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February 21, 2025 ■ FREE

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Crews work to keep schools in shape

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – The maintenance crew of Holyoke Public Schools puts in a lot of work to prepare and help the schools through the winter months.

Maintenance Administrator Sean Sheedy and his team work together before the start of winter to prepare the district's outdoor equipment. All equipment is serviced and prepared for the conversion from warm weather to cold weather equipment.

"Lawn tractors are converted from grass-cutting attachments to snow-blowing attachments," Sheedy said. "Salt spreaders are greased and tested for proper operation. Snow-melting materials are delivered and stored at the schools."

On top of the outdoor equipment, the maintenance team also prepares the HVAC equipment.

All the filters are cleared or changed and the belts and grease fittings are all inspected.

Some systems are manually switched to heating so the maintenance team can test their system.

"The hydronic and steam boilers are tested and run through their operations testing the system and identifying issues while making corrections."

See CREWS, page 6

Moira Reardon crowned Grand Colleen

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – Moira Reardon was crowned the Grand Colleen at the coronation ceremony on Saturday, Feb. 15.

She was honored to have been chosen for this opportunity by the judges.

"When my name was read, I was in shock," Reardon said. "I was so happy to have all of the people I love in one place celebrating something so special to us all. It all felt and still feels so surreal."



Reardon has wanted to be involved in the Colleen since she was a kid. A large part of this was inspired by her family.

"My Great-Grandparents were lifelong Holyoke resi-



Left, Moira Reardon reacts to her name being announced as the 2025 Grand Colleen. Above, the 2025 Grand Colleen and her court. Grand Colleen Moira Reardon, and court members Erin O'Donnell, Maura Joseph, Abigail Huebner, and Erin Gauthier.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

dents and instilled in my mom, sisters, and me what it means to be a hardworking, involved community member," Reardon said.

"They loved celebrating Irish heritage, and Holyoke as a whole, as do I."

Additionally, she has always enjoyed celebrating St. Patrick's Day and wanted to do so in a way that would

also help the community.

"Celebrating St. Patrick's Day has always been my favorite time of the year, and representing my family, heritage, and community is an honor that I am incredibly thankful for," Reardon said.

Holyoke has held an annual Colleen ceremony since the 1950s as a way to highlight young women in the community with Irish heritage who exemplify com-

munity values.

"The Colleen is a young woman who embodies community, poise, presence and who are great emblems of Irish ancestry and their community," Dunn said.

The Colleen makes significant contributions to the community throughout their reign. They visit many schools in Holyoke and South Hadley, senior centers in both towns and the Veterans Home.

Reardon was excited to become a part of this long standing Holyoke tradition.

"I remember when the Colleen visited my school at Blessed Sacrament- I was so inspired by their love of the community and their deep connection to their Irish heritage," she said. "It's truly special to see generations of Colleen- past, present, and future- coming together."

See COLLEEN, page 10

Tentative competency assessment presented to school committee

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – Superintendent/Receiver Anthony Soto discussed with the school committee Holyoke Public School's plans for a new competency assessment now that the MCAS is no longer required.

Now that the MCAS is no longer a required competency assessment for students to graduate high school, schools have been working to determine how to move forward.

Due to this, HPS does not plan to keep the MCAS.

Instead, Soto and other key HPS faculty and staff have proposed that HPS require students to receive a passing grade in grade nine and ten English, algebra one and geometry, and in biology to graduate from high school.

If students do not initially pass these classes, students can apply to pass a course equivalent that is approved by their principal and the superintendent.

"Our academic team and Dr Mahoney and some

ly seniors and have not yet passed that assessment.

After Soto presented this to the school committee, he requested that they send the matter to a subcommittee to discuss further.

"What I would like to do is hopefully go into a deeper discussion at a subcommittee meeting where we can dive deeper into any questions the school committee would have," Soto said. "Ultimately we are looking for this year for the school committee to adopt a competency determination assessment."

He wants to have this matter discussed and decided on as quickly as possible so that the students in the high school currently, specifically the seniors, know what they need to do to graduate.

"Part of why we are putting this in front of you is because we want students to know what the competency determination is going to be for this year," Soto said.

Ultimately, while the school committee will make a decision on what the competency assessment is for this year, this may not stay true for future years.

"I anticipate that the state is working on further guidance that will either support whatever local decisions are made or provide more guidance on what is expected in competency determinations," Soto said.

However, as the districts

See SCHOOL, page 6

Joint committee discusses Soto, Garcia stance on immigrants

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – The joint committee of the city council and the school committee discussed Mayor Joshua Garcia and Superintendent/Receiver Anthony Soto's recent statement affirming the rights of immigrants at their meeting on Feb. 12.

Soto addressed that his intention with the letter was to ease the concerns of many families and staff within the district.

"We do have a significant amount of newcomer families," Soto said. "My first intent was to ease their anxiety. I have had families come crying, I have had bus drivers walking into the central office, crying, and saying, 'Mr. Soto, this student that I always see, he wasn't in school today, I am worried something happened.' So, first and foremost was just to ease the anxiety of students and families because there is a lot of misinformation out there."

Soto had received concerns from families about bringing their children into school due to perceived threats from Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"It is hard to make that academic progress that we would like to see when so many kids are missing so many days and we had been hearing that families were scared to send their kids to school," Soto said. "So we wanted to clarify with them

what their rights are."

Additionally, Soto hoped that this would inform the staff of Holyoke Public Schools as to what their rights are.

"It is a state requirement that we do not collect documentation, so there is no way for our staff to know whether a newcomer family has a status or not," Soto said. "That is the guidance that we received from DESE."

Soto also noted that HPS had a much higher than normal number of newcomer families this year.

In past years, there have been about 10 newcomer families. This year, HPS received over 100.

"We do have a lot of newcomers this year," Soto said. "I do not know their immigration status..., but we have a lot."

As a result of this number of newcomer families, HPS had to open up a new program to support these students.

"We actually had to open up a new program for newcomers," Soto said. "For kids who are not Spanish-speaking we have created a newcomer program and we



Interim Superintendent Anthony Soto



Mayor Joshua Garcia

have somebody who helps translate and connect with families."

This program works to give students the support they need as they get used to Holyoke and, potentially, learn English.

City Council Member Kevin Jourdain raised concerns about how this influx of newcomer families will impact the finances of HPS.

"The concern some have is that there are other people in charge of Washington now..." Jourdain said.

Soto assured him that currently the state covers the costs of transportation and other key costs for these students and they receive financial support from McKinney-Vento for families who are unhoused.

However, there is uncertainty on the continued existence of these funds, due to the current administration in charge of the federal government.

"I don't know that that is going to stick with the federal government and the impact that is going to have on state funds," Soto said.

See IMMIGRANTS, page 6

"I anticipate that the state is working on further guidance that will either support whatever local decisions are made or provide more guidance on what is expected in competency determinations."

- Superintendent Anthony Soto

One district, Frontier Regional School District in South Deerfield, has decided that they will continue to use the MCAS.

"There is one district that I know of that is continuing to use MCAS as that competency determination," Soto said.

HPS does not want to follow in that decision. During the November election, 10,296 Holyoke voters out of a total 14,184 voted in favor of getting rid of the MCAS.

counselors, we solicited some feedback from different stakeholder groups," Soto said. "We got some input from our teacher advisory group, we got some input from counselors at each of the high schools."

Soto also clarified that as HPS is making this transition, students this year who have already passed the MCAS will not have to also make these competency requirements.

This, instead, pertains to any students who are current-

Ruiz acquires Wyckoff Country Club

HOLYOKE – Area businessman and entrepreneur Cesar Ruiz has acquired the Wyckoff Country Club in Holyoke, Massachusetts for \$2.8 million.

The 109-acre property, which includes an 18-hole golf course and clubhouse, including the “Daniel Ross Course” restaurant, will remain a country club and golf course under Ruiz’s ownership.

The restaurant and clubhouse will undergo an

approximately \$250,000 modernization and renovation. New golf carts will also be acquired, replacing the existing fleet, Ruiz said.

Ruiz said, “I am thrilled to announce the acquisition of Wyckoff Country Club, a cherished landmark in Holyoke. This 120-acre gem will continue its legacy as a premier country club and vibrant social hub. I look forward to working with the community in Wyckoff’s next growth phase.”

The new Wyckoff is projected to generate jobs and attract existing and new members annually to the once-thriving course. Ruiz said he views the redevelopment of Wyckoff as a complement to an Olympic-styled sports corridor in Holyoke that he envisions with volleyball as a centerpiece.

The Wyckoff property will not be used to house or host any of the non-golf sporting activities and facil-

ities. The present staff will remain.

Ruiz is leading the proposed sports corridor currently under development, which he sees as positioning Holyoke as New England’s premier destination for athletic excellence, tourism, and community development. The initiative is led by Cesar Ruiz, a 2020 BusinessWest Top Entrepreneur and founder of Golden Years Home Care Services, which he recently sold.

Marshal Mania set for next Saturday

HOLYOKE – The St. Patrick’s Committee of Holyoke will host the 2025 Marshal Mania Kick-Off Party on Saturday, March 1, at the Log Cabin in Holyoke.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Eavesdrop, an Americana-pop/Folk-Soul band from the Pioneer Valley, will start at 8:00 p.m., followed by

Unforgettable Fire, the #1 Premier U2 Tribute Band. Liberty Bank generously sponsors this year’s event. There will be a cash bar, food for sale from the Log Cabin, and raffles. Tickets are \$20 per person.

Contact Jeff Walsh at jeffwalsh127@gmail.com at 413-530-3944 or Johnny Driscoll at johnnydriscoll@live.com at 413-530-3328.

City to raise Irish Flag March 1

HOLYOKE – The Hibernians of Hampden/Hampshire Counties invite the public to participate in the Irish Flag Raising Exercise on Saturday March 1 at 10 a.m. at Holyoke City Hall to celebrate the Irish American Heritage Month of March.

Mayor Josh Garcia and Holyoke City officials plan to be in attendance.

Hibernian President Joe O’Connor will preside as Master of Ceremonies. Other dignitaries planning to be in attendance: representing Holyoke St. Patrick’s Parade Committee will be

2025 Parade President John Beaulieu and Parade Grand Marshal James Lavelle; Barbara Twohig President of the Massachusetts State Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians; Mary Kate O’Connor President of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians Division 2 and President Sean Cahillane of the Irish Cultural Center of Western New England. Piper Matt O’Connor will play the pipes at the event and Sheila Moreau will sing the American and Irish Anthems.

There are over 31.5 million residents who claim Irish Ancestry in America. The U.S. Congress designated March as Irish American Heritage Month in 1991.



Annual battle of the bars gets ready to rumble this weekend

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.”

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.

The media is invited to attend. More information on the event can be found on the Committee website here: holyokestpatrickspade.com/events/2025-battle-of-the-bars.

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

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

Dobbin Tartan party kicks off green season

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.holyokestpatrickspade.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.



Schindler to be guest speaker at upcoming Hibernian Annual Communion Breakfast

HOLYOKE – The public is invited to the Hibernian Annual Communion Breakfast Sunday, March 16.

In concert with the festivities surrounding the 2025 Holyoke St Patrick’s Parade, The Hibernians of Hampden/Hampshire Counties invite the public to attend the Annual Communion Breakfast, 8

a.m. Memorial Mass at St Jerome’s Church - breakfast at 9 a.m. at Wyckoff CC, 233 Easthampton Rd Holyoke; Honoring Owen Donohue with the 2025 Hibernian Christian Charity Award; guest speaker will be Teri Schindler. She is a writer, director, producer; worked for NBC, HBO, and ESPN; won an Emmy for her work in 2000 Sydney

Australia Olympics; founding member of WNBA; First woman to produce live NCAA broadcasts; All-American Swimmer; married to announcer Mike Gorman; daughter Kristen and son-in-law Marc.

For reservations call Attorney John J. Driscoll at 413-534-0445 by March 14. Tickets are \$25 per person. Tables of 10.

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Saint Patrick Novena offered

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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Thunderbirds talent to visit MiraVista Behavioral Health Center

HOLYOKE – MiraVista Behavioral Health Center is excited to announce that top talent from the Springfield Thunderbirds, the American Hockey League affiliate of the St. Louis Blues, will visit MiraVista (1233 Main Street, Holyoke) on Tuesday, Feb. 25, at 2 p.m. This special event will include a slapshot contest, autograph signing, and an opportunity for staff to meet the team's beloved mascot, Boomer.

The visit is part of

MiraVista's ongoing efforts to celebrate its top talent -- the dedicated staff who work diligently to make a difference in the lives of those they serve. The event offers a fun and energizing break in the day, giving employees a chance to connect with the Thunderbirds players and enjoy a few light-hearted moments.

"The discussion around mental health is such an important conversation, and organizations like MiraVista

are so integral in addressing it," said Springfield Thunderbirds Manager of Community Relations, Ryan Smith. "Mental health is every bit as vital as physical health, and we're honored to visit as a token of our appreciation for the hard work being done on site every day at MiraVista."

Kimberley Lee, MiraVista's Chief of Creative Strategy and Development, expressed the organization's gratitude: "We couldn't

be more grateful to the Thunderbirds for bringing their energy and enthusiasm to MiraVista. This visit is a wonderful opportunity for our team to take a well-deserved break, have some fun, and enjoy time with such a well-loved, local team."

Lee added that the Springfield Thunderbirds are known not only for their success on the ice but also for their commitment to engaging with and supporting the local community. "MiraVista

is proud to welcome them to the behavioral health center and looks forward to an afternoon filled with appreciation and team spirit."

For more information about MiraVista Behavioral Health Center and the work we do, please visit www.miravistabhccare.com.

MiraVista cares for thousands of individuals from across New England and is a leading provider of mental health and addiction treatment services, dedicat-

ed to empowering individuals to overcome challenges and achieve their full potential. With a commitment to excellence and compassion, MiraVista offers a comprehensive range of evidence-based treatment programs tailored to meet the unique needs of each patient. Through personalized care and support, MiraVista inspires hope and healing, helping individuals reclaim their lives and embrace a brighter future.

Mall touts new tenants

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Mall, Western Mass.'s premier shopping, dining, and entertainment destination, is preparing for an eventful year of transformation in 2025. We're excited to share some updates on the center, including new store openings, remodels, and investments in the center.

Holyoke Mall is thrilled to announce several additions and renovations that will enhance our offerings:

Pickleball Kingdom: Pickleball has become one of the fastest growing sports and we're pleased to meet this growing demand with a new indoor pickleball club. Pickleball Kingdom will feature 15 individually fenced courts, a pro shop, snack bar, and outdoor playing surfaces with all the benefits of being inside. Construction is expected to start soon with an opening of late 2025 on the lower level near JCPenney.

Footlocker: Recently reopened after a \$1.1M remodel of their store. The refresh features their latest prototype with a new storefront, open ceiling concept, more space, and new lighting.

JD Sports: Known for its innovative athletic footwear and apparel, JD Sports is set to open in April of 2025 on the lower level near Hobby Lobby.

Altitude Trampoline Park: Altitude added 4 brand new attractions in February:

- **Freedom Gaming Strike Arena:** A fast-paced hunt-the-lights arena challenge where players test their speed and agility, competing individually, or in teams, to find and hit their colored pods.

- **AeroTower:** Interactive target attraction for single or multiplayer games, with the added challenge of rotating targets that test hand-eye coordination and reaction time.

- **FreeStyle Duo:** Dual interactive reaction walls that challenge speed and reaction, with flashing lightpods that test players reaction time and jump accuracy.

- **PowrPlay:** In this exciting interactive soccer target game, players score points by hitting the opposite team's target, with the option to score more points when hitting flashing targets.

Uncle Cho's Fish & Chips: This fish and chips concept will be the latest addition to our food court and is expected to open soon.

These exciting new tenants and updates will be a great complement to our unique mix of retail and experiential offerings at Holyoke Mall and we are very optimistic about what 2025 will bring.

Lynch to discuss new book at library event

HOLYOKE – On Thursday, Feb. 27 at 3 p.m., author Jacqueline T. Lynch will be part of an event at Holyoke Public Library.

Jacqueline Lynch's new book explores how WWII children's literature—particularly adventure novels aimed at teens and young adolescents—shaped the world views of these readers, readers who would later become

members of the 'Silent Generation,' known for their conformity and strong work ethic. Lynch looks at how the adventures of fictional nurses (Cherry Ames and Ann Bartlett) and young aviators (Dave Dawson and Stan Wilson) served as entertainment, information, and indoctrination for those old enough to know about the war, but too young to participate.

Lynch will be joining the event on Zoom. Pre-registration is required for the event, which will be held in the History Room at the Library.



Jacqueline Lynch



ARTery to feature artist Mehrnoush Bouzarjmehr

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Art is excited to announce its opening reception for March's Featured Artist, Mehrnoush Bouzarjmehr, on Saturday, March 1, from 12 to 3 p.m. at the ARTery. The exhibition will be on display at the ARTery, located at 289 High St. in Holyoke, MA, throughout the month of March. Regular gallery hours are Thursday, Friday, and Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. or by appointment. Visit www.holyokeart.com or call 413-420-8303 for more information.

Mehrnoush Bouzarjmehr brings a rich, multi-layered artistic history to her work.



Born in Iran, she worked for two decades as a midwife, a role that influenced her deeply. In 2017, after immigrating to the United States, she reignited her passion for painting, working with mediums such as oil,

acrylic, watercolor, gouache, and traditional Persian techniques like Tazhib and Gol-o-Morgh. Her work has been featured in exhibitions throughout the Northeast, earning several awards. Bouzarjmehr now calls Holyoke home, where her art is infused with the city's beauty and energy.

"For me, painting is more than blending colors—it is the creation of life in silence. Every painting is a piece of my soul, bringing peace and life wherever it goes", said Mehrnoush.

We invite art lovers and the community to experience the soulful and evocative works of Mehrnoush Bouzarjmehr. Don't miss this opportunity to explore her journey and vision through her vibrant, story-filled creations. Join us at The ARTery to celebrate art that inspires and connects.

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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

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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:

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Guest Column



Reader asks about claiming Social Security when I have a Health Savings Account

Dear Rusty

I have reached my full retirement age (66 plus 8 months) and plan to apply for Social Security this month, but I've seen articles, which say that when I apply, I must also take Medicare Part A.

This, even though I am continuing to work and am covered by my employer's health insurance (a high deductible plan). I contribute bi-weekly into an Health Savings Account. I've read that Medicare back dates Part A coverage by six months, which suggests I would have had to stop contributing to my HSA six months ago.

If this is true, will I need to pay penalties and such to the IRS? I'm not able to find anything else about this topic and I'm wondering what you might have to say. I have my wife and two children on my employer's HDHP. We contribute \$6,000 annually to our HSA and my employer contributes \$1,250 on Jan. 1 each year. We can live without the HSA, but the taxes and IRS penalties concern me.

Signed: Wanting to Claim SS (but concerned)

Dear Wanting to Claim I'm afraid that what you've read is correct – it is mandatory for you to take Medicare Part A (inpatient hospitalization coverage) when receiving Social Security benefits after age 65. Medicare Part A is free to you and even though you are still covered under your employer's creditable high deductible healthcare plan and can delay taking Medicare Part B, you must take Medicare Part A to collect Social Security after 65. Medicare and your employer's plan will coordinate healthcare benefit payments.

That does, however, also mean your Health Savings Account will be affected because, as you have found, Medicare

will backdate your Part A coverage by six months. And because Part A is not a high deductible plan (a requirement for HSA), any contributions you make after the effective date of Part A will be subject to an IRS penalty, and your HSA contributions won't be considered tax-exempt. This will mean the IRS will likely assess a 6% excise tax on any contributions made after your Part A effective date and you'll need to pay income tax on those contributions.

What you may wish to consider is stopping your HSA contributions now and waiting an additional six months or so to claim your Social Security benefits (to get beyond the HSA penalty phase). This would have the advantage of avoiding the IRS penalty on your HSA contributions and would also increase your Social Security benefit due to Delayed Retirement Credits. You earn DRCs at the rate of .677% for each month beyond your FRA that you wait to claim, which means an SS benefit about 4% higher if you wait six months longer to claim SS.

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 informational 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.



DAVE GRANLUND © www.davegranlund.com

Guest Column

Leave it to fate



I never thought I would say this, but I am out of ideas for this week's column. Every topic I come up with has been covered at one time or another. So, as the snow falls every so furiously outside, I am going to resort to the "stick your finger in the gardening encyclopedia, and see where it lands" trick.

I'll leave the topics of the week to fate.

Here goes: For the first topic, my finger landed on a funny picture of geranium plants with their rootballs wrapped in newspaper hanging from the beams in someone's basement. I have written before about my success in bringing my geranium plants inside for the winter and placing them in a south facing window.

Just yesterday I was looking at the plants more closely, knowing that soon enough, I will be snipping the tips to take some cuttings. But I digress, the picture I saw is just another way to over-winter your geranium plants, especially if you don't have a sunny window or a lot of indoor gardening space.

Many old timers used to talk of this method a lot and had great success with it. You could either try and pot the plants up ahead of time or go right from the basement to the outdoors after the threat of frost has passed and after a thorough hardening off process, of course.

Second topic: My finger landed on the herb Lovage

(*Levisticum officinale*). I have started lovage from seed nearly every year for the last 30 years.

This celery substitute is always on the list of transplants needed for the herb garden at Old Sturbridge Village. Lovage seed is not viable for long, so new seed is needed each year, or germination will be sparse. The plant is considered a perennial, meaning it will return year after year, but in my experience, the best foliage production will be in the first year. The flowers are "umbells" like dill and fennel but flowers only take away from foliage production, so they are best snipped off.

The hollow stems are used in place of celery in soups and stews. My mom always enjoyed drying the leaves for use during the winter months.

Topic three: Hostas! I was never a big fan of Hostas until I had a yard that had substantial amounts of shade. These versatile plants are a perfect companion for many shade loving perennials, especially if they are planted in fertile soil with ample moisture.

Like other perennials, Hostas need a period of dormancy to succeed, so they will do well in our climate, and down to Zone 8 or so. Most varieties are grown for their foliage only; I find it funny that some gardeners snip off the flowers as they begin to form, saying that it actually takes away from the look of

the plant.

There are so many types to choose from and in colors ranging from grass-green to yellow and even blue-gray! Some are variegated or splashed with color.

Leaf sizes range from minuscule to huge! One pest that loves Hosta leaves is the slug. To lessen their interest in the plant, be sure to remove decomposing foliage.

Use any number of traps, homemade or otherwise to keep your plants damage free.

And the last fate-filled topic is: Chile peppers! There are all kinds of hot peppers out there for the gardener to experiment with. You might think that growing instructions may differ for fire-hot peppers, but they are grown in the same manner as regular bell peppers.

Start the seeds inside, or purchase transplants. Warm the soil ahead of installing the plants, and don't overdue it fertility-wise. Provide supplemental water if the summer gets droughty.

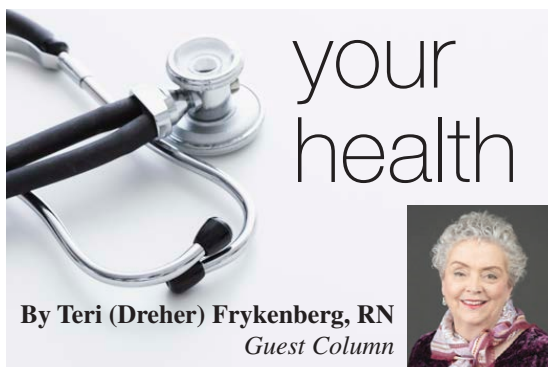
Harvest when the peppers turn color, and do so wearing gloves being ever mindful not to touch your eyes. I had always heard that a milk bath should help ease the sting of an accidental burn; others say ingesting starchy food does the trick.

Well, I hope this unconventional column was an enjoyable read. It's never too late to pull out a reference book or two for some interesting factoids.

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.

Guest Column

Are you a "complex patient"?



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

With more people living longer, it's becoming likelier than an individual will be dealing with more than one chronic health condition, such as heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, cancer, any number of autoimmune disorders (such as lupus) – the list is practically endless.

Your doctors – you probably have more than one -- may not tell you to your face that you are "complex" or "complicated," so how do you know if you are? What are the pos-

sible implications of complexity, and what can you do about it?

Here are some typical characteristics of complex patients, in addition to having multiple health conditions:

- You take multiple medications.
- You have a lot of health-care providers, including specialists.
- You are in the hospital frequently.
- You struggle to manage your own health care because of its complexity.
- You lack the family or social network you need to manage your

health care.

Health-care providers are seeing more patients with complex conditions than ever, but there's little consensus among doctors about how to deal with them. Aside from the characteristics I listed above, patient complexity is aggravated by a number of other factors.

- Our health care and social care systems are fragmented, and the gaps are continuously growing.
- The scope of individuals' needs are constantly growing.
- More patients are living alone, as family and community connections weaken.
- There is a global shortage of caregivers in the workforce.

Researchers have also noted the impact of socioeconomic factors, such as lack of nutrition, poverty and access to care.

"All of this poses great challenges and

the need for a paradigm change in proposing possible solutions and interventions," three European researchers wrote in 2023. "We have to invest, mobilize and implement harm reduction interventions in the care of complex patients."

Easier said than done, obviously.

One positive I'm seeing is the emergence of patient-centered care as a pathway to better health outcomes. Using a patient-centered assessment lets providers understand not only a patient's physical health, but also their mental health, lifestyle, behaviors, social factors (education, employment) and ability to understand their symptoms and treatments.

As a patient advocate, I have to take all of these factors into consideration when working with a client and communicating with their care team.

Even the smallest problem in any of these dimensions can dramatically worsen a patient's health outcome.

But patient advocates and health-care providers cannot do the job by themselves. If you fall within the definition of "a complex patient," it's important for you to take the bull by the horns and participate in your own health care to the best of your ability. The same goes for your loved ones, your primary care provider and caregivers.

This is not easy in our fragmented health-care world. Still, there are actions a complex patient can take to help themselves and (one hopes) improve their health outcomes.

1. Coordinating care. Each health-care provider has to know what the others are diagnosing, treating and prescribing. It's likely that one or more of your providers is acces-

sible through a patient portal that also contains test results, notes and electronic health records.

Will they have time to read everything? Maybe not, but you should, so you can convey your understanding of what other doctors are saying. This is where medically-trained patient advocates provide a valuable service, by reviewing the records and then conveying that information to doctors in medical terminology.

2. Being honest. As humans who want to appear competent and in charge of our lives, we sometimes hesitate to tell our providers everything that's going on. Maybe there's an emerging mental health issue. Maybe you're taking a drug that hasn't been prescribed. Maybe there's been a breakup in a marriage. Maybe

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HOLYOKE
the Sun
TEAM



EDITOR/SPORTS
Greg Scibelli
thesun@turley.com



ADVERTISING SALES
Wendy Delcamp
wdelcamp@turley.com

The Holyoke Sun is published every Friday by Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, Mass. 01069. Telephone (413) 283-8393, Fax (413) 289-1977.



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PATRICK H. TURLEY
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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.

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PHONE
413.283.8393
Fax: 413.283.7017
Subscriptions: 413.283.8393

EMAIL
Advertising Sales
Wendy Delcamp
wdelcamp@turley.com

Editor
Gregory Scibelli
thesun@turley.com

WEB
www.sun.turley.com

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Nominations sought for William Pynchon Award

SPRINGFIELD – The Advertising Club of Western Massachusetts is seeking nominations for throughout Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, and Berkshire counties for the William Pynchon Award, which recognizes those citizens of our region who have rendered outstanding service to the community.

The Order of William Pynchon was established by the Advertising Club in 1915 to recognize and encourage individuals whose lives and

achievements typified the ideals of promoting citizenship and the building of a better community in western Massachusetts. Past recipients include community volunteers, social activists, teachers, journalists, public servants, business leaders, philanthropists, historians, physicians, and war heroes — a diverse group united by their passion for our region. Pynchon nominees are people you know/live/work with, who are passionate about their community

or cause, and give selflessly of their time, talent, or treasure (sometimes all three). Pynchon recipients are recognized for giving a little more and doing a little more, making them role models for community involvement. Though nominees may serve in a leadership role, they are just as likely to work anonymously or behind the scenes. The Pynchon award is not a recognition of “lifetime achievement” — age and length of service are unimportant — rather, it is depth

of dedication and influence on the community that matters. A nominee’s impact need not be region-wide, just meaningful and impactful within the community, (and the trustees’ definition of “community” is broad, including neighborhoods, municipalities, and region). There are many people doing great things in our community ... “unsung heroes,” if you will. This is your chance to sing their praises. A complete list of recipients since 1915 can be found at adclubwm.org/pynchon-awards

To nominate an individual, please submit the form on the website. The Pynchon Trustees respectfully reserve the right to eliminate nominations from consideration due to insufficient information. Nominations must be submitted by March 1, 2025 to: William Pynchon Trustees, Advertising Club of Western Massachusetts, P.O. Box 1022, West Springfield, MA 01090-1022 or by the form provided on the website. Qualifying nominees

will be considered and researched by the Pynchon Trustees. Pynchon medalists are chosen by unanimous decision of the Pynchon Trustees. The 2025 recipients will be announced in Spring 2025, with an awards ceremony tentatively scheduled for the fall of 2025. Recipients are presented with a bronze medal cast with the name and likeness of Springfield’s founder, William Pynchon, and bearing the inscription: “They honor us whom we honor.”

Free computer literacy training course 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@albanycodecode.org, or go to cancode.org/apply-now.

HCC accepting scholarship applications

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 fill-

ing 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.

HEALTH, from page 4

you’re drinking more. All of these things can impact your well-being, and your doctor needs to know about them.

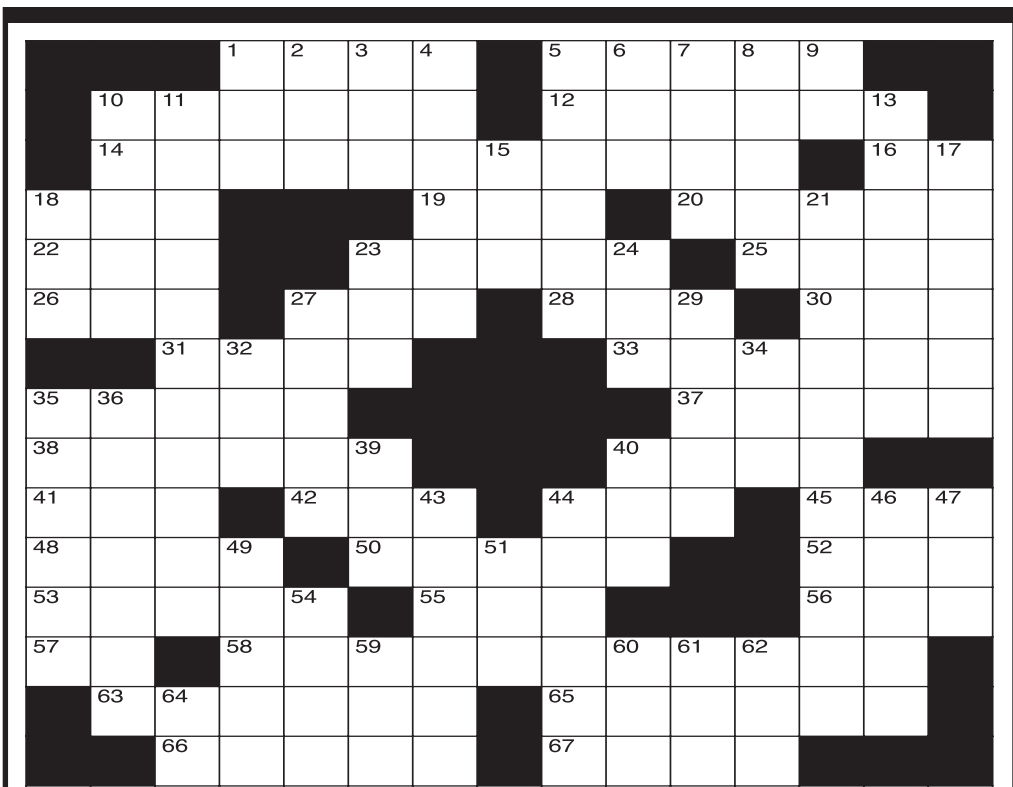
3. Taking notes. I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again. Take someone with you to medical appointments and have them take notes, or even keep a journal yourself. You can keep track not only of doctor discussions, but also

note your mental, emotional and physical symptoms on a daily basis to share with your provider.

If you are a “complex patient,” or you know someone who is, recognize that fact and take a stronger hand in your care. You may be helping yourself or a loved one live their best life.

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.



CLUES ACROSS

1. Tropical Asian plant
5. Yankees’ slugger Judge
10. Helps to preserve food
12. Plant disease
14. One who predicts
16. Equally
18. Burundian franc
19. Pouch
20. Arizona city
22. Surround
23. Hard, heavy timber
25. Witnessed
26. They ___
27. French river
28. A way to drink
30. Small constellation
31. Peruse a written work
33. Type of hound
35. Plant of the goosefoot family

CLUES DOWN

37. Evade or escape
38. A way to confine
40. Volcanic crater
41. Weekday
42. Women’s service organization (abbr.)
44. Local area network
45. Sensory receptor
48. Posted
50. Tibetan pastry
52. Licensed for Wall Street
53. Very willing
55. Golf score
56. Consume
57. Touchdown
58. Tends to remind
63. In a way, smoothed
65. Poke holes in the ground
66. Herbaceous plants
67. Taiwanese river

CLUES DOWN

1. Body art
2. Boxing’s GOAT
3. Film for posterity (abbr.)
4. Prayer
5. Calculating machine
6. Keyboard key
7. Outburst
8. Man-eating giants
9. New Hampshire
10. Type of sword
11. Counting
13. Pants style
15. Political action committee
17. U.S. government legislative branch
18. Civil Rights Act component
21. Contractors take one
23. Spanish soldier
24. A person’s brother or sister
27. Expressed pleasure
29. Song of praise
32. Shock treatment
34. Patti Hearst’s captors
35. Counteract
36. Goes over again
39. Popular Dodge truck
40. Male adult
43. A part of a river where the current is very fast
44. Rope used to lasso
46. Become less intense
47. Subway rodent
49. Lead alloy
51. Japanese honorific title
54. Advise someone
59. Famous NYC museum
60. Ocean
61. Cathode-ray tube
62. Cologne
64. It starts with these two

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 8

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Rev. Duy Le
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BBB Tip: What to know if you're using NFCs (and you probably are)

Paula Fleming
pfleming@boston.bbb.org

If you have a smartphone purchased in the last few years, it almost certainly came with NFC capability.

The technology allows users to effortlessly transfer money, share files and knock out a growing list of other tasks. But that data transfer can create vulnerabilities.

BBB has tips on what NFCs can do and how to stay safe when using them.

What exactly is NFC?

NFC stands for Near Field Communication. It's a data transfer that only works within a very short physical range. We're talking inches, not feet. Some forms of this technology require you to tap one device against another or wave them back and forth in close proximity.

NFC also stands for National Football Conference and the National Finance Center, a branch of the USDA, but we're not going to talk about those here. Near Field Communication capabilities have been around for years, but their use is becoming much more widespread.

NFCs are based on RFID (radio frequency identification) technology, a process that uses radio frequencies to identify objects. Near Field Communication is high-frequency RFID that makes it easy for one device to communicate with another.

What does it do?

Near Field Communication uses a series of protocols to make transactions easier and faster. People use them to make contactless payments, share digital content, connect one device with

another, and a list of other tasks that gets longer every day.

How do they work?

An NFC relies on proximity, so when users get close to a device they want to interact with, typically, they receive a prompt asking for permission. They follow on-screen prompts from there. It's convenient because it doesn't involve downloading an app or signing up to get started. When you activate some NFC technologies, they enable Bluetooth and use that to make your data transfer. That means you don't have to fumble around with your phone to find Bluetooth settings, choose the device you want to pair, enter the key or code, and so on.

Other NFC technologies enable Wi-Fi between two devices so they can "talk" back and forth. The big benefit here is that Wi-Fi direct has much greater bandwidth, so big files transfer faster.

What smartphones come with NFC?

New handheld devices become available all the time, so the compatible device list is constantly changing. NFCWorld maintains an exhaustive list of phones and tablets both available now and coming soon. But for most people, their mobile is already capable.

Android devices running 4.0 or later come with the ability to use NFCs for financial transactions. Phones with Android 4.4 or later allow users to exchange files and messages via NFC.

iPhone was a little later to jump on the bandwagon. However, if you have an iPhone 6 or later, it supports Near Field Communications.

Are they just for financial transactions?

The possibilities and uses for near-field communications are, for the most part, just limited by the imagination. Here are just a few things people can do with them already:

- Open car doors
- Share contact information
- Share any link you program it to have
- Make wireless payments using smartphones and tablets
- Create an automatic Wi-Fi/Bluetooth pairing between phone and vehicle for hands-free driving
- Pay for and receive access to public parking and transportation
- Send photos or video between digital cameras, cell phones and media players
- Allow shoppers to receive and redeem coupons
- Prevent hard sleepers from turning off their alarm until they're actually awake
- Enable healthcare workers to monitor medications and track physical symptoms
- Create interactive toys and games

Simplified connectivity is great, and being able to exchange funds without having to dig into our wallets was becoming popular even before social distancing was a thing. Now it's even more helpful because it means we don't have to touch cash or transaction terminals. But every time a technology is widely adopted, hackers start focusing on how they can exploit it for unfair gain.

Near Field Communications and cybersecurity

Convenience is great, but if you're like most people, you might recognize when data is just floating around, there's

a security risk, especially when technology is linked to your credit card or bank account. So how risky is NFC technology?

The good thing is if you're bumping your phone with a friend's to share music or checking out with a trusted vendor, the security risk is fairly low because of the proximity requirement. Devices must be four centimeters or less apart, and during the split seconds the data transfer actually takes to occur, it would be hard for a hacker to get in there without you noticing.

It takes more than just a bump for a transaction to occur; both sending and receiving devices must be ready to accept the data transfer. It would be difficult for a hacker to brush against you in a crowd and wirelessly withdraw from your bank account. You're not likely to collide with a stranger in the grocery store and accidentally send their phone all your personal information. But that doesn't mean NFCs are without risk.

One problem happens when people lose their phones or have their devices stolen. If a thief can unlock your device, or if you don't secure it with a strong password, there's nothing to stop him or her from waving it over a payment terminal or ATM to get your money.

NFC tags are also vulnerable to tampering. For example, users have tapped smart tags thinking they were about to access movie trailers or visit a vendor website but instead had their personal information sent to a bad actor.

General NFC security tips

- Turn NFC off when not in use: Disable NFC on your device when you're not using it to reduce the risk of unau-

thorized access or accidental connections.

- Be mindful of proximity: NFC only works within a short range (typically 4 cm or less), but attackers could use specialized tools to attempt to intercept data. Be cautious when using NFC in crowded or untrusted areas.

- Use secure apps and devices: Only use trusted apps for NFC payments or file sharing. Ensure your device has updated security features and firmware.

- Enable device authentication: Use a PIN, pattern, or biometric lock on your device to prevent unauthorized use of NFC.

- Monitor permissions: Regularly check the permissions granted to apps that use NFC to ensure they only have access to necessary features.

- Avoid connecting to unknown devices: Do not pair with or transfer files to unknown NFC-enabled devices or tags without verifying their source.

- Encrypt sensitive data: If you're using NFC for payments or sharing sensitive information, ensure the data is encrypted and transmitted over a secure channel.

NFC payment tips

- Verify payment apps: Use payment apps from trusted providers and download them only from official app stores.

- Check the terminal: Inspect payment terminals for tampering or unusual devices before tapping your phone or card.

- Enable notifications: Set up notifications for NFC transactions so you're immediately aware of any unauthorized charges.

- Use one-time

tokens: Where possible, opt for payment methods that generate one-time-use tokens for added security.

NFC tags tips

- Inspect before scanning: Avoid scanning unknown or suspicious NFC tags in public areas, as they may contain malicious code or links.

- Use a trusted NFC reader app: Use apps from reputable sources to read NFC tags, and review the permissions these apps require.

- Program tags securely: Use a PIN, pattern, or biometric lock on your device to prevent unauthorized use of NFC.

Have you heard about or experienced an NFC-related scheme or fraud? You can help spread awareness and protect others when you report it to BBB Scam Tracker.

IMMIGRANTS, from page 1

Jourdain and other members of the joint committee simply asked that Soto and Garcia work to keep the school committee and the city council updated on future steps the city will have to take as things change on a federal or state level.

"We are so reliant on Washington for so much federal assistance on different things," Jourdain said. "So certainly keep your city council, your school committee members, all of us debriefed."

Soto promised to do so. Until there is a change, the district will work to continue forward with the assumption that funding will be as it has been.

CREWS, from page 1

tions before the start of the heating season," Sheedy said.

The maintenance team works to keep many of the needed parts stocked in the warehouse so they do not have to purchase them if one piece breaks.

For more specialized parts they have various vendors they keep close contact with who can provide the parts they need as they make repairs.

Sheedy also gives thanks to the subcontractors that work with the district, as they help to support the maintenance team.

"This allows us to correctly maintain all of our heating and cooling systems," Sheedy said. "This results in keeping all of our systems functioning correctly throughout the year."

After the preparation and switch-overs are complete, the maintenance team keeps a close eye on all the school buildings to ensure that they can quickly fix any issues that arise.

The building management system sends Sheedy an electronic notification in real time if there are problems in any of the buildings.

Sheedy will then use that information to dispatch the needed team member or subcontractor to work on the issue.

Additionally, the custodial staff in each building keep an eye out for any problems and will report issues through the electronic work ticket system.

As any problems arise, the management team works hard to keep the staff that work in each building

informed.

"A follow-up email will be used to keep track of and inform certain staff of the repairs taking place," Sheedy said.

While a team member is working on the repairs and when the repairs are complete, Sheedy, a facilities director or the assistant manager keep an eye on the project to ensure the issue is resolved.

When it is time for the city to prepare its annual budget, the maintenance team and the district work together to predict what budget maintenance will need for each year.

"By using historical data from previous years, the district projects the cost increases that have to do with labor rates and supply chain issues," Sheedy said. "Spreadsheets are used to track every facet of the budget using real-time updates from our accounting systems program. Previous and current invoices are monitored closely, in turn using that data to continually update our operating and projected costs."

The maintenance team has been working hard throughout this year to keep all HPS staff and students warm and safe during the winter.

So far there have been no significant issues, but management is keeping a close eye on any systems that may need repairs, updates or maintenance soon.

"Our goal is to maintain and repair our systems correctly, while exploring options to update and implement the new installation of modern equipment to help keep our core elements at a minimum for constant repairs," Sheedy said.

SCHOOL, from page 1

wait for state guidance, they will simply have to set their own competency measures.

This matter will be further discussed at the next leadership and accountabili-

ty subcommittee, where the subcommittee will come to a decision, then recommend to the full school committee.

From there, the school committee will discuss the matter and take a vote on what to do for this school year.



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3	2BR 2BA	\$1,479	\$53,244	\$59,160
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Applications will be available February 15, 2025, through April 15, 2025, at the following locations:


- Northern Heights at 769 Main Street Springfield, MA 01105 M-F 9AM-4PM OR
- Holyoke Public Library 205 Chestnut St Holyoke, MA 01040 M-Th 8:30AM-8:30PM, Fri & Sat 8:30AM-4PM

You may also request an application by emailing ResidencesOnAppleton@wincco.com or calling 413-300-5181. Visit www.residencesonappleton.com for more details or to download an application.

Informational Public Meetings:

- March 27, 2025, at 6:00PM, at the Holyoke City Hall, located at 536 Dwight St Holyoke, MA 01040
- April 5, 2025, at 1:00PM, at the Holyoke City Hall, located at 536 Dwight St Holyoke, MA 01040

The Housing Lottery will take place at the Holyoke City Hall, located at 536 Dwight St Holyoke, MA 01040 on Thursday, April 17, 2025, at 1PM. All are welcome to attend but it is not required if you are chosen.


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Holyoke boys get home win over Warriors

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

HOLYOKE – When the Tantasqua Regional boys' basketball team faced the Holyoke Purple Knights at John 'Jinx' O'Connor Gymnasium two years ago,

they celebrated a 17-point victory.

The Warriors made another trip to Holyoke High School last Wednesday night and it was a much closer game this time.

Holyoke junior Aden Cabrera made a 3-pointer

and a lay-up during the final seconds of regulation, as the Purple Knights escaped with an exciting 59-52 home victory on senior night.

"It felt very good when I made the 3-pointer late in the fourth quarter," said Cabrera,

See BOYS, page 8



Aden Cabrera flies for the layup.



Calvin Godbolt sends a shot away.



Chauncey Ruiz goes after the tip.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



Jordan King-Perilli goes for the free throw.

Knights get win in quarterfinals

HOLYOKE – Earlier this week, Chicopee Comprehensive High School boys basketball fell 62-51 in a rematch against Holyoke. But this time, the two teams were playing in the quarterfinals of

the Western Mass. Class A Tournament.

In the matchup, Xavier Kleps had 12 points while Elijah Kleps had 10 points. Holyoke was led by Calvin Godbolt with 21 points. Aden Cabrera had 18

points and Jordan King-Perilli had 16 points. The Knights were scheduled to face Central in the semifinals while the Colts went to nonplayoff action until the state tournament begins next week.

Lady Knights get just fourth win of season

FISKDALE – Last Wednesday night, Holyoke High School girls basketball scored a 41-36 win over host Tantasqua. The Knights got

17 points from Kiara Perez while Aliana Almodovar came off the bench and scored 13 points. Holyoke improved to 4-15 on the season.



Evangeline Cauley gets ready to shoot.



Kiara Perez attempts to drive to the hoop.



Michaela Guzman came up with a rebound.



Aliana Almodovar looks to drive to the hoop.



Kylie Blaha signals a play to her teammates.



Genesis Rivera fights for possession on a rebound.

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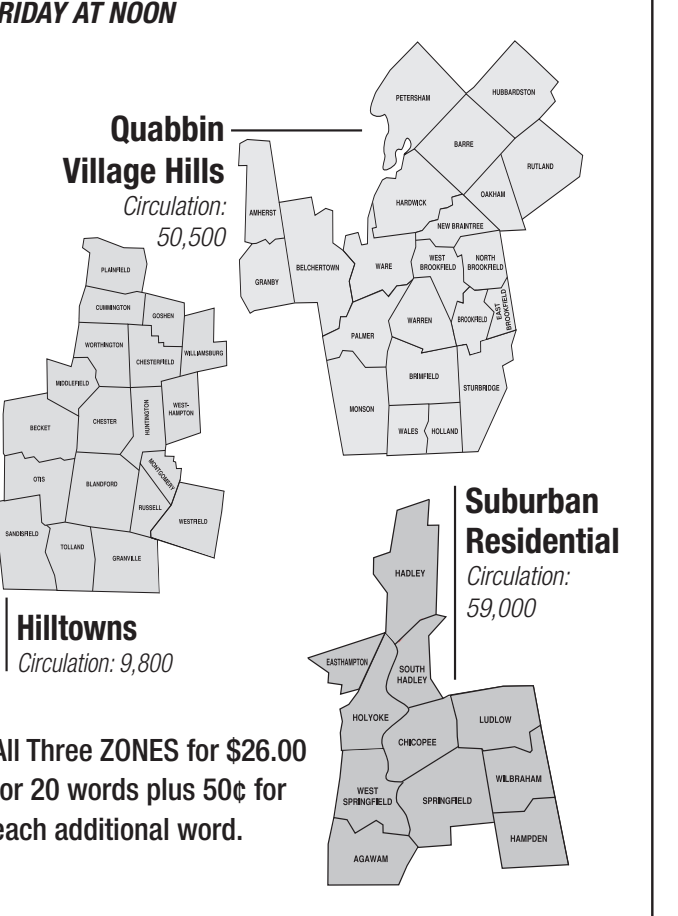
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Timothy Kowalski and 2024 Grand Colleen Elizabeth Gourde.



Amelia George (2024 Ms Congeniality) and her mom, Louise Millane-George.



Devin Sheehan (Rohan Award winner), and President John Beaulieu.



Rev. Fr. Robert Gentile Jr. gets the Citizenship Award from President John Beaulieu.



Daniel and Jacqueline Reardon, Geraldine and Christopher Bresnahan.



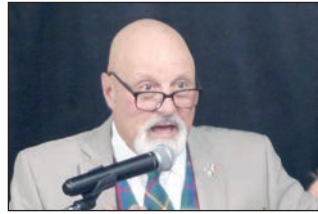
Grand Colleen Moira Reardon takes her throne.
Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



Medeya Surmava, Marissa and Jeff Szczepanek, and Wendelyn Hidalgo.



James Meenaghan receives the Gullivan Award from John Beaulieu.



President John Beaulieu shares some thoughts.



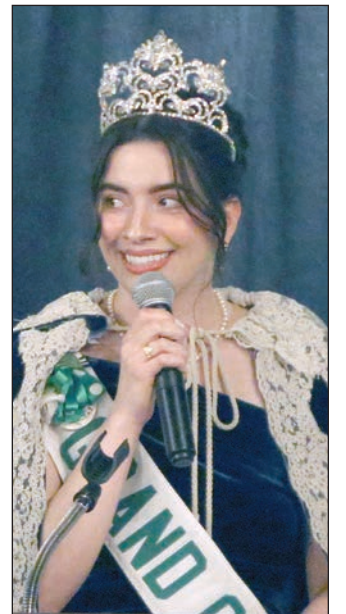
Mayor Joshua Garcia speaks at this year's coronation.



Kelsey Myers enjoys the evening.



Erin Gauthier poses with family and friends.



The 2024 Grand Colleen Elizabeth Katherine Gourde speaks.

COLLEEN, from page 1
er. Traditions like this one strengthen not only our community, but surrounding towns as well, and create lasting bonds, and it is something that makes Holyoke so unique.”
She looks forward to all the events she is going to be involved in over the next few months, and to getting to know more members of the community through these.
“I am most looking forward to meeting the Colleens from the surrounding towns, and of course, Parade Day,” Reardon said. “Being given the opportunity to meet some of the most accomplished

young women in Western Massachusetts is such a gift, and all of us celebrating our communities and heritage will be memories I’m sure we will all cherish.”
Throughout the Coronation Ceremony, several other community members were honored for their contributions to the parade committee and Holyoke as a whole.
Reverend Robert Gentile was the recipient of the 2025 Citizenship Award. This award is given to a person or organization who may be of non-Irish descent but has made substantial contributions to the parade.
“Father Gentile has

been a long supporter of the parade committee,” Parade Committee Member Hayley Dunn said. “He really got the students and the parish involved with the parade... so he is certainly a deserving recipient of the award.”
The 2025 Thomas Rohan Award was given to School Committee Member Devan Sheehan. This award is given to a longtime committee member who has made significant contributions to the parade and the committee.
Sheehan has been highly involved in the parade committee for many years. He was a past president and has helped with parade coordina-

tion, planning out the coronation ball and developing the program book.
“He has just been so involved in so many different aspects of the parade to help make it successful year after year, so we were delighted to honor him on Saturday,” Dunn said.
Jeff Walsh was honored to receive the 2025 George O’Connell Award. He was given this for his contributions to the fundraising efforts of the parade.
“He has raised a significant amount of money through that fundraising event [the Martial Mania event] year after year,” Dunn said. “He

has also chaired the golf tournament and other efforts. So Jack has been a terrific committee member in his short time.”
Finally, the 2025 Daniel Gullivan Award was presented to James Meegahan. This award is given to a longtime committee member who has made significant contributions to the overall success of the parade, even when they are not a resident of Holyoke.
Meegahan lives in the eastern part of the state and, despite this, he still comes

to Holyoke parade weekend each year to help with the parade.
“He is also still very involved with the ambassador’s selection and the ambassador’s breakfast,” Dunn said. “So we are truly grateful to Jim for still coming back here to give his support.”
All of the award recipients of the night were honored to have been selected.
Overall, the evening was a perfect way to celebrate many different members of Holyoke and to kick off the Irish season.

