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'PILOT' program presented to council

HOLYOKE – A policy designed to gain revenue from tax-exempt property owners was presented to a City Council subcommittee last week by Mayor Joshua A. Garcia.

Known as a PILOT – Payment in Lieu of Taxes – the purpose of the policy is to bring in a portion of the money a tax-exempt property – properties owned by non-profit organizations and quasi-public institutions – would pay were it not tax-exempt to help pay for critical municipal services that benefit everyone.

Mayor Garcia and City Solicitor Lisa Ball have been approaching tax-exempt organizations about paying PILOTs and have learned

See PILOT, page 3

Delegation represents city in Ireland

TRALEE, Ireland – Holyoke Mayor Joshua A. Garcia and a Paper City delegation of 33 participated in a full-immersion Hibernian experience: the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in Holyoke's Sister City, Tralee.

Garcia was Grand Marshal of the colorful event, an honor bestowed by officials of this ancient city of 26,000. Cheering crowds lined the route which Garcia and Tralee Mayor Mikey Sheehy covered sitting in the back of an antique car. The Holyoke delegation marched behind carrying mini-American and Irish flags, waving to spectators and sharing countless high-fives with children lining the route. When the USA contingent reached a reviewing stand, the DJ greeted the American guests and then blasted out the Bee Gees' 1989 hit "Massachusetts" to the delight of both the crowd and the Holyoke delegation. Tralee officials and



A delegation of representatives from Holyoke led by Mayor Joshua Garcia marched in a parade hosted by Holyoke's Sister City of Tralee, Ireland last week. Submitted photo

townspeople rolled out the hospitality. After a guided tour of the city, which was founded in 1216, the

Holyoke visitors were guests of honor Sunday evening at a ceremony in the city's museum. Mayor Sheehy

expressed the desire to strengthen and expand the Tralee-Holyoke connection. Mayor Garcia expressed his

gratitude and appreciation for the warm welcome and

See IRELAND, page 6

School committee laments rising transportation costs

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – During the school committee meeting on Feb. 24, Superintendent/Receiver Anthony Soto made a presentation on the current budget projections for fiscal year 2026.

One of the biggest costs within the budget was the projected transportation costs for the district.

The current breakdown of the transportation budget places the cost at about \$12 million.

"Our transportation bud-

get is bigger than the fire department's budget in the city," Soto said.

A large reason behind this large cost for transportation is an increase in rates for students being transported to Springfield through the McKinney Vento program.

"Springfield's rate for this transportation dou-

bled and we have a significant amount of kids who either live in Holyoke and go to Springfield or live in Springfield and come to Holyoke, but they have McKinney Vento status," Soto said.

However, Soto took the moment to note that while these rates have increased, the

district is partially reimbursed for McKinney Vento transportation costs.

"The majority of McKinney Vento transportation is reimbursed currently, but so right now we are getting close to 100% reimbursement," Soto said. "Although this number is going up, the revenue that the city is going to be getting for McKinney Vento is also going up."

Another large influence on the transportation costs are the costs for transporting special education students. A total of 65% of the transportation budget goes

toward special ed.

"The majority of our transportation is for special education at this point," Executive Director of Finance Sean Mangano said. "That includes mini buses and vans."

Due to this, Mangano, Soto and other district staff are looking into ways to potentially cut down these transportation costs.

"We are being really aggressive with trying to find savings in this budget," Soto said. "This is a challenging budget year so we need to make sure that we are being fiscally responsible and some-

times that comes with collapsing routes, having more kids on buses or we have some bus monitors that may not be required in an IEP."

While the district does not want to take away services from those who need it, they do want to assess if there is a way to combine routes of students who need special education transportation.

This way the kids can still get the transportation they need while saving the district some funds.

School Committee

See SCHOOL page 6

"We are being really aggressive with trying to find savings in this budget."

Superintendent/Receiver Anthony Soto

Area resident raising awareness for those suffering from 'long' COVID

By Kristin Rivers
krivers@turley.com

WILBRAHAM – Kevin Welsh is raising awareness for Long COVID, letting others know they are not alone.

Welsh, 33, is a life-long resident of Wilbraham and got COVID for the first time on October 1, 2023. He was an academic advisor and professor at Southern New Hampshire University at the time and, before the pandemic, was a teacher at Minnechaug Regional High School.

"I went the whole time without getting it. We had been keeping up with our vaccinations, we were doing everything we were supposed to be doing, but it gets ya. It gets everybody at some point, so I got it," Welsh said. "I wasn't hospitalized, but I was mostly really sick and it just never got better. Usually people with a COVID infection, a week to 10 days they're back on their

feet. We got three, four, five weeks down the line and the only thing that was better was I wasn't testing positive anymore."

Welsh still had all the symptoms, including loss of taste and smell, fever, body aches, debilitating fatigue, cough and respiratory and cognitive problems. He, also, experiences vocal problems as due to the inflammation from the virus, the vocal folds in his throat "are actively closing off my airway covering my voice box."

"I've had three rounds of Botox injections into my throat to try to help and they haven't helped. I have another one set for the end of the month and that's the maximum they can do," Welsh said.

He elaborated on the debilitating fatigue he experiences.

"I now get what is called nonrestorative sleep which means I'm asleep but my body does not recharge its batteries essentially. In order to get through the day I have to take several naps and there is almost a narcolepsy aspect to it as I will fall asleep mid-conversation, mid-bite of food or really any random time," Welsh said. "I went from someone that just needed a few hours sleep to have a great day, to someone that would sleep 24 hours a day if I could. Since I've been battling Long COVID I crave sleep like peo-

ple crave food."

Other symptoms include developing blood problems he never had before, high blood pressure and becoming B12 anemic.

After many visits to his primary care, Welsh said it got to the point where they said "We can't really help you," sending him to a Long COVID clinic in Hartford, CT. There, he tried medications and nebulizers, physical therapy, speech therapy and cognitive therapy, which didn't work.

"So I started there around December 2023 and then—now—it's still so new that there's still not, really, a ton that's known about Long COVID. It's mostly just trying to treat symptomatically and it doesn't really work," Welsh said.

He later got a phone call from the physical therapy that the clinic in was closing after "the doctor put in her resignation and didn't tell any of the patients."

After searching throughout Connecticut, New York, Rhode Island and the Boston area, Welsh went to Massachusetts General Hospital where he's been ever since, with a team of seven or eight doctors who are heads of their departments. He now goes there several times a month to try to find answers, taking part in studies and experimental trials.

"Once we got into Boston with these doctors, they were

very clear from day one that if I was not fully vaccinated and boosted, then my infection would have killed me," Welsh said.

After getting Long COVID, Welsh shared he had to resign from his job at SNHU and could no longer do things such as going out to a restaurant.

"Life has paused. Everybody, the world, has gone back to normal. My world has not and we don't know when it will. There's a good chance these are things I deal with for the rest of my life," Welsh said.

Another difficult thing for Welsh is when he wears a mask when going to the grocery store, sharing the reactions he and others experienced.

"The looks, comments, that I get for wearing a mask in public and coughing and being winded. COVID is still so politicized that people—anyone who goes out in public with a mask—whether it's me, my family, other people, we get criticized for it and it's terrible. It shouldn't be that way. At the end of the day, how does somebody doing something to protect themselves impact somebody else's everyday life?" Welsh said.

Welsh added he kept this to himself "for a long time," but decided to share his story to raise awareness.

See COVID, page 10



Kevin Welsh, pictured right, stands with his father outside Gillette Stadium, the home of the New England Patriots, with a sign reading "I'm Fighting Long COVID. Pats Inspire Me!" that was signed by numerous players. Welsh is raising awareness for Long COVID. Submitted photos



The Team Welsh wristbands supporters wear to support Kevin Welsh.

In The News

Pride Month events kicks off early

HOLYOKE – Get ready to show your pride, Holyoke. The Holyoke Pride Committee is rolling out an unforgettable series of vibrant and inclusive events this June to honor and uplift the LGBTQIA+ community. Whether you're a long-time ally or new to the celebration, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Kick Off Early with the 'Over the Rainbow' Fundraiser Before the full celebration begins in June, Holyoke Pride invites you to start the party early with the 'Over the Rainbow' fundraiser on April 11. It's more than just a night out—it's a chance to fuel the spirit of Pride while showing your

support for the community.

Headlined by local sensation Richard Parris Scott and the Band, the evening will also feature powerhouse performances from Avery Joi, Chestina Thrower, Natasha Ellis, and Eyyan Diaz. With music that moves you and an energy that fills the room, this night promises unforgettable memories. Plus, thrilling prizes await—don't miss your chance to win big while supporting a great cause.

Friday, April 11 from 7 to 11 p.m. at De La Luz Soundstage, 114 Race Street, Holyoke Tickets are available on a sliding scale (\$20 - \$50)—please give what you can. Tickets avail-



able at holyokepride.org Pride Month Events - June 2025 Pride Month officially kicks off with the iconic Flag Raising Ceremony on June 2 at Holyoke City Hall at 5 p.m. Feel the rush of pride as the flag soars high, reminding us of our commitment to love, equality, and the power of community.

UCCH offering 'connections' at concert

HOLYOKE – We all need connection. The United Congregational Church of Holyoke is inviting the public to join us as we host the Westfield State University Chorale for a free of charge concert on Saturday, April 12 at 7 p.m.

The concert is called "Connections", a choral experience exploring the

bonds of human experience. The performance features music by Ola Gjello, Zanaida Robles, Josquin Despres, Emma Lou Diemer, William Dawson and Margrit Kits. The WSU Chorale is directed by Scott Bailey.

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.ucholyoke.org, find us on Facebook or Instagram, or call our office at 413-532-1483 Monday through Friday from 9 am – 2 pm.

Mini-golf, game event hosted by HPL

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Public Library will host a miniature golf and game event on Saturday, April 12 from 9:30 a.m. to

3:30 p.m.

There will be human foosball and other outdoor games, prizes at a lucky ticket auction, miniature golf

taking place on every floor of the library, and much more.

There is no cost for the event and all are welcome to attend.

1-day giving campaign raises \$181K

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Community College Foundation raised more than \$181,000 for scholarships and student-support programs during its March 4 "Together HCC" one-day giving campaign.

The fifth annual "Together HCC: Drive to Change Lives" campaign exceeded its goal of 500 donors, receiving donations worth \$181,285 from 504 alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends of the college during the 24-hour fundraising drive.

"For the fifth straight year, our network of alumni, faculty, staff, and friends continue to show how much they care about HCC students," said Julie Phillips, HCC director of development. "With so many people giving what they can, it shows our students that we are invested in their success."

All of the money raised goes directly to six areas that support HCC students: academic excellence and innovation; scholarships; the Thrive Student Resource Center and Food Pantry; the President's Student Emergency Fund; the President's Fund for Opportunity, and the HCC Foundation's general, unrestricted fund.

HCC alumni made up the majority of donors at 37 percent, followed by HCC faculty and staff at 30 percent; 19 percent from friends of the college, 5 percent from parents, and 5 percent from students.

Together they unlocked \$130,000 in challenge pledges, including \$5,000 from campaign partner Gary Rome, owner of Gary Rome Hyundai in Holyoke and a member of the HCC Foundation Board of Directors.

"Every gift to the 'Together HCC' campaign matters," said Phillips. "When we remove barriers for one student, we're not just changing their life, we're transforming their family's future and strengthening our entire region."

The HCC Foundation, the college's charitable, non-profit foundation, launched "Together HCC: A Campaign for Caring" in March 2020 to build community support and raise money for students experiencing financial distress during the pandemic. Since 2021, with Rome signed on, HCC has added the "Drive to Change Lives" theme and collectively raised nearly \$1 million for student support programs.

Anyone who missed this year's day of giving and still wants to contribute to the HCC Foundation can do so at hcc.edu/give.

Annual Jazz Festival to be held on March 28-29

HOLYOKE – The annual Holyoke Community College Jazz Festival returns for its 26th year on Friday, March 28, with pianist, composer and educator Earl MacDonald joining the Amherst Jazz Orchestra and members of the HCC jazz faculty for a big band concert.

The Friday show begins at 8 p.m. in HCC's Leslie Phillips Theater in the Fine & Performing Arts building on the main HCC campus, 303 Homestead Ave.

MacDonald, the former musical director and pianist for trumpeter Maynard Ferguson, is director of Jazz

Studies at the University of Connecticut and teaches annually at the Jazz in July program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

"I met Earl MacDonald at the Jazz in July program at UMass and worked with him there in the summertime," said HCC jazz professor Bob Ferrier, the jazz festival organizer. "He's a great educator, great piano player, and on top of it, a great guy."

The concert is free for HCC students, faculty and staff, and \$10 for the general public.

Led by trombonist David Sporny, the Amherst Jazz Orchestra has been a main-

stay of the HCC Jazz Festival since the first in 1998.

On Saturday, March 29, starting at 10 a.m. in the Fine & Performing Arts Building, MacDonald and members of the HCC Jazz Festival faculty will lead improvisation clinics, demonstrations, and jam sessions for area high school and college musicians.

Saturday events are free and open to the public.

As a bandleader, MacDonald has released seven albums. His accolades include a 2022 Covenant Award from GMA Canada, the Connecticut Office of the Arts' 2020 Artistic

Excellence Award, the Sammy Nestico Award for big band arranging, and two "Jazz Album of the Year" JUNO Award nominations.

The Winnipeg, Canada, native earned degrees from McGill University and Rutgers, where he apprenticed with jazz master Kenny Barron.

He has been called "a magical, musical alchemist of hip hybrids" by the Hartford Courant and "a major force in the world of jazz composition" by Dan Bilawsky on AllAboutJazz.com.

The Amherst Jazz Orchestra, led by trombon-



HCC will hold its 26th Jazz Festival next weekend.

Submitted photo

ist David Sporny, has been a mainstay of the HCC Jazz Festival since the first one in 1998.

For more information, please contact Bob Ferrier at 413-552-2480 or rferrier@hcc.edu or Mary Starzyk at 413-552-2485 or mstarzyk@hcc.edu.

To learn more about guest artist Earl MacDonald, please go to: earlmacdonald.com.

Easter Bunny hops to mall

HOLYOKE – Spring is on its way and Holyoke Mall is egg-cited to kick off the season with visits and photos from the Easter Bunny once again this year. Mr. Cottontail arrives at Holyoke Mall on Friday, March 28. Reservations are now open so reserve your time slot at www.wherisbunny.com. Guests who pre-book will receive a reservation gift.

The Easter Bunny can be found in his spring garden in Honor Court, on the lower level near Hobby Lobby, for greetings and pictures. The Bunny's Gazebo will be open:

- Monday to Friday: 2 to 7 p.m., extends to 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on April 7

- Saturday: 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

- Sunday: 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Children of all ages love

visiting the Easter Bunny, so get dressed in your Easter best and bring the whole family to capture that perfect moment! Photo packages and pricing can be found here.

The Easter Bunny will also have 2 special events this season:

- Bunny Cares Sensory Friendly Event: Sunday, April 6: 9 to 10:30 a.m.

- Pet Photo Night: Monday, April 7 and Tuesday, April 8, 4 to 7 p.m.

To celebrate the start of spring, we will also be joined by Ed Popielarczyk for his Spring Spectacular Magic Show on Saturday, March 29. The fun-filled show will take place from 11 a.m. to 12 noon on the Lower Level, Macy's Court. This event is free, open to the public, and is best suited for children ages 12 and under.

Applications available for Carlos Vega fund grants

HOLYOKE – The year marks the 14th for The Carlos Vega Fund for Social Justice mini grants.

Local non-profits and individuals are invited to apply for funding between March 10 and the April 18 deadline, by completing the application form available at www.carlosvegafund.org. All applicants must have either 501(c)(3) status or be fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) organization.

For more than 40 years, Carlos Vega fought for social justice in the Greater Holyoke area. In 2010, a small group of family and friends started the Fund to support the kind of social justice initiatives that were important to Carlos.

Carlos Vega Fund for Social Justice provides grants amounting up to \$2,000 to be used for a specific, one-

time program or project that focuses on the fundamental primary causes of injustice, fosters change, and promotes self-help and empowerment.

The purpose of the grants is to support the efforts of those who are addressing issues of poverty and oppression, and involve people who are socially and economically marginalized in the Greater Holyoke area.

Previous mini grants have supported a variety of other organizations including: Girls Inc. of the Valley, Granby Public Schools, The Gray House, Holyoke Public Schools, Holyoke Safe



Treehouse, Seeds of a Father, The Care Center, and Wistariahurst Museum.

The Carlos Vega Fund for Social Justice is administered through the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts and is overseen by an advisory committee. Since 2012, the Fund has awarded more than \$71,000 to more than 50

organizations in the greater Holyoke area.

In addition to our spring grant cycle, the Carlos Vega Fund advisory board is announcing a new track of funding to support local organizations with our Event Sponsorship request for up to \$500. The request form is available on the Carlos Vega Fund website, carlosvegafund.org.

Looking to the fall of 2025, we will be honoring our 11th Carlos Vega Social Justice Award recipient who will be announced later this year.

For further information and/or to obtain an application, please visit the Carlos Vega Fund for Social Justice website at <http://www.carlosvegafund.org/> or contact Aaron Vega at carlosvegafund.413@gmail.com.

Donovan's Irish Pub Western Massachusetts #1 Irish Pub!

Friday, March 21st Blarney Brothers	Saturday, March 22nd 12 noon Mnummers 7pm The Healys	Sunday, March 23rd The Healys After the parade
Friday, March 27th Baird Souls	Saturday, March 28th Floyd Patterson	

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HCC Culinary Arts program hosting open house, tasting event

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College will host an open house and free community tasting event on Wednesday, April 9, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, 164 Race St.

Visitors will be able to tour the state-of-the-art kitchens at the college's culinary arts facility, sample dishes prepared by culinary arts students and faculty, learn about the college's culinary arts certificate and associate degree programs, noncredit job training and personal enrichment classes, and play Food Bash Bingo for a chance to win prizes.

"We will have food in every kitchen, showcas-

ing the work of our talented students and instructors," said Stacy Graves, the culinary arts institute coordinator. "Various HCC programs and community partners will have informational tables in the dining room so the public can learn about their programs."

Visitors will have the opportunity to talk to representatives from HCC programs and offices, including Admissions, the Marieb Adult Learner Success Center, HCC Foundation, Alumni Relations, Thrive Center and Food Pantry, El Centro, ALANA Men in Motion, and Jumpstart, as well as personnel from area community groups, includ-

ing Tech Foundry/Tech Hub, United Way, Alzheimer's Organization, and Holyoke Medical Center.

The HCC Culinary Arts Truck – a.k.a. The CAT – will also be parked outside the building for visitors to explore, and the HCC Culinary Arts Club will be selling homemade ice cream as a club fundraiser.

Staff from the HCC Admissions office will be on hand to discuss enrollment options, including MassEducate, the state program for free community college.

In 2021, HCC placed 50th among the Best Culinary Schools in America, a list that also includes

such esteemed schools as the Culinary Institute of America. HCC's culinary program ranked third in New England after Johnson & Wales in Providence, R.I. and Southern Maine Community College in Portland. Best Choice Schools cited HCC for the quality of its one-year certificate and two-year associate of arts in science degree programs in culinary arts, as well as its 20,000 square-foot culinary arts facility, which opened in downtown Holyoke in 2018.

The HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute is equipped with four modern kitchens, a bakery, hotel lab, and student-run dining room.

For more information



There will be an open house in the culinary department at HCC on Wednesday, April 9.

Submitted photo

about HCC's Culinary Arts program, please visit hcc.edu/culinary or send an email to CAI@hcc.edu.

NAMI holding art reception

HOLYOKE – NAMI-WM (The National Alliance on Mental Illness of Western Massachusetts) will hold an opening reception for its 14th Annual Art and Poetry Show featuring the work of artists and poets living with mental health conditions. Taking place on Wednesday, April 1st from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Chicopee Public Library, 449 Front St. The reception, and parking adjacent to the library, are free. The show will feature art and poetry works, some for sale to the public, with all pro-

ceeds going to the artists. Complimentary refreshments will be served and all are welcome to attend this very special event. The exhibit runs the entire month of April.

This is a wonderful venue for artists and poets with lived experience to have a showcase for their work. It provides an important opportunity to educate the public about the lives, abilities, and creativity of individuals in the Western Mass. community with mental health conditions.

Library hosts dominoes club

HOLYOKE – Love the strategic game of dominoes? Come play it at the Holyoke Public Library from 5 to 7 p.m. every Monday starting Monday, March 10. The weekly

games will be held in the first-floor board room. For more information, call Abbey at 413-420-8101 or email abuendinger@holyo-kelibrary.org. The event is geared toward adults.

PILOT, from page 1

that the city needed a better, more systematic approach to these conversations so that the process is fair and equitable and less of a "shake-down" situation. The Mayor's Government Restructuring Advisory Council, one of several advisory panels Garcia created on taking office in 2021, took up the issue of non-profits acquiring properties in Holyoke and taking them off the tax rolls. Mayor Garcia empowered the Advisory Council to research consultants the city could contract with to help explore the issue and help draft a policy. A discussion with the Collins Center for Public Management was initiated in early 2024 which later led to a \$13,000 contract, supported by the City Council.

The draft PILOT policy and analysis presented Tuesday was developed by the Collins Center.

Stephen E. Cirillo, a Collins Center associate who specializes in PILOT strategies, financial forecasting, capital improvement planning, and financial policies, presented the policy designed for Holyoke. He described the data-gathering involved in the first phase of the project: Assessor's records, classification forms, existing PILOT agreements, interviews with Garcia and other City officials, and an inventory of Holyoke's tax-exempt parcels — 940 of them, in all, which is about 16% of the total assessed value. In FY2025, the primary property class in Holyoke is residential, accounting for nearly 66% of the total assessed value. The commercial, industrial, and personal property classes (CIP) make up 18%, while the exempt class constitutes 16%.

Cirillo recommended establishing 25% of the assessed valuation as the PILOT target. He said the City might consider setting a lower

percentage target for low-value, tax-exempt properties.

The 25% figure, Cirillo said, represents the approximate share of the City budget that goes to provide police, fire, and public works coverage: emergency and security services plus road maintenance. These three, he said, are services all property owners receive, whether taxpaying or tax-exempt.

Garcia said the City has, over the years, arrived at PILOT payments from a handful of tax-exempt property owners. But that those agreements lacked formality and are, in several cases, "handshake" arrangements. The policy presented Tuesday calls for written contracts that include established percentage amounts.

"We are committed to creating a sustainable financial future for Holyoke while ensuring that all community stakeholders contribute to the essential services that we all rely on," Mayor Garcia said.

"Beginning July 1, the policy will be adopted and the City will seek voluntary PILOT agreements with all tax-exempt institutions within the community that own real property."

Garcia explained that these written PILOT agreements will be based on fair market value and a tax levy. PILOT agreements will be established based on a percentage of the amount that the tax-exempt property would pay if not exempt. The percentage is determined based on the tax levy amount that supports the critical services of the City's police, fire and public works operations. The City has determined that this share is equal to at least 25% of the full levy.

Garcia said, "For smaller, community-based tax-exempt organizations with controlling interests in properties assessed at less than \$2 million in FY 2025, that the share will be equal to at least 15% of the full levy."

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Can I avoid paying the Medicare premium?

Dear Rusty:

Is there any way I can get out of paying the \$185 I am told will be taken out of my Social Security for Medicare Part B when I turn 65?

We pay for Medicare all our working lives, and now I have to pay a monthly premium for insurance that only covers 80%.

Signed: Disheartened Senior

Dear Disheartened:

For clarification, the money you paid into Medicare while working during your lifetime was for Medicare Part A, inpatient hospitalization coverage. The Medicare taxes paid while working entitled you to free Medicare coverage for Part A, inpatient hospitalization coverage, but they do not entitle you to Medicare coverage for outpatient services coverage for doctors, med-

ical tests, etc.. For that coverage from Medicare, you must enroll in Medicare Part B, for which there is a monthly premium (\$185 per month for 2025). If you wish to have Medicare Part B coverage, you must enroll in Medicare Part B at age 65, unless you have other "creditable" healthcare coverage from an employer.

The Medicare Part B premium will be automatically deducted from your Social Security payment when you enroll in Medicare and there is no way to avoid it if you wish to have Medicare healthcare coverage for outpatient medical services. But, if you currently have "creditable" healthcare coverage from an employer, you can delay enrolling in Medicare Part B (thus avoiding the premium) until your employer



coverage ends.

If you don't enroll in Medicare Part B during your initial enrollment period at 65 or in a Special Enrollment Period following the end of your creditable employer healthcare coverage, then you will incur a penalty for enrolling in Medicare Part B outside of the prescribed enrollment periods. That penalty is a permanent increase in your Medicare Part B premium. FYI, "creditable" is an employer group plan with at least 20 participants.

We do not advise going without outpatient healthcare coverage, so you should carefully consider enrolling in Medicare Part B when

you turn 65. If you are already collecting Social Security benefits, you will be automatically enrolled, but you can opt out of Part B if you wish - it's just not advisable, unless you have current creditable healthcare coverage from an employer.

So, to recap: the Medicare taxes you paid while working only entitled you to free Medicare Part A inpatient hospitalization coverage. You must enroll in Medicare Part B (for which there is a monthly premium) to have Medicare healthcare coverage for outpatient healthcare services. Both Medicare Part A and Part B have deductibles and copayments, for which you may wish to consider getting either a supplemental insurance plan or a Medicare

Advantage plan. But, in either case, you must still have both Medicare Part A and Part B to obtain such additional healthcare coverage.

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

Grateful for the March garden

I don't know about you, but those first few warmer days do something to my brain. I begin to expect that we are in for nice weather all the time.

It's easy to start dreaming and scheming, but alas, we are not exactly on a fast track to summer just yet, nor should we be. There is much to enjoy about this time of year.

Here are just a few of my favorite things about March.

First on the list is that my however-many-year-old Gerber daisy houseplant gave me a flower, with a couple more on the way. I had three of these plants last year. I gave a two away in one of my "less is more" moods.

Do they bloom as well as they did when they were a year old? No, but that bright and cheery daisy in seashell pink was just the pick-me-up I needed last week.

Soon, you will see Gerber daisies for sale in the grocery stores and plant nurseries. Try overwintering one in a bright but cool window next winter for your own dose of pre-spring happiness.

After the size 10 footprint landed on the corner of my front border, in exactly the spot that I planted some tulip bulbs last fall, I made a fence out of apple tree prunings. What a fun March activity!

I bent each long piece into a U shape and plunged the ends into the ground, starting the next one in the middle of the one prior. That outta keep my husband off the bulbs; I hope at least.

Speaking of prunings, I have started to accumulate "pea brush." I'll be sowing pea seeds in the next few weeks, and although I typically plant the seeds right up against the garden's fence, I am going to need more room this year, and these leftover prunings will be perfect for the tendrils to grab hold of.

I make a wide bed the length of the garden row, insert the prunings in the middle of the row and plant pea seeds four deep up against the branches. In addition to my old stand by, shelling peas, I am going to be sowing sugar snap and snow peas.

My first experience with sugar snap peas came from harvesting some pods while on a weekend getaway at bed and breakfast. It was a cool little place in southern New Hampshire where you could pick the vegetables from the kitchen garden and eat them for dinner.



It'll be fun to grow my own for fresh eating.

"Pea brush" can also be used to support annual or perennial flowers that tend to have weak or floppy stems. The brush blends into the scenery a little better than stakes and twine, and it's easily dismantled when the time comes.

My favorite March bulb is a harbinger of all harbingers, the Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*). Toughened points on the leaf tips make it possible for the snowdrop to push through the crusty soil of late winter.

Two or three strappy leaves grow from each bulb; most often there is just one flower. You'll notice three white outer petals first and upon closer inspection you'll see green tipped inner petals.

The flowers are held on the stem in a nodding fashion and in my experience they stay in bloom for upwards of



Snowdrops

three weeks. Reportedly they are well adapted for bees, at least those that are brave enough to venture out of the hive in search of pollen during the warmest days of late winter!

Snowdrops will naturalize if happy, increasing in numbers both above and below the ground! Although we "deadhead" most bulbs, keeping spent flower heads of this genus in place will allow seeds to ripen and new plants to form.

It is interesting to observe the process of a snowdrop self-sowing. Once the flower has gone by a large seed will form; because of its weight, the stem will bend toward the ground dropping its ripe seed at a perfect distance from the

mother plant. Under no circumstances should the foliage of a bulb be removed until it is brown and dry. It may not be the most beautiful to look at, but all the while that it is green it is making and storing food for next year's flowers.

Enjoy these early days in and around the garden.

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



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The 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

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For more information, call 413-283-8393.

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspa-

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

the Sun TEAM



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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.

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

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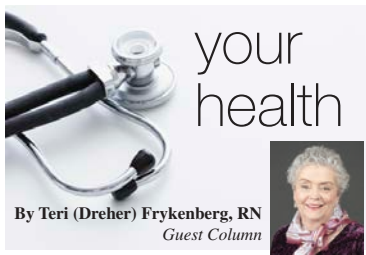
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Animal bites, even from pets, can be dangerous



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column



authorities or treated in the ER or doctor's office, so there are likely many more.

Here are some things to know about animal bites.

Cat bites can be more serious than dog bites

That cute little kitten may look harmless compared to a snarling dog, but if it bites or scratches you, watch out. The likelihood of a cat bite becoming infected is double of that of a dog bite, according to the World Health Organization.

Dogs' teeth may be bigger, but cats' slender, sharp fangs can penetrate a wound deeper, causing damage to tendons or ligaments. Cats don't necessarily have more bacteria in their mouths, but, as self-groomers, their mouths are anything but clean. Women are the most frequent victims of cat bites.

Unvaccinated feral cats are dangerous, though they probably won't let you come near. Among domestic cats, the most common cause for a bite is when they're being medicated. If you've ever tried to get a cat to swallow a pill, you know this to be true.

If the vet prescribes a

pill for your cat, have them demonstrate how to administer it. Better yet, ask if the medication comes in a liquid form that you can administer using a syringe.

Cat scratch disease is a thing

Cat scratch disease (CSD), also known as cat scratch fever or Bartonellosis, is a bacterial infection, most commonly transmitted through scratches or bites from cats, especially kittens, that have fleas carrying the bacteria. The bacteria can also be spread through exposure to cat saliva or flea bites.

CSD is rarely serious on its own, but those with weakened immune systems and children are more vulnerable. There are two telltale signs: swollen lymph nodes and bumps or cysts under the skin, usually near the wound. It usually goes away on its own, but if you develop fever or the infection seems to be spreading, get medical attention.

Rabies is nothing to laugh at

Rabies is a viral disease that is more common in wild animals (skunks, squir-

rels, raccoons, foxes) than domesticated ones, which are usually vaccinated. If you're taking a nature walk and encounter wildlife, even though it's cute and you want to share your granola, keep your distance. Rabies is also more common with a cat bite.

Though rabies cases in the U.S. are extremely rare, if you are bitten, you need immediate treatment.

Report animal bites

You should contact animal control or your local police if you are bitten by an animal that behaves in an odd way; an unknown pet or one that's unvaccinated; or a stray or wild animal. In Massachusetts, any non-domestic animal biting or scratching a human must be reported to Department of Public Health Epidemiology at 617-983-6800.

How to avoid animal bites

These tips seem like common sense, but they bear repeating, especially where children are concerned:

- Don't scream or run near an animal.
- Avoid eye contact
- Don't have food out when a strange animal is

nearby.

• Stand very still with your hands at your sides.

• Don't pet or catch a wild animal.

• Never bother an animal while it's eating.

• Never tease or chase an animal or pull its ears, tail or paws.

• Once the animal loses interest, slowly back away until you no longer see it.

• Walk away if an animal is growling. Don't run.

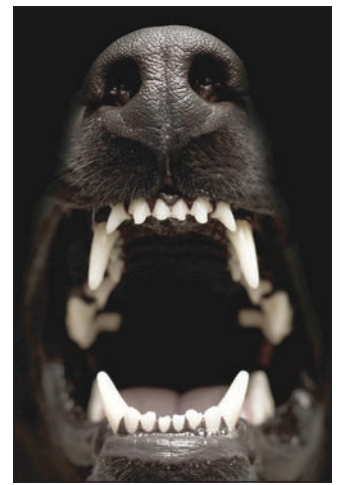
• If attacked, give the animal your jacket, book bag or anything you can put between you and it.

• If you fall down, curl into a ball with your hands over your ears and don't move. Try not to scream and roll around.

We love our companion animals, but keep this in mind: They are still just that – animals that may behave unpredictably.

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 success-

ful 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.



Springtime and the warming weather in general usually bring about an increase in the number of animal bites reported to health authorities. As you might expect, the main culprits are dogs, but while cats are responsible for fewer bites, they are responsible for more infections.

And as people spend more time outdoors, they may be more likely to encounter wildlife, such as raccoons, skunks and foxes.

All this is to say that animal bites are nothing to be ignored. In the United States, there are between 2 million and 5 million bites each year, the vast majority of reported bites being caused by dogs, with the remainder caused by cats (5 to 10 percent) and rodents (2 to 3 percent). Children are bitten more often than adults.

Of course, most animal bites aren't reported to

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<p>CLUES ACROSS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Take heed One's superior Prepped meat Tighten anew Type of textile fiber Animalistic When you hope to get somewhere Offender Former NYC mayor Ed Type of cryptocurrency Mauna _____, Hawaiian volcano Herring-like fish Popular PBS program Congressman (abbr.) Flightless Australian birds Defrosted 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Prior Yankee sensation Kevin Nasal mucus Some are southern A place to construct Popular beer brand Shouts of farewell Network of nerves Make a mistake Showed old movie Body parts A divisor Congressional investigatory body Papers Most unnatural Judge the worth of something Makes sounds while sleeping Which Hungarian Violinist 	<p>CLUES DOWN</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Pages Head pain A loud utterance Large brown seaweed Hulu's chef Carmine Greek mountain Made final Bar Tai subgroup What you eat Teaches again Small constellation Type of berry Cows fattened for meat A way to hoof it Exaggerated a role About two Long upholstered seat 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What employees earn Fiber from a coconut husk Digits Polish by rubbing Liquid body substances Furniture with open shelves Edible part of a chicken Satisfy Tool used to remove Icelandic poems Swiss village Drunks Evergreen plant genus Light precipitation Ribosomal ribonucleic acid An informal debt instrument
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frduyle@blessedsacramentholyoke.org
1945 Northampton St., Holyoke
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Sunday 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
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Monday - Friday: MASS 6:45 a.m.
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firstbaptistchurchholyokeye@comcast.net
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Wednesday Bible Studies, one at 11 a.m. and one at 5:30 p.m.

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CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 6

The Holyoke Sun • MARCH 21, 2025 • 5



Mayor Joshua Garcia waves from his vehicle at the parade with Tralee Mayor Mikey Sheehy.



Tralee and Holyoke are known as Sister Cities.



Tralee is a town in County Kerry, in southwestern Ireland.



The Holyoke delegation marches out in Tralee.

Submitted photos



The delegation has returned and is getting ready for this weekend's parade scheduled for this Sunday, March 23.

IRELAND, from page 1

the many acts of kindness. Tuesday's schedule involved more guided touring and with stops at historical sites and other points of interest. Garcia, who was accompanied by his wife, Stefany, returned to Holyoke Wednesday night.

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SCHOOLS, from page 1

Member Ellie Wilson asked that the district look into students' IEP plans and really decide if they need separate transportation or not. "I look at it and go 65% is unreasonable," she said. "I am not blaming anyone, I am not saying that students don't deserve specialized transportation, if it is required, but I am telling you as a former employee of HPS...I saw students who had transportation who did not meet the criteria for specialized transportation."

Additionally, the district hopes to look into ways to potentially cut down the transportation costs of kids going to charter school in Holyoke. Charter transportation is predicted to have a 9.9% increase this year, and the district would like to find a way to bring that down. They hope to check the routes of the Holyoke Community Charter school to ensure that the district is not paying for routes that go beyond what they are legally expected to pay for. On top of these increased transportation costs, the district is also dealing with costs as a result of the Student Opportunity Act. While the costs for the SOA are expected to level out over the next few years, for FY26, the district will see an increase. Mayor Joshua Garcia took a moment to comment that it is these increases that have a significant impact on the overall city budget. "I just want the public to know what is driving the increases in our overall budget," Garcia said. "The student opportunity act for year four, now there is another increase for year five, and then one more, and then it was the transportation costs, all that coupled with health insurance. That was the \$3 million increase to the budget this year compared to last year's budget." As the district and the city move forward with the budget, they will be looking for various ways to cut costs down. Community members are encouraged to work with the city and district as they find a way to decrease this budget. The school committee is anticipated to take a final vote on their budget in June, with the city council following up with a vote on the total city budget soon after.

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SPORTS

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Holyoke defeated in quarterfinals

HOLYOKE – On Monday, March 3, Belchertown 7/8 faced host Holyoke in the quarterfinals. The Knights were unable to advance as they lost in the matchup held at Dean Technical High School. Belchertown would fall to Westfield in the semifinals.



Isabelle Lopez heads down the court.



Alanna Sanchez tries to get around the defense.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



Jaciani Diaz enters the paint.



Keileann Colon dribbles near the sideline.



Leah Robert gets the shot.

Lusitano Club of Ludlow awards return

The Lusitano Club of Ludlow returned to their tradition of giving out awards and scholarships to outstanding soccer players in the region

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW – More than 3,400 high school soccer players from throughout Western Massachusetts have been honored at the Lusitano Alumni and Fans (LAF) Awards Banquet during the past 35 years.

Because of the COVID 19 pandemic, the soccer banquet has been a lot smaller, but it's always a very special event.

Six scholarship winners

were honored at this year's LAF banquet, which was held at the Gremio Lusitano Club in Ludlow on March 9.

The six award recipients are Thomas Wadas (Ludlow High School), Gabriella Fialho (Pope Francis/Ludlow), Samantha Lowe (Pathfinder Tech), Kylee Gamache (Franklin County Tech), Kennady Marino (East Longmeadow High School), and Burke Warchol (Longmeadow High School).

Wadas, who's ranked seventh in the senior class academically with a 4.5 G.P.A., will be playing college soccer at UMass Amherst. He's also a member of the National Honor Society.

"I'm going to be playing soccer at UMass, which was my top college choice," Wadas said. "Staying close to home was really important

to me."

A year ago, UMass lost at third-seeded Denver, 3-0, in the Elite 8 of the NCAA Division 1 tournament. The Minutemen finished with a 13-4-5 overall record.

"UMass had an outstanding season last year," Wadas said. "I'm just going to try my best to make an impact as a freshman. I'm really looking forward to playing soccer at the next level. The college game is a lot more physical and quicker."

The UMass men's soccer coach is Fran O'Leary.

Wadas, who's planning to study business in college, was a four year starter for the Ludlow boys' varsity soccer team, which is coached by Greg Kolodziey.

"Coach Kolodziey made a big impact on my life both on and off the field," Wadas

said. "I'm going to do everything that he has taught me at UMass. I'm also going to miss playing soccer for him a lot."

Wadas, who was a team captain last fall, was selected to the All-State soccer team twice.

The Lions won three out of the past four Western Mass. Class A titles. They also advanced to the Elite 8 of the Division 1 state tournament each year.

"The new state post-season tournament format allowed us to play a few more teams in the Boston area," said Wadas, who scored 13 goals and had 12 assists as a senior. "I think we did very well against them. We beat Newton South, who was the number one team in the state in last year's state tournament."

Fialho has been a high honors student at Pope Francis since she was a freshman, and also has 4.5 G.P.A..

During Fialho's varsity soccer career, Pope Francis has captured the Western Mass Class title three times.

Last fall, Pope moved up to Class A for the first time and posted a 1-0 victory against Longmeadow in the championship match. They also celebrated 1-0 victories against West Springfield in the quarterfinals and Minnechaug Regional in the semifinals, which was decided in penalty kicks.

Just like Wadas, Fialho also will be playing college soccer close to home.

"I'll be playing college

See AWARDS, page 8

Hall of Fame names Godbolt senior all-star

SPRINGFIELD – The Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame announced the team rosters for the 2025 Western Massachusetts Senior High School All-Star Games. On Thursday, March 20, the Hall of Fame will host the 2025 All-Star event on the Jerry Colangelo Court of Dreams at the Hall of Fame. A total of 60 players were selected from different divisions within the region to participate in three games that will showcase the top seniors in their final high school contest.

"We are proud to host the top high school basketball players from Western Massachusetts at our 14th annual All-Star celebration at the Basketball Hall of Fame," said John L. Doleva, President and CEO of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. "Residents of Western Mass. are encouraged to join us as we honor these exceptional seniors as they play the final game of their high school careers."

A committee of local coaches and media members who represent each division on the boys' and girls' sides selected the teams. Using

the designated classes for the PVIAC Tournament, the players will be divided into six teams: two girls' teams, two boys' teams of Class A and B players, and two boys' teams of Class C and D players.

Only graduating seniors are eligible for the All-Star Games. Rosters can be found on the next page.

For the 14th year, the Naismith Basketball Hall

of Fame will recognize one boy and one girl as the Western Massachusetts Players of the Year. A special presentation will be made for the recipients during halftime of one of the participating games. A panel of local media members selects the award winners, who are recognized for their achievements on the court in addition to their sportsmanship and character off the court.

The three All-Star Games will be held on Thursday, March 20. The first game of the evening will feature the Class C and D boys' teams at 5:30 p.m., followed by the girls' matchup at 7 p.m., and the

See ALL-STAR, page 8



The scholarship winners show off their awards.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Sports

AWARDS, from page 7

soccer at Springfield College next year," Fialho said. "I'm very happy that I'll be attending a college and playing soccer close to home."

The Springfield College women's soccer team is currently looking for a new head coach.

Kristin Cannon will be stepping down from her coaching duties for personal reasons on June 30. Fialho is hoping that the current assistant coach Brendon Boates

is named as the new head coach.

"I was recruited by coach Boates," Fialho said. "He has a passion for the sport of soccer, and he has a lot of energy."

Prior to her freshman year, Fialho decided to attend Pope Francis instead of going to Ludlow High School.

"All of my friends wanted me to go with them to Ludlow High School," she said. "It was a very difficult decision for me to make, but I'm glad that I decided to go

to Pope. It's a great school both academically and athletically."

Lowe, who lives in Ware, played soccer at Pathfinder Tech for four years and she was a team captain the past two seasons.

"I'm really excited to receive the scholarship award," said Lowe, who's not planning to play college soccer. "I'm proud of my accomplishments during my high school soccer career. The girls' soccer team has improved a lot since I joined

the team."

Lowe is planning to pursue a degree in culinary arts at a local community college.

"When I was growing up, I was always in the kitchen with my mom and we've grown a lot of our own food," she said. "I was also able to get into the culinary arts program at Pathfinder."

Lowe is currently working at Farmer Matt in New Braintree

"I've be working there for two years on April 1," Lowe said. "They have a

store, and we also make homemade soups. Working in a kitchen is just as fun as being on the soccer field. I'm learning something new every day."

The LAF President is Joseph Jorge Sr., who received a 30 year service award. Jeri Humphries is the Vice President, Luis Vitorino is the Treasurer, and Steven DaSilva is the Secretary. The four board members are Joseph Jorge Jr., Richard Oliveria, Teri Myette, and Stephen Scott.

ALL-STAR, from page 7

final game will showcase the Class A and B boys' teams at 8:30 p.m.

Tickets for the All-Star Games are available at the Hall of Fame box office on the night of the event. Each ticket provides access to all three games that evening (Adults: \$20, Students: \$10). Advance tickets can also be purchased online.

Calvin Godbolt made the squad representing Holyoke High School.

Public Notices

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate
and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No.
HD25P0474EA
Estate of:**

**Joyce R Barran
Date of Death: 11/22/2024
CITATION ON PETITION
FOR FORMAL
ADJUDICATION**

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Annetta Patrick of Perrineville, NJ** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: **Annetta Patrick of Perrineville, NJ** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/03/2025. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 06, 2025
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
03/21/2025

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETING

Last Green Valley Seeds Co, a proposed cannabis microbusiness, is having a Community Outreach Meeting at 1 Cabot St., Holyoke, its proposed location, at **5:15pm on April 7, 2025**. There will be an opportunity for the public to ask questions or email: ezra@blueskiescan.com 03/21/2025

City of Holyoke Planning Board PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Holyoke Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.com; ID: 836-3939-8493; CALL IN *67 646-558 8656 to hear, pursuant to the Holyoke Zoning Ordinance, Special Permit to Exceed Fence Height (Sec 4.6.3.2); Holyoke Landing BESS (2025-13), at 0 Lower Westfield Rd & Holyoke Street(117-00-005A), submitted by Amanda Henry/ Convergent Energy & Power, LLC.

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

APPLICANT:
Amanda Henry/ Convergent Energy & Power, LLC.

PLANNING BOARD:
Mimi Panitch,
03/21, 03/28/2025

LEGAL NOTICE CITY OF HOLYOKE GAS & ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT

Holyoke Dam Inflatable Crest Gate Replacement Project

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

Bid Deposit:

A Bid Deposit in the amount of 5% of total bid value 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

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

Please mark sealed envelopes "**Holyoke Dam Inflatable Crest Gate Replacement Project**" and address them to:

James M. Lavelle, Manager
Holyoke Gas & Electric Dept
99 Suffolk St
Holyoke, MA 01040
03/21/2025

City of Holyoke Planning Board PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Holyoke Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.com**; ID: 83639398493; CALL IN 1 646 558 8656 to hear, pursuant to the Holyoke Zoning Ordinance, a Special Permit for a Parking Reduction (Sec 6.1.7), Dimensional Regulation (Sec 8.8.4), and Increase Fence Height (Sec 4.6.3.2) to allow a temporary fence for construction purposes, submitted by Holyoke Housing Authority (2025-9) (2025-10) (2025-11) located at 354 Chestnut Street (009-06-004).

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

APPLICANT:
Holyoke Housing Authority
PLANNING BOARD:
Mimi Panitch, Chairperson
03/21, 03/28/2025

City of Holyoke Planning Board PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Holyoke Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.com** ID: 836 3939 8493; Call in *67 646 558 8656 to hear a Special Permit to exceed fence height (Sec 4.6.3.2) for a temporary fence for construction purposes as indicated in the plans as received for 679 & 689 Main Street, & Beauileu Street (055-00-009.2, 009, 009.1), submitted by JLL Real Estate, LLC c/o Richard Kowalski (2024-29).

For a complete copy of the application and site plan, con-

tact the Planning Department at (413) 322-5575.

APPLICANT:
JLL Real Estate, LLC
c/o Richard Kowalski
PLANNING BOARD:
Mimi Panitch, Chairperson
03/21, 03/28/2025

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. HD25P0532EA Estate of:

**Edward Lucey
Also known as:
Edward F Lucey,
Edward J Lucey
Date of Death: 03/09/2016
CITATION ON PETITION
FOR FORMAL
ADJUDICATION**

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Late and Limited Formal Testacy and/or Appointment** has been filed by **John D Lucey of South Hadley, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: **John D Lucey of South Hadley, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/11/2025. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 13, 2025
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
03/21/2025

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION HIGHWAY DIVISION NOTICE OF A PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING

**Project Description:
Chicopee Bridge Replacement, Br# C-13-038 I-391 over Route 116 (Chicopee Street)
Project File No. 612187**

A Public Informational Meeting will be held by MassDOT to discuss the proposed project in Chicopee, MA.

WHERE: Legacy Church
780 Chicopee Street
Chicopee, MA 01013

WHEN: Thursday,
April 3rd, 2025, 6:00 PM

PURPOSE: The purpose of this meeting is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed project. All views and comments made at the meeting will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project consists of the full replacement of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial Bridge which carries I-391 over Route 116, locally known as Chicopee Street, in the Willimansett neighborhood of Chicopee. The existing bridge is a concrete structure, originally opened to traffic in 1979. It provides three northbound lanes (towards Holyoke) and three southbound lanes (towards Chicopee), though the left lanes of both directions are currently closed to traffic. Though safe for all users, this bridge has reached the end of its useful lifespan and must be replaced. MassDOT proposes to replace the existing structure with a new bridge which will provide three lanes in each direction, a 75-year design life span, and incorporate modern bridge design elements to reduce maintenance impacts to the Willimansett neighborhood and the traveling public. During demolition of the existing structure and construction of the new bridge, some limited detours and closures may be required to ensure public safety, but in general, MassDOT will seek to maintain traffic on both Chicopee Street and I-391. We invite all members of the community to attend the meeting and learn more about this project.

This location is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (including but not limited to interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, open or closed captioning for videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats, such as audio tapes, Braille and large print), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), fax (857-368-0602), TTD/TTY (857-368-0603) or by email (MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us). Requests should be made as soon as possible prior to the meeting, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten (10) business days before the meeting.

In the event of inclement weather a cancellation announcement will be posted on the internet at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events>.

JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR

CARRIE E. LAVALLEE
CHIEF ENGINEER
03/21, 03/28/2025

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.
HD25P0471EA
Estate of:
John Martin Nyzio
Date of Death: 01/01/2025
CITATION ON PETITION
FOR FORMAL
ADJUDICATION**

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment**

of **Personal Representative** has been filed by **Guy E Nyzio of Ludlow, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: **Guy E Nyzio of Ludlow, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/04/2025. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 06, 2025
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
03/21/2025

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Division Docket No. HD24P2482EA Estate of:

**Alice Pasternak
Date of Death: June 5, 2023
INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE**

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Joshua Musick of Holyoke, MA**.

Joshua Musick of Holyoke, MA

has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.

03/21/2025

Trial Court of Massachusetts Juvenile Court Department COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS Middlesex County Juvenile Court Lowell Justice Center 370 Jackson Street, 4th Flr. Lowell, MA 01852 978-441-2630

**DOCKET NUMBER:
24CP0120LO
SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION
CARE AND PROTECTION, TERMINATION OF PARENTAL RIGHTS**

TO: Richard Rodriguez, Father of Jaydez K Rodriguez:

A petition has been presented to this court by DCF – Cambridge/Somerville, seeking, as to the following child, **Jaydez K Rodriguez**, that said child be found in need of care and protection and committed to the Department of Children and Families. The court may dispense the rights of the person(s) named herein to receive notice of or to consent to any legal proceeding affecting the adoption, custody, or guardianship or any other disposition of the child named herein, if it finds that the child is in need of care and protection and that the best interests of the child would be served by said disposition.

You are hereby ORDERED to appear in this court, at the court address set forth above, on the following date and time: **05/01/2025 at 09:00 AM Pre Trial Conference (CR/CV)**

You may bring an attorney with you. If you have a right to an attorney and if the court determines that you are indigent, the court will appoint an attorney to represent you.

If you fail to appear, the court may proceed on that date and any date thereafter to a trial on the merits and adjudication of this matter.

For further information call the Office of the Clerk-Magistrate at 978-441-2630.

WITNESS: Hon. **Brian P Frane, FIRST JUSTICE**,
DATE ISSUED: 03/05/2025

Elizabeth Sheehy,
Clerk-Magistrate
03/14, 03/21, 03/28/2025

City of Holyoke PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Holyoke License Board will be holding a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, April 2, 2025, at 5:15 pm**. You can join via Zoom.com; ID **886 6089 9324**; CALL IN: *67 646 558 8656 or in person at **City Hall, 536 Dwight St. in the Old Tax Collector Office**, regarding the application for a **New Seasonal On-premises All Alcohol License for SJS Enterprises, LLC DBA Waterfront Event Venue 920 Main St.** pursuant to M.G.L. Ch.138.

Applicant:
SJS Enterprises LLC
License Board:
Jose Correa, Chairman
03/21, 03/28/2025

City of Holyoke Planning Board PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Holyoke Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, April 8, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.com**; ID: 836-3939-8493; CALL IN *67 646 558 8656 to hear, pursuant to the Holyoke Zoning Ordinance, Special Permit for an Increase in Sign Size (Sec 6.4.6.4); Stop and Shop (2025-12), submitted by Agnoli Sign Co, Inc to be located at 28 Lincoln St, Holyoke MA (073-00-034).

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

APPLICANT:
Agnoli Sign Co, Inc.
PLANNING BOARD:
Mimi Panitch, Chairperson
03/21, 03/28/2025

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FRIDAY AT 2 PM

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LOCAL TREE SERVICE looking for climber and ground person.
Must have driver's license in good standing. Call **413-507-1949**.

The Town of Huntington is seeking a full-time **Highway Truck Driver/Equipment Operator/Laborer**. Applicants must possess a Massachusetts Class B CDL with Air Brake Endorsement and possess or be able to obtain 2B or higher & 4G Hoisting Engineer's licenses within 6 months of hire. \$27.50 to \$28.79 per hour based on qualifications. Application and complete job description are available online at **www.huntingtonma.us** or by emailing **admin@huntingtonma.us**. Position is open until filled. Town of Huntington is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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

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FRIDAY AT 2 PM



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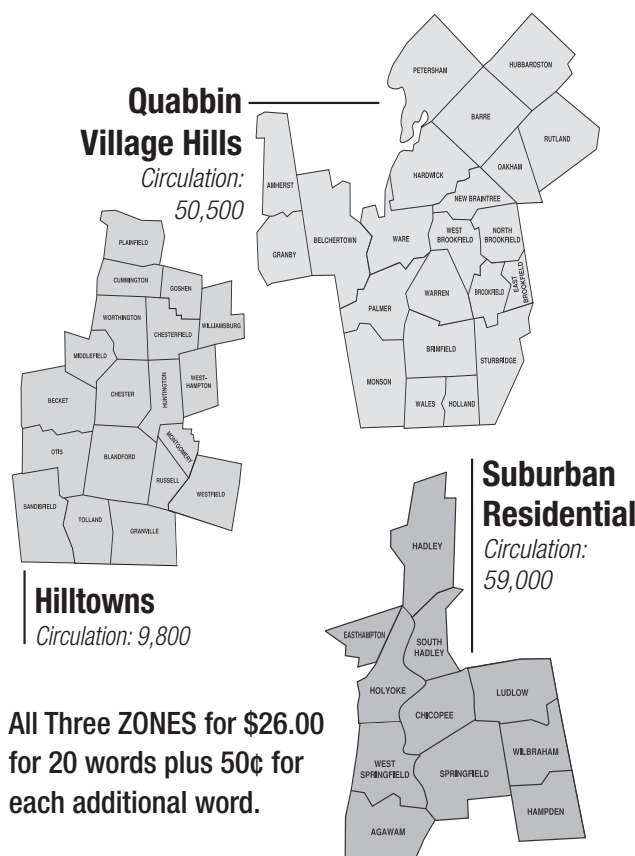
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E-Bike fire prompts lithium-ion battery safety reminder

HOLYOKE – An electric bicycle’s battery pack exploded in a Holyoke apartment this weekend, injuring one person and displacing several residents, said Holyoke Fire Chief John Kadlewicz and State Fire Marshal Jon Davine.

“The lithium-ion batteries that power e-bikes and many other devices have caused serious fires when abused, overcharged, overheated or defective,” said Chief Kadlewicz. “Please store, charge and dispose of them safely. And if you’ve got a larger device like a bike or scooter, it’s especially important to store it outside if possible. If people must store it indoors, keep it away from doors, windows and stairways. These are your way out in an emergency and the way in for firefighters

coming to help.”

Chief Kadlewicz and State Fire Marshal Davine offered these safety tips:

- Choose devices that are listed by an independent testing laboratory like UL or Intertek/ETL. Look for the lab’s mark on the packaging and device.
- Be sure you have working smoke alarms on every level of your home.
- Read and follow the manufacturer’s storage instructions.
- Store lithium-ion batteries and the devices they power at room temperature whenever possible. Don’t leave them in a hot car, in direct sunlight or in freezing temperatures.
- Read and follow the manufacturer’s charging instructions.
- Always use the battery,



A lithium-ion battery from an electric bicycle exploded in a Holyoke apartment causing serious injuries to a resident. The battery’s remnants and debris are pictured here. Submitted photo

cord and power adapter made specifically for the device. Aftermarket and generic accessories have been linked to serious fires.

- Plug the charger directly into a wall outlet, not an extension cord or power strip.
- Don’t leave a charging device unattended.

Disconnect the charger from the outlet when the device is fully charged.

- Charge devices on a hard stable surface such as a table, not a couch, bed, or pillow.
- Read and follow the manufacturer’s instructions for use.
- Discontinue use if the battery is damaged, if you notice an unusual odor, a change in color or shape, leaking or odd noises. If you can do so safely, move the device away from anything that can burn and call 9-1-1.
- Don’t discard lithium-ion batteries in the trash. Recycling is the best option.
- You can find a recycling location at www.call2recycle.org/locator.

The Holyoke Fire Department was notified of a fire at 16 West Court St.,

on March 9 at 4:30 a.m. On arrival, firefighters observed heavy smoke coming from the middle of the two-story townhouse-style apartment building. All occupants were able to escape, but one was seriously injured and transported first to Baystate Medical Center and then Massachusetts General Hospital. Holyoke Fire Department fire investigators determined that the fire began with the lithium-ion battery pack in an electric bicycle and that the owner was attempting to carry it outside when it exploded.

State Fire Marshal Davine said that the incident was one of more than 170 fires linked to lithium-ion batteries since late 2023, when the Department of Fire Services launched a new tool for reporting these events.

COVID, from page 1

“There’s 30 million people in the country dealing with Long COVID. Some people have been sick since COVID began in 2020. So, it’s something that needs to be talked about more, researched more, supported more,” Welsh said.

Since sharing his story, people have reached out to Welsh with their own stories and wristbands in the gray and teal LONG COVID colors that read, “Team Welsh” on one side with a ribbon and “Fight Long COVID” on the other side, were created by him and his former team at SNHU to stay connected and garner support. His doctors at MassGeneral also wear the wristbands and have had people reach out to them to learn more.

They are also sponsored by a local insurance agency owned by his father.

“It means the world to me

that people want them, that people want to wear them, people want to show me the support in what I’ve done,” Welsh said. “Everybody that’s gotten one has taken a picture of themselves wearing it, so I have a collage at home full of pictures that shows me I’m not doing this alone.”

This support has also expanded to the New England Patriots, who partnered with Team Welsh last summer after Welsh reached out to the team about his story and wanting to do something for his father’s 70th birthday. The team hosted the family during training camp “and went above and beyond to make sure I was safe” from a personal valet to a special roped-off area so people weren’t around him.

After the practice, the players came over to Welsh, who had a sign saying, “I’m fighting Long COVID. Patriots Inspire Me!”

Numerous players signed it and also gave him a signed football, later spending time talking with him.

When Welsh reached out to the team again to thank them and shared about the wristbands, they responded within an hour asking for 50 to 75 wristbands for the players and staff.

“So, the entire Patriots roster, the coaching staff, the Kraft Family--the owners--all have these wristbands and a letter from me expressing my appreciation for their support and telling them my story so everyone there knows my story,” Welsh said. “In the next week or so, we’re sending out enough for the roster of the Celtics.”

To date, Welsh added, almost 300 of these wristbands have been distributed, with more sought as people learn his story. The prior and current presidential adminis-

trations have, also, received these wristbands.

“It has nothing to do with politics. It’s about the position in the country, to have the most powerful person in the country aware of Long COVID and the fight that goes along with it. I don’t care what party you’re on. Just to have that support is incredible,” Welsh said.

He, also, has a goal of doing a fundraising event with the wristbands and community to support Long COVID research, expressing gratitude to his family--including his parents--the community and supporters for their love and support.

One thing Welsh wishes people knew about Long COVID was this: the impact on every person is different.

“I have met many people through this that have developed things like Type 1 Diabetes from Long COVID.

I’ve met people that had to get pacemakers because of Long COVID, but they don’t have the cognitive issue, they don’t have the vocal issue, they don’t have the blood problem. So, it’s going to present itself differently to every person that has it, which is why it’s so hard for people to diagnose it,” Welsh said.

He also encouraged people to keep pushing for support from their doctors or to seek a specialist to get the support and help they need.

“It’s going to take you time to find the doctors, but there are doctors out that will believe you, what you’re fighting and they will. They will help you,” Welsh said.


His message for the community was this: to be kind and to remember the kindness that was shown during the pandemic “to everyone that was putting their lives in jeopardy for us” from the Amazon

and UPS drivers to the grocery store workers.

Also, remember and support those struggling with COVID or Long COVID today and not to leave them behind.

“COVID has impacted our lives forever, and personally, for the community, I just know what this community is capable of. I’ve lived here my whole life. I’ve seen this community rally behind any number of great people and worthy causes and to know that there’s some people already who now know the story are now getting my story out,” Welsh said. “I know that once it’s read and out there, that I’m going to have the whole community supporting someone who’s been raised and lived here for my entire life.”

To get your own Team Welsh wristband and learn more, email teamwelshlong-covid@gmail.com.



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