jazz” in the Campus Center cafeteria.

Starting at 11 a.m., HCC jazz professor and guitarist Robert Ferrier will lead a discussion about the history of jazz and a performance by the HCC All Stars band, featuring HCC music students.

The HCC event is part of a month-long series of events at HCC highlighting this year’s national Black History Month theme: “African Americans and Labor.”

On Tuesday, Feb. 18, at 12:30 p.m., HCC will host a watch party for a Zoom presentation by UMass graduate student Tiamba M. Wilkerson: “Voices of Solidarity: on Black Union Participation.” Wilkerson is a PhD student in sociology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst whose research focuses on the intersections of race and gender in the labor market, racial capitalism, neoliberal urban redevelopment and gentrification, as well as race and place in the South.

On Wednesday, Feb. 26, HCC will host a Harambee Celebration at 11 a.m. in the HCC Campus Center. Harambee is a Swahili word that means “pull together” or “unite.” It’s a celebratory event that

honors the contributions and achievements of Black people. HCC’s event will feature food, music, as well as an open mic session.

“At a time when conversations about equity, inclusion, and justice are more important than ever, celebrating Black History Month allows us to uplift voices that have historically been marginalized,” HCC’s Black Leadership Council and Black History Month Committee, said in a campus-wide email. “Recognizing and honoring these histories is not just about the past, it’s about shaping a future that embraces diversity, fosters understanding, and empowers all members of our community.”

In addition, HCC’s Marieb Adult Learner Success Center is hosting weekly book readings, accompanied by milk and cookies in the Parent Learning Center (Frost 269) for student parents and their children: Feb. 12, 2 p.m. (All Because You Matter by Tami Charles); Feb. 20, 12:30 p.m. (Black is a Rainbow Color by Angela Joy); Feb. 26, 2 p.m. (Sulwe by Lupita Nyong’o).

Also, on Friday, Feb. 21, at 12:30 p.m., HCC will host a Black History Month-themed trivia contest in the HCC Campus Center.

To learn more about Black History Month months at HCC or to participate remotely, please go to: hcc.edu/bhm.

Habitat for Humanity hosting open house

WEST SPRINGFIELD – Join us Feb. 19 for an inspiring and interactive open house hosted by Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity. Whether you’re curious about our mission, eager to get involved, or just want to learn more about how we build stronger communities, this is the perfect opportunity.

The fun begins at 5:30 p.m. at East Forest Park Library, 136 Surrey Road, Springfield. Free refreshments will be served as well as a Q&A session. Reserve a spot today: bit.ly/4jwNo0i

“Discover how you can make a difference,” said Olga Calligos, GSHFH Homeowner and Programs coordinator. “Whether you want to swing a hammer, donate, or simply spread the word, there’s a place for everyone in our Habitat family.”

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 Calligos, Homeowner Programs coordinator, at calligos@habitatsspringfield.org or (413) 739-5503 x1003.



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Irish Night in Holyoke 2025

IN MEMORY OF DANIEL P. CURRAN TO BENEFIT THE MAURICE A. DONAHUE MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Night will Feature The Keohane And Kenneally Irish-American Band

Additional Entertainment by The Cassin School of Irish Dance & Matt O'Connor of The Springfield Kiltie Band

and A Corned Beef & Cabbage Dinner with Ribs

AVISO PUBLICO PARA LOS EX-ESTUDIANTES DE EDUCACION ESPECIAL DE LAS ESCUELAS PÚBLICAS DE HOLYOKE

Favor informarse que los archivos de estudiantes de Educación Especial (Capítulo 766) con fecha de retiro dentro del año 2016/2017, serán destruidos el 28 de Febrero de 2025. Si desea obtener una copia de sus archivos, favor de comunicarse con las:

Escuelas Públicas de Holyoke, Departamento de Educación Especial Calle Suffolk # 57, Holyoke, MA 01040 Tel: 413-534-2000 ext. 1209

Este aviso no concierne los archivos actuales de Educación Especial. Este aviso no concierne las transcripciones del estudiante bajo 603 MCR 23.06

PUBLIC NOTICE TO FORMER HOLYOKE PUBLIC SCHOOLS SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

Please be advised that student’s Special Education (Chapter 766) records, with a withdrawal date within the year 2016/2017 will be destroyed on February 28, 2025. If you wish to obtain a copy of your records, please contact the:

Holyoke Public Schools, Special Education Department 57 Suffolk Street, Holyoke, MA 01040 Tel: 413-534-2000 Ext. 1209

This does not pertain to current Special Education Student’s records. This notice does not pertain to student’s transcripts Which are dealt under 603 CMR 23.06

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22 2025 | **At the LOG CABIN 500 Easthampton Rd. Holyoke, Mass.**

Doors Open 5PM • Dinner 6:30PM
\$50 Per Person (advanced Reservations Required)
Valet Parking

www.aoh-holyoke.com

Tickets or table reservations available until February 18, 2025 by calling Joe O’Connor @ 413-627-7148 or Fran Hennessey @ 413-785-5687 or online at eventbrite.com

“Tis the event of the season! Happy St. Patrick’s Day to all!”
Presented by The Ancient Order of Hibernians, James A. Curran Division One and The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians Division Two of Hampden/Hampshire Counties



Guest Column

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters
By Russell Gloor



Why was Social Security money moved to the General Treasury?

Dear Rusty
Why were the Social Security funds moved from the Social Security account to the General Fund with the government?
Is it not then called a tax making it an entitlement? That then gives the government control of our retirement. Most of us feel that someone should be in charge and use the Social Security fund with investments that grow our savings.
I invested my 401,000 and savings and the original amount made me money during the Trump years and I'm now trying to catch up. I make this statement because I draw more from my investments than I receive from Social Security.
Signed: Questioning Senior Citizen

Dear Questioning Senior:
I'm afraid I must inform you that no Social Security funds have ever been moved from the Social Security account to the government's General Fund; this is a pervasive myth which we have refuted many times over the years. For information, here is one of many articles I have published on this topic, which I hope you find interesting: <https://socialsecurityreport.org/ask-rusty-about-repaying-social-security-money-taken-by-politicians/>.

Someone actually is charged with monitoring our Social Security funds, a board of Social Security Trustees consisting of the Secretaries of Treasury, Labor, and Health and Human Services, as well as the Commissioner of Social Security plus two Public Trustees. Each year the Social Security Trustees do a complete analysis of the Social Security program, especially its financial status and outlook for the future. If you have interest in the Trustee's latest annual report, here is a link to the 2024 analysis: <https://socialsecurityreport.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/tr24summary.pdf>.

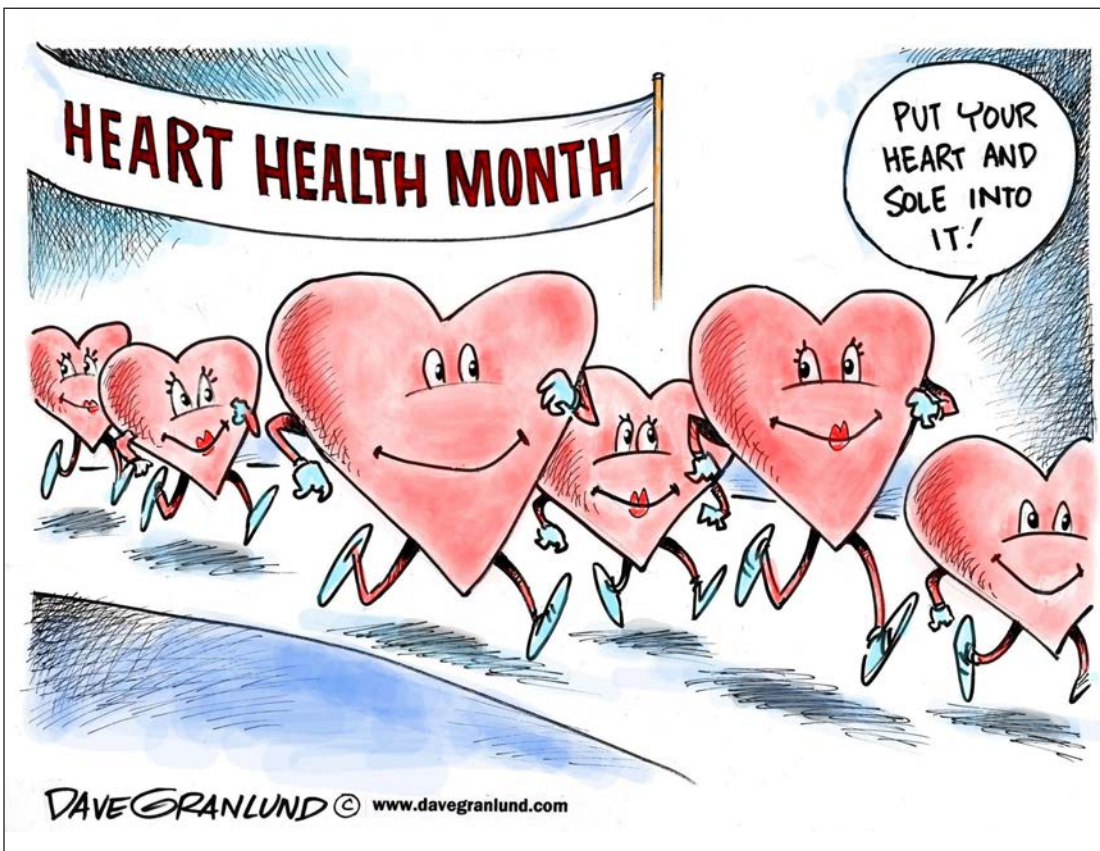
What you will find in the Trustees' report is that Social Security will run out of reserved funds in about 2033, necessitating an across the board cut of about 21% for everyone, unless Congress acts soon to reform the program and restore it to fiscal solvency. The Trustees have warned Congress about this problem for many years, but Congress has yet to find the bipartisan cooperation needed to fix the problem.

Association of Mature American Citizens has steadfastly offered proposals to Congress, which would restore Social Security to solvency and will continue to do so with the new 119th Congress, which convened on Jan. 3, 2025.

Please know that we appreciate your feedback and commend you for the wise use of your 401k investments, something that many of our members find necessary to supplement their Social Security. Remember, Social Security was never intended to provide all your retirement income, so earlier saving to supplement your retirement financial needs was a very wise move on your part.

The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadviser@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

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Guest Column

Roses or carnations, you choose!

in the Garden
by Roberta McQuaid



With St. Valentine's Day coming up, my thoughts turn to flowers.

I am not a "rose girl" so to speak. It is probably because I am frugal and roses cost an arm and a leg this time of year.

Get me a carnation and I am happy. They don't bend at the neck or pick you with thorns. They even smell nice, to me the fragrance is that of cloves.

So this will be a combo column. First, it will give our rose lovers out there the best chance of keeping their admirer's big investment healthy for the longest possible time. Then, I will do the same for the humble carnation.

Perhaps you will be the lucky recipient of roses on Friday. I have a couple tricks up my sleeve to help you increase their vase-life. First, remove the roses from their box and give each one a fresh cut on a forty-five degree angle.

If you can do this under water, all the better to prevent what I call "bent head" or "limp neck" syndrome- an air bubble clogging the stem.

You should also remove any foliage that will be underwater - it will rot and make the water stinky and full of bacteria. Leaves on the top third of the stem can remain as long as they look pretty; unbeknownst to me, these will continue to photosynthesize, making food to help the rose color up to its full potential.

We all have had a few "bent heads" or "limp necks" in our day - a shame, considering how expensive roses are, especially when purchased on a holiday. If you catch this situation early there is a way to remedy it: recut the stem of the rose or roses in question and soak them horizontally, under water for a half-hour or so.

This technique is contrary to what one might think is good for a many-petaled flower. I would argue that water trapped within the petals would breed fungi and shorten vase-life, but I guess if the rose is doomed to the fate of a bent head, it's worth a shot. Regular folks have tried it in the bathtub and have been successful.

How about those carnations? They aren't as

fussy as their more expensive counterparts, but here are a few helpful hints. Recut their stems to just above a node (the bump where leaves come from) and place in floral preservative.

If you don't have floral preservative, you can make your own. Here is a recipe that, just like the professional blends, contain the three necessary components for fresh flower health and longevity: carbohydrates, a biocide and pH adjuster.

- 1t sugar
- 1t bleach
- 2t lemon or lime juice (strained)
- 1 quart water

Alternate version:

- 1-12 ounce can decaf lemon/lime soda
- 3 cans water
- 1T bleach
- Mix and stir to flatten

Each of these preservatives should be stored in the refrigerator with contents labeled.

Sometimes, carnations come very tightly budded. If you want them to open quickly, without waiting days, you can up the sugar content in the preservative to force bloom.

Do expect that you won't get to enjoy them as long in the vase if you do this, though, since their energy will be spent.

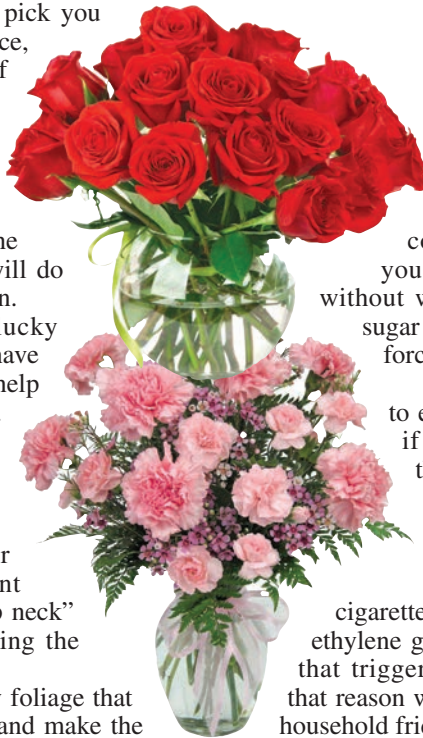
Cut flowers are sensitive to ethylene gas, and carnations are especially sensitive.

Rotting foliage, ripening fruit, cigarette smoke and exhaust all release ethylene gas, which acts like a hormone that triggers maturation and death. For that reason we avoid storing flowers in the household fridge.

I had my own firsthand experience. I had arrangements to make at work, but had jury duty the day they were needed. I made them a day early and cleared out one of the coolers. Wouldn't you know it that someone put an apple inside without my knowing. Sure enough everything was ruined.

Whether you are a rose lover or a carnation lover, or enjoy any flower in between, I hope that you either treat yourself, or are treated by someone else, either on St. Valentine's Day or sometime soon!

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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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 newspa-

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

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



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A day in the life: Never a dull moment



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

People often ask me what a patient advocate does. Truly, when my phone rings I never know what the day might bring. But if I have done my job, by the time my head hits the pillow, I will have made someone's life better or their hospital stay safer.

Let me walk you through a day in the life of a patient advocate.

Morning

I receive a call from a senior health-care industry professional with a referral for a man who is struggling to care for his wife, who has Alzheimer's. Dementia is hard not only on the person who has it, but on their loved ones who are determined to care for them. It can be a lonely existence.

This man needs support because

he wants to keep his wife safe at home, meaning he will need to find 24-hour care. In addition, he is suffering from caregiver stress and has health challenges of his own. It seems also that a new neurologist is needed to get a fresh set of eyes and a new evaluation of his wife's condition.

One of our nurses will follow up with this couple after I share their story and initial priorities of care.

Then, a community member calls regarding an elderly neighbor who has been in the hospital for several weeks and is having complications that come with prolonged hospitalization.

People who are hospitalized for days or weeks at a time may suffer sleep deprivation and disorientation, which can complicate their recovery.

The neighbor is concerned that the man is not receiving the care he should, but I explain that we cannot legally help unless we are formally retained and have the individual's or family's permission to act as their representative.

In addition, the man has a wife at home with dementia and no family around to help out.

We plan to have a call this afternoon to discuss having one of our nurse advocates going to assess the patient's situation and make sure his wife is well cared for in his absence.

Afternoon

I prepare for a panel discussion presented by the National Association of Healthcare Advocacy Consultants.

Two sisters contact me about their father, who is experiencing complications following what was supposed to be a straightforward surgical procedure. When they tell me his story, I realize that the proper standard of care is not being met. Because of the trauma he is experiencing, the patient is also displaying disturbing psychological symptoms for which he is being (unnecessarily as it turns out) medicated.

The sisters tell me that they have tried to speak to the medical staff but don't feel they are being heard. Meanwhile, they are terrified of losing their dad.

Patient advocates are often able to dial back the drama and get the situation sorted because we understand patient rights as well as the hospital's perspective and can try to work out a win-win for all concerned. I schedule a visit to the hospital. Later, if this family receives a bill from the hospital, I will work to make sure they don't pay a penny.

Evening

I get a call from a former client whose sister had a massive stroke four years ago, and now the insurance company is saying she no longer qualifies for placement in a skilled nursing facility. There has been frag-

mented communication among the physicians, therapists and family.

The family wants me to appeal the insurance company's decision and gather documentation that will allow the sister to be approved for further long-term care, therapy and high-tech care for her needs. While waiting for documents, I speak with the woman's daughter to formulate a plan.

Finally, I update presentations for our Nurse Advocate Entrepreneur training program and speak with two nurses who are eager to sign up and start their own advocacy businesses. From their hospital experiences, they can see that families need a great deal of help these days navigating the health-care landscape.

My days aren't always this busy, but every day reminds me of the significant impact I can have on someone's life, health and well-being. It's worth it, to be sure.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of Northshore Patient Advocates LLC (NShore). She is also founder and CEO of Nurse Advocate Entrepreneur, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. Teri offers a free phone consultation to newspaper readers as well as to nurses interested in becoming advocates. Reach her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com.

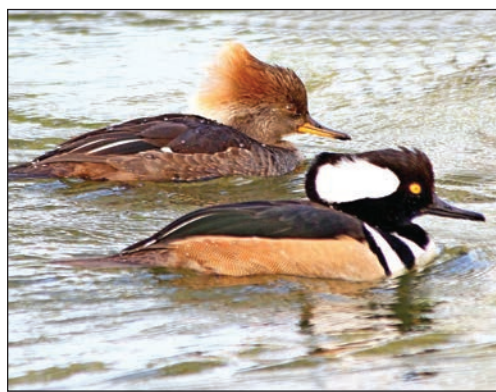


My daughter saw a pair of hooded mergansers on the Ware River on two different occasions.

She said, "They were riding those rapids to the bridge and looked like they were having a blast. Then they just hung out under the bridge."

The hooded merganser is the smallest of the mergansers at 18 inches long. It has a short thin bill and crested head. The male has a black head, white fan shaped patch within the crest, which is only visible when the crest is raised. The flanks are brown and the back black. It also has black vertical lines on its white breast. The female is plain brown with a darker back and red brown crest. The immature female looks like the adult female and the immature male similar to the female, but they some white in the crest.

Hooded mergansers dive underwater and eat small fish, frogs, crustaceans, mollusks and aquatic insects. Courtship begins in mid-



Male and female hooded merganser

winter. Females do head bobbing and pumping. Most male displays involve crest raising. The male makes a frog like note and the female makes a hoarse "gak."

The female lays six to eight white eggs in a nest of grasses and down placed in a tree cavity or nest box. Mergansers summer on wooded rivers and lakes and winters on similar locations as well as along the coast.

Ludlow birds

On Saturday, Jan. 25 a Ludlow resident emailed about the birds in her backyard. She said, "The usual visitors are purple finches, white-throated sparrows, juncos, titmice, nuthatches, bluejays, mourning doves, cardinals and red bellied woodpeckers. Yesterday Jan.

24, we had a cowbird at the feeder. We haven't had any visit us in the five years we've fed the birds in winter. Just wondering if others in the area have seen a cowbird this early."



Northern flicker

Bluebirds and northern flicker

I received an email on Sunday, Jan 26 from a North Brookfield resident, She said, "I live in North Brookfield, down on Lake Lashaway. I had five blue birds and a northern flicker on my feeders this morning along with the usual birds. Early Spring?"

Brimfield birds

I received an email from a Brimfield res-

ident on Jan. 21. He said, "Today in the yard all the usual birds were about however the junco flock has increased to about 65 birds. Other not so commonly seen birds were a Carolina wren, and a white-throated and a tree sparrows."

In another email he wrote, "Yes the blue jays sure do like the peanuts. The titmice also get their

share. And once in awhile a red-bellied woodpecker with show up and take a peanut. When I walk around the yard there are a couple of places under a tree or shrub where the ground is littered with empty peanut shells."

Birds in my yard

I continue to have the usual birds at my feeders and suet feeder such as black capped chickadees, titmice, white breasted nuthatches, downy woodpeckers, mourning doves and blue jays. Now that it is February, I expect to see male red-winged blackbirds.

I received a state of the art bird feeder equipped with a camera for my birthday. I have not set it up yet. I will take it down once bears come out of hibernation because I would not want it destroyed.

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



CHURCH DIRECTORY

Your Community Church

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

St. Peter's Lutheran Church
Rev. Debora Stein
34 Jarvis Ave., Holyoke
Office: (413) 536-3369
Office: stpetersholyokey@gmail.com
Pastor: revdebma@gmail.com
Website: www.stpetersholyokey.org
Social media:
facebook.com/stpetersholyokey
OFFICE HOURS:
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.

First Baptist Church
Pastor Theresa Temple
1976 Northampton St., Holyoke
(413) 533-7728
firstbaptistchurchholyokey@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. Paul's Episcopal Church
The Rev. Canon Joel Martinez
485 Appleton St., Holyoke
413-532-5060
Office@StPaulsholyoke.org
StPaulsholyoke.org
Instagram:
stpaulsepiscopalchurch_holyoke
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Tuesday - Friday 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Days and Hours of Services:
Sunday: 8 a.m.
Sunday: 10 a.m.
Sunday: 5 p.m. (Spanish)

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CLUES ACROSS
1. Racquet sport group (abbr.)
4. Norse god of thunder
8. Russian industrial city
10. What's good for the ___
11. Round-ish shape
12. Baltimore MLBer
13. French modernist painter
15. Burned with water
16. Intestinal issue
17. Take the lead
18. Prove oneself worthy
21. None
22. Tax collector

23. Swiss river
24. Gymnast Raisman
25. Baby's dining accessory
26. Canadian beer distributor
27. Iconic American tourist destination
34. More expansive
35. Alert
36. Popular boots
37. Showings
38. Conclusion
39. Share a common boundary
40. Shooting sport
41. Popular side dish
42. Global energy firm
43. Chronicles (abbr.)

CLUES DOWN
1. Type of bomb
2. Polynesian island country
3. Heavenly body
4. Hard workers
5. Covered
6. Johns Hopkins Hospital founder
7. Plant of the grass family
9. Island person of the Bering Sea
10. Storehouse
12. Scarlet-flowered desert shrub
14. A pituitary hormone
15. Female sibling
17. Monetary unit of Afghanistan
19. Empowering
20. Space station
23. Disorder
24. State of fuss
25. Footwear for babies
26. Nuclear reactor (abbr.)
27. Drovers
28. Affirmative
29. Male parent
30. Utter obscenities
31. Type of verse
32. Unpleasant person
33. One who settles down
34. Founder of source-based history
36. A way to snarl

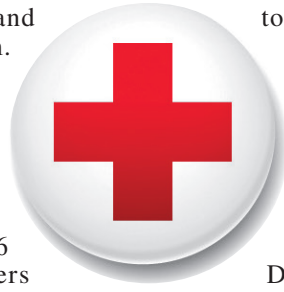
CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 9

Schools & Youth

Red Cross training now available

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Parks and Recreation Department is offering a life-guard 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.

Free computer literacy training offered

HOLYOKE – In partnership with the nonprofit CanCode Communities, Holyoke Community College is offering a free six-week computer training course starting Feb. 25.

The real-time, instructor-led online classes will run Tuesdays and Thursdays Feb. 25 to April 3, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

The program is aimed at helping individuals build essential computer skills for both personal and professional development. Participants will explore the Microsoft Office (Microsoft 365) suite of programs (Outlook, Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and OneDrive), learn how to create resumes and presentations, manage calendars and tasks, create spreadsheets, send email, and organize and

share documents using cloud storage.

"This course is perfect for those with basic computer skills looking to level up their Microsoft 365 knowledge for work, school, or personal use," said Arvard Lingham, HCC executive director of community education and corporate training.

Tuition assistance is available for qualified Massachusetts residents 18 and older. Limited seats are available. Laptops and WiFi hotspots for Internet access will be provided for students who need them.

Funding for the program comes from the Western Mass Alliance for Digital Equity.

To sign up for classes, please send an email to admissions@albanycode.org, or go to cancode.org/apply-now.

HCC scholarship season opens

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.

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

"Awarding scholarships to deserving students has been a cornerstone of the work of the HCC Foundation..."

- Amanda Sbriscia

Jewish Endowment Foundation encourages students to apply for scholarships

SPRINGFIELD – 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>.

Horace Smith Fund scholarship and fellowship money available for graduates

WESTFIELD – 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 generous philanthropist named Horace Smith, co-founder of Smith & Wesson, established in Springfield. The scholarships and fellowships are named for Walter S. Barr, a West Springfield busi-

nessman, 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 or by phoning (413) 739-4222.

WARMING, from page 1

have access to a phone.

They work to keep this list updated so they can have as efficient communication with people as possible.

"It is not the best but, it is using whatever tools we have," Garcia said.

The city also sends out communications to all of their community partners and outreach teams that do work for the unhoused population.

Each time the city has to activate the shelter, Garcia estimates that it costs about \$2,000, between the price of paying the workers who run the shelter and gathering supplies.

The city uses funds from community development block grant funds to cover the

cost of the shelters.

It is due to the cost that the city is not able to have the warming centers open more often.

"I wish I could do it every single day, not just in freezing temperatures, but regular cold, but there is just not enough resources to have one 24 hours, seven days a week," Garcia said.

Garcia is grateful to those from Providence Ministries who are willing to dedicate their time to helping with the warming center.

"They have a team of staff who love this partnership arrangement and understand that when it is pop-up warming shelter time, they come in and they are going to be working overnight," Garcia said.

The city also has a partnership with the Center for Human Development, which has funding from a grant from the state to help with overflow issues from shelters.

"So right now our warming shelter can only fit 30 people or so but if 10 people showed up and they didn't fit, the CHD has funds to put them up somewhere to make sure that they are not stuck in freezing temperatures on the streets," Garcia said.

If people are interested in supporting the city's efforts to support the unhoused population, they can follow Providence Ministries on Facebook.

Whenever Providence Ministries needs something from the Holyoke community, they will make a post and people are welcome to bring in donations.

People are also welcome to make food donations to Kate's Kitchen at any time.

Warming shelters can be found at Kate's Kitchen at 51 Hamilton Street, which can hold about 30 people, or at the CHD, with individual accommodations at 1515 Northampton Road (former Motel 6).

The CHD has a capacity of 45 beds and can be contacted at 413-302-5398.

The CHD Warming Center is at 696 Dwight Street and is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

If people have questions or concerns about the warming centers, they are welcome to contact the Holyoke Mayor's Office at 413-561-1600 or the Emergency Management Department at the Holyoke Fire Department at 413-534-2251.

LOWER PRICES TO BOOST YOUR BUDGET! **INFLATION PRICE BUSTERS** **PRICES IN RED ARE AT OR BELOW LAST YEAR'S PRICES!**

USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS PORK BUTT STRIPS.....	\$2.99 lb	VALENTINE'S DINNER FOR 2 2 FROZEN TENDERLOIN STEAKS 4 JUMBO SHRIMP CHEESECAKE FOR 2 2/13-2/15	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF TOP ROUND ROAST or STEAKS.....	\$4.99 lb
USDA INSP. FRESH PORK SIRLOIN CUTLETS.....	\$2.22 lb		USDA INSP. FRESH CHICKEN DRUMSTICKS 10 LB BAG	77¢ lb
USDA INSP. FROZEN BONE-IN PORK LOIN END CHOPS	\$1.79 lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF SHORT RIBS	\$8.99 lb	
USDA INSP. SLICED IN OUR DELI TURKEY BREAST.....	\$3.99 lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN HANDMADE CHICKEN EMPANADAS FULLY COOKED	\$2.99 lb	
USDA INSP. SLICED IN OUR DELI MONTEREY JACK CHEESE	\$4.44 lb	USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN RAW SHRIMP EASY PEELED 31/40 COUNT 2 LB BAG.....	\$9.99 ea	
SOUP'S ON!		USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY DIET LEAN GROUND BEEF 5 LB BAG	\$4.99 lb	
USDA INSP. FRESH BONE-IN BEEF SHANK.....	\$3.99 lb	90 Meat Outlet 90 Avocado St. Springfield 413-737-1288 www.90meat.com We reserve the right to limit quantities.		
USDA INSP. FROZEN GOAT MEAT.....	\$6.99 lb	HOURS: Mon. - Wed. 8-4 Thurs. 8-6 • Fri. 8-6 • Sat. 8-3		

SALE DATES: 2/13/25-2/19/25 **BUY DIRECT FOR SAVINGS • SELECTION • SERVICE**

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Think Spring!

April 27	Some Like it Hot at PPAC.....	\$120
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June 28.....	Boston Harbor Lunch Cruise.....	\$175
July 12	Escape to Rockport.....	\$110

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Colts get major upset over Knights

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

HOLYOKE – The Chicopee Comp Colts held a slim two point lead late in the third quarter against the Holyoke Purple Knights.

Following an impressive 17-2 run, the Colts entered the final eight minutes of the boys' basketball game holding a 17 point advantage and they wound up celebrating a 73-53 victory before a large crowd at Holyoke's John 'Jinx' O'Connor Gymnasium, last Friday night.

"To be able to win a game in this gym against a very good Holyoke team is a huge accomplishment for us," said Comp head coach Gavin Miller. "We're playing very well right now and we're just trying to keep improving entering the postseason tournaments."

The non-league road win improved the Colts overall record to 13-4.

It was the Purple Knights (12-3) first home loss of the regular season.

The Colts' only two double digit scorers were junior Brody Fay, who scored 12 of his team-leading 18 points in the third quarter, sophomore Elijah Kleps, who netted 12 of his 17 points



Jaycob Andujar heads for a layup.



Calvin Godbolt takes the free throw.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

See BASKETBALL, page 8



Isabella Lachat eyes the hoop.



Genesis Rivera attempts a trey.



Kylie Blaha goes for the three-pointer.

Evangeline Cauley looks to work around an opponent.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



Michaela Guzman sends a shot up.



Kiara Perez shoots over a defender.

Tough defeat for Holyoke

HOLYOKE – Last Tuesday evening, Holyoke girls basketball was defeated by Holyoke 60-17. Genesis

Rivera was limited to just seven points. Holyoke is 3-14 and will not make the tournament this season.

COLLEGE NEWS

Owls stop three-game slide, beat Wesleyan

WESTFIELD – Westfield State seniors Olivia Hadla (Westfield, Mass.) and Jordan Grant (Gray, Maine) combined for 47 points as the Owls outscored Wesleyan University by 18 points in the second half to pull away in a 96-82 non-conference triumph on Thursday night from the Woodward Center in Westfield, Mass.

The Owls halt their three-game slide, improving to 12-8 on the season while the Cardinals fall to 8-13 overall.

Westfield trailed by as many as ten points on multiple occasions in the second quarter before beginning to chip into the deficit. With the Cardinals leading 49-40 with 1:49 to play in the half, Tavi Williams (Springfield, Mass.) converted a layup, then Kayley Downie (Easthampton, Mass.) came away with a steal with the ball finding her later in the possession for a wing triple, trimming the Owls deficit to four points entering the break.

In the third quarter, the Owls ramped up the pressure forcing 15 Wesleyan turnovers after generating 12 Cardinals turnovers in the first two quarters combined. Williams opened the third period with a layup after the Owls generated a Wesleyan turnover on the first possession. Hadla put Westfield in front with a three-pointer with 8:03 left in the quarter, giving the Owls their first lead since the 7:53 mark of the first quarter.

The Cardinals regained a 55-52 edge before Westfield's defense caused havoc in the backcourt, forcing four consecutive turnovers on four straight Cardinals possessions, leading to an 8-0 scoring run capped by a Maddie Pond (Holyoke, Mass.) triple to ascend the Owls to a

See OWLS, page 8

Public Auction Sale February 22, 2025 at 8:30 a.m. 460 Race St., Holyoke MA All Sales Cash Immediate Removal - Day of Sale Tools, Riding Mowers, Appliances, TVs, Toys, Furniture and More

836-3939-8493; CALL IN *67 646 558 8656 to hear, pursuant to the Holyoke Zoning Ordinance, a Site Plan Review Amendment (Sec 10); New Leaf EV Modification (File #101-C) and Special Permit Amendment. (Sec 6.1.7); New Leaf EV (2025-5) Parking Reduction, submitted by Whiting Farms Rd EV Charging, LLC to be located at 245 Whiting Farms Road, Holyoke MA (174-00-013).

TERMS OF SALE: A deposit of \$7,500.00 DOLLARS shall be required to be made to the mortgagee in cash, by certified or by cashier's check at the time and place of the sale as a deposit. The successful bidder will be required to execute an Auction Sale Agreement immediately after the close of the bidding. The balance of the purchase price shall be paid in cash, by certified check, by cashier's check, or other check satisfactory to Mortgagee's attorney within thirty (30) days thereafter at the offices of BARSH AND COHEN, P.C., Attorneys for the Mortgagee, 500 Turnpike Street Suite 201, Canton, MA 02021, in exchange for which and at such time and place, the deed shall be delivered to the purchaser for recording.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M. Hyland, First Justice of this Court. Date: February 03, 2025 Rosemary A. Saccomani Register of Probate 02/14/2025

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court Docket No. HD23P2350EA Estate of: Marcia Ann Cassidy Date of Death: September 1, 2023 INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE

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 compliant 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.

City of Holyoke PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE The Holyoke Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, February 25, 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, Section 6.4.6.4, a Special Permit for an Increase in Sign Size for a ground sign at 850 High Street (009-04-005).

MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by 117. All Gas No Breakz LLC to Crowd Lending Fund One, LLC, dated March 10, 2023 and recorded at Hampden County Registry of Deeds on March 10, 2023, in Book No. 24934, at Page 74, modified by Assignment to Willard Street Capital, LLC dated March 15, 2023 and recorded at Hampden County Registry of Deeds on June 6, 2023, in Book No. 25033, at Page 66, and to Webster Business Credit, A Division of Webster Bank, N.A., dated March 15, 2023 and recorded at Hampden County Registry of Deeds on June 12, 2023, in Book No. 25038, at Page 597, and to Willard Street Capital, LLC dated November 20, 2024 and recorded at Hampden County Registry of Deeds on December 4, 2024, in Book No. 25679, at Page 316, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder Willard Street Capital, LLC, for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing same will be sold at public auction at 1:00 PM, on March 11, 2025 on the mortgaged premises being known as 74-76 Newton Street, Holyoke, MA, being all and singular the premises described in said mortgage to wit:

OTHER TERMS TO BE ANNOUNCED AT THE TIME AND PLACE OF THE SALE. Dated: February 5, 2025 (signed:) Willard Street Capital, LLC Present Holder of said Mortgage By its Attorneys, Barsh and Cohen, P.C. Neil Cohen, Esquire Attorney for the Mortgagee 500 Turnpike Street Suite 201, Canton, MA 02021 (617) 332-4700 02/14, 02/21, 02/28/2025

LEGAL NOTICE CITY OF HOLYOKE GAS & ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT FENCE MAINTENANCE, REPAIRS & INSTALLATIONS ANNUAL CONTRACT Sealed bids for the above contract will be received by Holyoke Gas & Electric Dept until 2:00 p.m., March 5, 2025, at the Office of the Manager, 99 Suffolk St, Holyoke, MA 01040, at which time proposals will be publicly opened and read.

LEGAL NOTICE CITY OF HOLYOKE GAS & ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT PURCHASE OF GAS MAIN CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS (PHASE 1) Sealed bids for the above contract will be received by Holyoke Gas & Electric Dept until 2:00 p.m., March 7, 2025, at the Office of the Manager, 99 Suffolk St, Holyoke, MA 01040, at which time the bids will be publicly opened and read.

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Applicant: Sign Dynamics Inc. Planning Board: Mimi Panitch 02/07, 02/14/2025

A certain lot of land with the buildings thereon situated in Holyoke, Hampden County, Massachusetts bounded and described as follows, viz; Beginning at a point or intersection of the easterly side of Newton Street, with the southerly side of Essex Street; thence running:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758 Docket No. HD23P2614PO In the matter of: Katherine Acevedo-Gonzalez CITATION ON PETITION FOR ALLOWANCE OF ACCOUNT

Bid Deposit: A Bid Deposit in the amount of \$4,000 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 (413) 536-9308 cwong@hged.com

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Beginning at a point of intersection of the easterly side of Newton Street, with the southerly side of Essex Street; thence running: . SOUTHWESTERLY on said Newton Street; sixty-six (66) feet; thence SOUTHEASTERLY and at a right angle to said Newton Street; seventy (70) feet; thence NORTHEASTERLY and parallel with Newton Street, sixty-six (66) feet to said Essex Street; thence NORTHWESTERLY on said Essex Street seventy (70) feet to the place of beginning. Containing four thousand six hundred and twenty (4,620) square feet, more or less. Being the same premises as conveyed to the mortgagor by deed of ASJ Properties, LLC, dated October 19, 2022, recorded at Hampden County Registry of Deeds on March 10, 2023 in Book No. 24934, at Page 70. The above described premises will be sold SUBJECT TO and with the benefit of all restrictions,

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Applicant: Philadelphia Sign Company Planning Board: Mimi Panitch 02/07, 02/14/2025

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The Holyoke Sun OBITUARY POLICY Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief Death Notice listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place. The other is a Paid Obituary, costing \$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.

A T P T H O R T U L A G O O S E O V A L O R I O L E M A N E T S C A L D E D I L E U S P I O N E E R C U T T H E M U S T A R D N I L I R S A A R A L Y B I B B D L H O L L Y W O O D S I G N R O O M I E R A W A R E M A R T E N S D E M O S E N D I N G A B U T S K E E T R I C E H E S S C H R

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Visit us at www.turley.com

Fire and Ice Festival plus luminaria takes place Feb. 22

AMHERST – The Amherst Business Improvement District in collaboration with Amherst Recreation is excited to announce the Fifth Annual Fire and Ice Festival plus luminaria, scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 22 from 3-6 p.m. on the Amherst Common. This event marks the culmination of Amherst’s week-long WinterFest and has become a highlight of the winter season, attracting over 2,000 attendees each year.

“The Fire and Ice Festival plus luminaria is a cherished tradition that brings the community of local families and residents, students and seniors together to celebrate the beauty and excitement of the winter season,” said Sarah Barr of Amherst College, which

presents the event. “We invite everyone to join us for an afternoon filled with art, performances, and delicious treats, all while supporting our local businesses.”

Attendees can look forward to a variety of engaging activities, including: Hot Cocoa, S’mores and Fire Pits: Warm up with complimentary hot cocoa and roast s’mores over open fire pits. Ice Sculptures: Marvel at ten intricate ice sculptures displayed throughout the Amherst Common, by Joe Almeida

Winter Tie-Dye Crafting: Participate in creative winter-themed tie-dye projects with Amherst Recreation. Fire Arts Performance: Enjoy a captivating fire juggling performance by Matica Arts.

Metal Sculptures Demonstration: Witness live metal sculpting by local artist and Hampshire College alum Kamil Peters. Wood Carving Demonstration: Observe Amherst resident Cody Stosz of Kodiak Carving showcase his wood carving skills. Special Menu Items: Savor delicious food and cocktail specials from the Inn on Boltwood.

Additionally, the Amherst Fire Department will be present with their fire truck, offering fire safety information and an opportunity to meet Sparky the Fire Pup.

“This festival not only celebrates the winter season but also highlights the vibrant community spirit of Amherst,” said John

Page, Executive Director of the Amherst BID. “We encourage everyone to explore downtown Amherst’s unique shops and restaurants before and after the event.”

The Fire and Ice Festival plus Luminaria is organized by Amherst Recreation and the Amherst Business Improvement District made possible by the generosity of many local businesses and community partners including presenting sponsor Amherst College, Summerlin Floors, Encharter Insurance, Amherst Innovative Living and more. For more information and updates, people may visit amherstdowntown.com and follow us on social media @amherstdowntown.

NAMI to hold family to family education program

HOLYOKE – National Alliance on Mental Illness NAMI Western Massachusetts offers their Family-to-Family Education Program in person, starting Tuesday, March 11, beginning at 6 p.m. in Holyoke.

NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, nine-session educational program for family, significant others and friends of people with mental health conditions. It is a designated evidenced-based program. This means that research shows that the program significantly improves the coping and problem-solving abilities of the people closest to a person with a mental health condition.

NAMI Family-to-Family is taught by NAMI-trained family members who

have been there and includes presentations, discussions, and interactive exercises. NAMI, is the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental health conditions. NAMI-WM is an affiliate of NAMI Massachusetts. NAMI Western Massachusetts and its dedicated volunteers, members, and leaders work tirelessly to raise awareness and provide essential education, advocacy, and support programs for people in our community living with mental health conditions and their loved ones.

Pre-registration is required. For more information, people may call Bonnie at 413-426-7644 or visit namiwm.org/support.

MassDOT alerts customers of ongoing EZDriveMA scam

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Department of Transportation reminds customers to be mindful of text message-based scams, also known as smishing.

The scammers are claiming to represent the tolling agency and requesting payment for unpaid tolls. MassDOT urges customers to be cautious about email, text and phone scams demanding payment of outstanding toll balances. Some attempts have been made to trick customers into sharing credit card numbers and other sensitive information by directing them to a website to pay their outstanding balances. MassDOT strongly encourages customers not to click the link contained in those messages.

MassDOT is underscoring that EZDriveMA will never request payment by text. All links associated with EZDriveMA will include www.EZDriveMA.com

The EZDrive “smishing” scam is part of a series of smishing scams which the FBI is aware of. Smishing is when unscrupulous actors send deceptive text messages to get someone to reveal confidential or financial information.

The FBI recommends individuals that receive the fraudulent messages to file a complaint with the IC3 by visiting www.ic3.gov and be sure to include: the phone number from where the text originated and the website listed within the text.

Delete any smishing texts received. If people clicked any link or provided private information, take efforts to secure their personal information and financial accounts. MassDOT encourages all customers to stay alert to these types of scams and to contact EZDriveMA by visiting www.EZDriveMA.com with any questions about notifications.

AAA offers tips to avoid potential vehicle winter damage

WESTWOOD – With temperatures expected to dip into the single digits this week, homeowners across the Northeast might be worried about the potential for winter-related damage to their properties and rightly so.

In 2022 alone, cold weather and winter storms caused nearly \$6 billion in insured losses in the United States, according to the Insurance Information Institute. The most common types of insurance claims related to severe winter weather include frozen pipes, ice dams building up along roof edges, damage from falling trees and limbs and even house fires.

Fortunately, a few preventive measures can reduce the risk of a winter catastrophe, starting with a review of their existing homeowners insurance policy to ensure any potential disaster is covered. Water damage from a leaking pipe or an ice dam that sends water

through the roof may be covered by a typical homeowners policy. But flooding caused by other events, such as rapid snow melt, may require a separate flood insurance policy.

“Winter storms are not typically thought of as natural disasters, but they can cause significant damage in the Northeast,” said Greg Smolan, vice president of insurance operations for AAA Northeast. “Taking preventive measures will help minimize the risk associated with winter weather.”

AAA Insurance recommends that all homeowners take these steps to effectively winterize their homes for safety and to avoid costly repairs:

Clear gutters and downspouts of debris to allow melting snow and ice to flow freely. To help prevent ice dams from forming, keep the attic well-ventilated and the attic floor well-insulated. Heat tape may also help pre-

vent ice buildup and can facilitate melting.

To prevent pipes from freezing and bursting, insulate exposed pipes, seal cracks in outside walls near pipes, keep cabinet doors on exterior walls open and keep a slow trickle of water flowing through unprotected pipes during cold spells.

Know the location of the main water shutoff valve. If pipes freeze, the faster you shut off the water, the better chance you have of preventing them from bursting and causing major damage.

Ensure the heating system is up to snuff by having the furnace, boiler or chimney serviced at least once a year. Be sure to have ducts, vents and filters inspected.

Check smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Residential fires and carbon monoxide poisonings increase in the winter as people rely on indoor fires and heating systems.

Detectors should be checked at least twice a year.

Follow all safety guidelines when using supplemental space heaters to prevent electrical fires or fires caused by the placement of heaters too close to flammable materials.

Trim trees and remove dead branches. Ice, snow, wind and rain can cause weak trees and tree limbs to fall and damage car or home or fall on people walking on or near your property. Clear your driveway and walkway of snow as soon as possible to prevent slips and falls.

AAA Northeast is a not-for-profit auto club with offices in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, New Hampshire and New York, providing more than 6.5 million local AAA members with travel, insurance, finance and auto-related services.

Cat in the Hat license plates available in Massachusetts

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Museums announces Dr. Seuss specialty license plates are now available across Massachusetts.

Featuring the iconic Cat in the Hat, the plates honor Springfield native Theodor Seuss Geisel, whose writings inspired generations of learners worldwide. The museums are home to the world’s only museum dedicated to the beloved children’s author, with proceeds from the plates supporting their mission to promote literacy and learning.

“We’re thrilled with the response to the Dr. Seuss plate and can’t wait to see them across the state,” said Kay Simpson, President and CEO of the Springfield Museums. “These plates are a great way to attract visitors to our museums, including the Amazing

World of Dr. Seuss Museum, which welcomes thousands of people each year.”

Dr. Seuss Plates can be purchased online or at an RMV service center. Any Massachusetts resident with a passenger car registered in the state is eligible. Specialty plates cost \$40, plus standard registration fees, with a portion supporting the museums. When re-registered, the full \$40 benefits literacy programs and services the museums.

The museums began a campaign to offer

Massachusetts drivers a specialty license plate in 2019. Orders came in quickly at first but then plateaued during the pandemic.

More recent efforts to resurrect the campaign got things moving again with the museums exceeding the minimum number of applications required for the Registry of Motor Vehicles to begin production of a specialty plate in March 2024. The Registry reached out to this initial round of supporters in late January 2025 with details on receiving their Cat in the Hat plates.



MassWildlife give advise on dealing with coyotes during the winter

Mass Wildlife reminds people late January through early March is coyote mating season. Coyotes are very active during the winter while courting mates and defending their territory. Coyotes are in every city and town in mainland Massachusetts, meaning the opportunity for human-coyote interaction is high. The mere presence of a coyote is not a cause for concern. MassWildlife officials are reminding the public to take these three simple steps to prevent conflict with coyotes during the mating season:

Protect pets

Pets should always be directly supervised on a leash when outdoors, especially during the coyote mating season. Coyotes can’t differentiate between their natural prey and small pets, so they will view unprotected outdoor cats and small dogs as a potential food source.

Coyotes can’t distinguish a dog from an intruding coyote, causing the coyote to be more aggressive toward medium and large sized dogs as they will view them as potential competition for mates and territory.

Do not supervise a pet from a distance on porch or at the backdoor. Most coyote attacks

involve dogs that are unsupervised or being supervised from a distance in a backyard.

Remove human-associated food sources

As opportunistic omnivores, coyotes will utilize naturally available food, like small mammals and birds and human-associated foods, like bird seed, garbage, compost, pet food left outdoors and backyard chickens.

Coyotes that find human-associated food sources will spend more time in yards and neighborhoods. It’s essential for neighbors to work together to secure or remove all human-associated food sources in a community.

Coyotes that become dependent on human-associated food sources can start to exhibit bold behavior toward people. Never intentionally feed coyotes.

Haze coyotes

While coyotes are naturally wary of people, this fear can lessen over time when they spend a lot of time around people or when they are fed, intentionally or unintentionally, by people.

When you see a coyote in your yard, you

should aggressively haze it. Hazing is a safe technique used to deter an animal from an area or to change its behavior. The intent of hazing is to frighten, not injure, the animal.

You can haze a coyote by creating loud noises by yelling or using a small air horn, waving a jacket overhead to look bigger, spraying a hose or throwing small objects in the coyote’s direction, and physically chasing and driving the coyote off. Haze the animal until it has fully left the area.

Hazing will not be effective if it’s done from inside a building, from behind a screen door, or from a car. Hazing is most effective when it’s done repeatedly, when a variety of techniques are used and when many people participate.

Negative encounters with coyotes are rare and human-coyote attacks are exceptionally rare. If people encounter a coyote that is exhibiting concerning behavior like approaching leashed pets, closely following people, or not running off when effectively hazed they should contact your local Animal Control Officer or local MassWildlife office for assistance. If there is an immediate threat to public safety, they should call local law enforcement.



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just try it. There are no negatives to starting and trying to get involved.”

“Take it day by day and don’t judge yourself too much,” Cayo said. “It is not something that you get overnight, so definitely be patient with yourself and others.”

They were also grateful for the effort everyone put forward for the performance.

“I think everyone put in enough time and commitment to the show, and were very helpful for each other to grow and get better,” Cayo said.

The students also sent a thank you to Brunelle for making this production possible.

“She provides the ability for the kids to

‘Lord of the Flies’ wows audiences

express themselves and lets this become a kid-focused production,” Callahan said. “She does a good job.”

It is thanks to Brunelle that this play was so student-centered, with the students heavily involved in the costumes, the set design, the

lighting design and the acting choices.

Brunelle also sends her gratitude out to the MIFA Victory Theater for being the theater company’s season sponsor, and to the Ramoth family for their overwhelming support.

Overall, all of those involved in the pro-

duction are grateful to the community that came out to show their support.

“I want to thank the community for coming out and supporting their students in this process,” Brunelle said.

Brunelle also encourages people to keep coming out to show their support. If there is anything the theater company can do to encourage more people to come to their shows, Brunelle encourages them to reach out.

“The kids put their hearts and souls into the production and we would love, moving forward, for the community to come out more,” Brunelle said.

HHS will be putting on another performance in the spring. The music department will be presenting the musical Little Shop of Horrors.



Eila Ramoth (playing Ralph) and Darius Baez (playing Piggy) opened HHS Theater Company’s performance of Lord of the Flies.



All of the children desperately tried to wave down a ship they could see in the distance.

Turley photos by Quinn Suomala



Piggy, played by Darius Baez, made a desperate plea to try to maintain order.



Piggy (played by Darius Baez) faced bullying from Jack (played by Cian Callahan).



The children who had split off to be hunters began to turn on the rest of the group.



Jack (played by Cian Callahan, left) ordered all the kids from his school to fall in line.



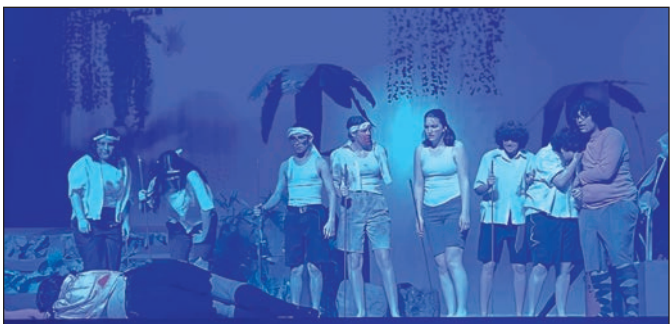
The children who survived the plane crash quickly began to argue over what rules they should have in place as they waited for rescue.



Tensions rose amongst the children as they went longer without being rescued.



The children begin to turn on one another as the days they are left on the island stretch out.



All of the children stood in shock after Simon (played by Fynn Maldonado) was killed by some in their group.



Jack (played by Cian Callahan) taunts Ralph (played by Eila Ramoth) while the other children watch.



The children are finally rescued as a naval officer arrives at the island they crashed on.



All of the cast and crew of Lord of the Flies take a bow to celebrate completing the show.



Grace Bechard and Darius Baez take their bows.



Cian Callahan and Eila Ramoth take their bows.



The cast of Lord of the Flies take a bow together.