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## CLASS OF 2025 bids farewell to HHS



Above, Principal Lori McKenna joined the Class of 2025 in one last group photo. Below, Mayor Joshua Garcia giving the final remarks before the diplomas are handed out.

Turley Photos By Abigail McCoy

**Abigail McCoy**  
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HOLYOKE – Against the backdrop of cheers, camera flashes, and bitter-sweet goodbyes, Holyoke High School’s Class of 2025 crossed the stage and stepped into the future on Friday, May 30, during an emotional and uplifting graduation ceremony that celebrated not only academic achievement, but identity, resilience, and community.

The ceremony featured powerful speeches from students, educators, and district leaders; each offering wisdom forged through personal experience, deep pride, and a shared belief in the strength of this graduating class.

Principal Lori McKenna, delivering the staff address, opened her heartfelt remarks with both humor and vulnerability, striking a maternal tone that resonated with students and families alike.

“You’re probably worried, scared, and unsure of what the future will bring,” McKenna said, pausing before adding with a confident smile, “but you are going to kill it.”

McKenna urged graduates not to underestimate themselves, to live boldly, and to face the unknown with courage. “Be known for being the one who pushes the challenge and stands at the brinkhead of tomorrow,” she

said. “Buy the shoes, eat the cake, take the trip, make the memories.”

McKenna’s message, while celebratory, was grounded in sincerity. She paid special tribute to students who had overcome significant adversity, telling them, “Have fun. Be yourself. Life is short.” As cameras clicked and families waved, McKenna grinned and reminded everyone to “get one last pic together.”

Superintendent Anthony Soto, himself a Holyoke graduate, reflected on the symbolism of the day and the perseverance it represents.

*“Graduation is more than a ceremony; it symbolizes resilience, commitment, and achievement,”*

**- Superintendent Anthony Soto**

“Graduation is more than a ceremony; it symbolizes resilience, commitment, and achievement,” Soto said, expressing pride in the graduates and deep appreciation for the teachers, families, and mentors who supported them.

Quoting a basketball coach, Soto reminded stu-

dents: “It never gets easier. It always gets harder. But you learn how to handle the hard better.”

Encouraging students to believe in their preparation and support systems, Soto added, “You are ready. You have what you need to make it happen.” His mother’s wisdom rang out in Spanish and English: “Dime con quién andas, y te diré quién eres.” (“Tell me who you’re with, and I’ll tell you who you are.”)

Salutatorian Michael Melendez brought a quiet power to the podium with his poised, thoughtful reflection on the challenges of cultural identity and discrimination.

“While my story may resonate with others from Hispanic communities, I speak not of similarity, but of shared strength,” he said. Melendez emphasized the importance of self-acceptance, mentorship, and the resilience of marginalized students.

“We grow, we learn, but most importantly, we change,” Melendez told his classmates, encouraging them to lead with love and empathy in a world that often tests it.

With a mix of humor and philosophical insight, Valedictorian Nicholas Rodriguez stole the show; opening his speech with the now-famous first lines of The Bee Movie as a metaphor for defying expectations.



“Much like bees, we don’t care what other people think is impossible,” Rodriguez quipped, drawing laughter and applause.

He blended comedic flair with sincere gratitude, thanking teachers who taught him not just chess or academics, but how to face life with resilience. “We are the Class of 2025,” Rodriguez declared, “and we will rise to any occasion and show the world who we are.”

Dr. Yadilette Rivera-Colón, vice chair of the school committee and a university biology chair, offered a deeply personal story about overcoming stereotypes, loss, and neurodivergence to

become a scientist and public leader.

“I introduce myself as ‘Dr.’ not out of pride, but because visibility matters... you can’t be what you can’t see,” she said.

Rivera-Colón described being dismissed by a counselor who once told her, “Students like you go to work, not college.” She proved them wrong, graduating valedictorian, earning a Ph.D., and rising through academic leadership.

Rivera-Colón’s message resonated with those who feel unseen: “To the neurodivergent, under-resourced, underestimated students...I see you. I am you. Against all

odds, you will rise too.”

One such student, Gedeon Ortiz-Torres, introduced by Rivera-Colón, shared a raw and courageous reflection on growing up amid poverty, instability, and trauma.

“I remember ramen noodles, shared beds, and my dad sleeping on the floor,” Ortiz-Torres said quietly. He spoke of anger and confusion, but also of a turning point in high school when he chose to stop the cycle of pain and embrace kindness.

“I love you, Dad,” Ortiz-Torres said tearfully, expressing gratitude to his father,

See GRADUATION, page 6

## Councilor proposes Housing Committee

**By Gregory A. Scibelli**  
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HOLYOKE – Tenant issues have been plaguing the city for several years, though residents have recently been speaking out, looking for the city to come up with solutions. Warnings have been issued to homeowners and rental property owners and now a city councilor is proposing an ordinance that would create a Housing Committee to address issues.

Jose Maldonado Velez has filed an order that was referred to the Ordinance Committee.

The committee will be asked to consider an order the city creates a Housing Committee tasked with creating policy suggestions and implementation of office of tenant protections, office of

returning citizens and homelessness liaison. Roles and committee to be created by Ordinance while bylaws to be created by the committee.

The committee should include at least one of the following – 1 tenant in market rate housing, 1 tenant with section 8 voucher holder, 1 tenant with MRVP or continuum of care, 1 tenant of HHA, 1 tenant representative of local organization working on housing issues, 1 home owner, 1 landlord.

This is the first action regarding tenant issues taken up in 2025. Last year, the council worked on ordinances beginning with the Oct. 15, 2024 meeting.

Due to the large number of people in the city this was impacting, the city council

See HOUSING, page 5

## BLUE SOX SEASON OPENS



The Valley Blue Sox celebrated opening night on Tuesday, June 3 at Mackenzie Stadium in Holyoke. Once again, the city will be the host of a team in the New England Collegiate Baseball League, featuring multiple promotional nights and great baseball for families in the community. Go to [www.valleybluesox.com](http://www.valleybluesox.com) for more information and the team schedule.

Turley photo by Sofia DiGrande

## Public input needed on upcoming budget vote

HOLYOKE – The FY2026 budget season well underway with the Holyoke City Council holding multiple special meetings to meet with department heads.

During the City Council meeting on Tuesday, June 3, councilors unanimously voted to open the budget hearing on June 9 to members of the public to weigh in on the proposed budget for the 2026 fiscal year. Prior to the final hearing of questions that councilors will ask of city departments, residents will be invited to offer their thoughts, concerns, or questions on the proposed budget.

Interested members of the public may attend in person in Council chambers at City Hall, or attend remotely via Zoom. Zoom may be accessed remotely by clicking the link below <https://us02web.zoom>.

[us/j/84723804733?pwd=wA8mUq9giwVDmpIuIctnMOs9IGIxt.1](https://us02web.zoom/j/84723804733?pwd=wA8mUq9giwVDmpIuIctnMOs9IGIxt.1) by visiting [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us) and entering Meeting ID: 847 2380 4733 and Meeting Passcode: 698880

or by call in at 1 (646) 558-8656 with the same Meeting ID and Passcode.

A copy of the proposed budget can be found on the city’s website [www.holyoke.org](http://www.holyoke.org).

The City Council will take up a vote on the full budget when they meet on Tuesday, June 17 at 7 p.m. If the council is unable to agree on the entire budget vote at the June 17 meeting, another special meeting may need to be scheduled.

It is also possible the June 17 meeting could feature several votes to make cuts to various parts of the budget.

# Wistariahurst Museum to offer summer passport series

HOLYOKE – Take a trip to Wistariahurst Museum this summer for our Summer Passport Series at Sensory Friendly Sunday Fundays. We have an array of themed Sunday Fundays that will delight the whole family visit after visit. Wistariahurst visitors will get their own passport that will be stamped at every event. Guests will get rewarded prizes based on how many stamps they collect by the end of the Summer Passport Series. From toys, to coloring books, to limited Wistariahurst merch, you don't want to miss earning a prize! Aiming for the biggest prize? Make sure to visit Wistariahurst during each of

the following Sunday Funday events:

June 8, June 22, July 13, July 27, Aug. 10, Aug. 24, Sept. 7, and Sept. 21 all from 12 to 3 p.m. Each day features a different event from Celebrate Pride and Juneteenth to Garden Grooves and Dino Days.

Each of these events has unique activities and opportunities for engagement. From Drag Storytime at Celebrate Pride, to a Dino Dance Party at Dino Days, there's something new every visit. Sunday Fundays are designed for guests of all ages, with our friends with sensory sensitivities in mind. Throughout the first floor, children will



be able to interact with fine motor activities, puzzles, and board games to engage with and enjoy. Gross motor activities like hula hoops, hopscotch, and bounce balls will get everyone moving

and grooving. Need to take a break from the energy? A low sensory area will be available to guests as well. Throughout the first floor, guests can also interact with activities such as our Where's Winston

scavenger hunt. During your self-guided tour, keep your eyes open for our lethargic, little lion. Take a picture or selfie with him and show your picture to our front desk attendant to get an exclusive

Winston sticker.

Our Sensory Friendly Sunday Fundays provide an excellent opportunity for families with sensory sensitivities to experience our museum in a relaxed environment at their own pace. Wistariahurst is thrilled to host these open hours, allowing families to explore, discover, and connect with our museum. This is why these events will be free and accessible to the public for all to enjoy. The first event of the Sunday Funday Passport Series is right around the corner. Join us Sunday, June 8 for Celebrate Pride. Pack your bags, pick up your passport, and start collecting stamps and memories.

## HCC to host July 4th fireworks

HOLYOKE – The City of Holyoke will be hosting the annual Fourth of July fireworks on Friday, June 27 (with a rain-date of June 29). The event will take place on the grounds of Holyoke Community College, at 303 Homestead Avenue.

Vendors interested in taking part in the event

should contact the Parks and Recreation Department before June 13, for a permit application at 413-322-5620.

We encourage everyone to come early to enjoy the music and food from a variety of vendors as well as many children's activities. The event begins at 6 p.m., with the fireworks display scheduled to

start at dusk.

Many of the streets around the college will close early, please plan for alternate routes. We are currently searching for volunteers, please call the Mayor's Office at 413-561-1600. If you are planning to bring your dog to the fireworks, the dog must be always kept on a leash.

## Tourism Advisory Committee seeking out new members

HOLYOKE – The City of Holyoke is currently seeking enthusiastic and experienced individuals to join its Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC). If you're a hotelier, restaurant owner, or someone with a strong background in the tourism or hospitality industry — we want to hear from you. Priority will be given to candidates with experience in these areas. We are also looking for a youth member who is under 21 years of age, a Holyoke resident and interested in promoting the positive things happening in Holyoke.

The TAC is a dynamic group made up of tourism experts and community representatives, including voices from iconic local institutions like the Wistariahurst Museum and the International Volleyball Hall of Fame. Together, the committee advises the city

on all things tourism — from strategy and events to funding and promotion.

This is your chance to get involved, make a real impact, and yes — help give away money! The TAC helps allocate funding for local events and community projects that make Holyoke a vibrant and welcoming place to visit.

For 2025 TAC utilized funds to support 11 events including:

- Holyoke Pride Festival on June 11
- The Great Holyoke Brink Race on October 11
- Holyoke Paper Fest on June 7
- Paper City Oaks Semi Pro indoor Lacrosse at Fitzpatrick's Arena - Summer 2025
- Holyoke Historical Society Garden Tour July 12
- LOCULUS Presents The Fourth Annual SIDEWAYS DOOR: A

Festival of Ecstasies & Escape Routes September 19 to 21

• Imagined Worlds Mural Project with the Holyoke Children's Museum

• Lemonade & Laughter at the Merry Go Round - fall 2025

• Holyoke Canals and its Mills - fall 2025

• BBJ Spring Spectacular Showing: A free night of musical theater - fall 2025

More information on all these events can be found at ExploreHolyoke.com

To learn more about TAC, visit <https://www.holyoke.org/departments/tourism-advisory-committee/>.

If you are interested in joining TAC please send cover letter and resume to [vegaa@holyokey.org](mailto:vegaa@holyokey.org) at the Office of Planning and Economic Development

## HCC celebrates Class of 2025 nursing graduates

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College celebrated the graduation of 53 students from its Associate in Science in Nursing degree program on Thursday, May 22.

The students were recognized during a pinning ceremony in HCC's Leslie Phillips Theater, during which they were formally inducted into the healthcare field as soon-to-be registered nursing professionals. During a traditional pinning ceremony, new nursing graduates light

candles, receive their nursing pin, and recite the Nightingale Pledge.

The graduates, many of whom are already working, will sit for their exams before becoming licensed as registered nurses.

Holyoke Community College Associate of Science in Nursing Degree Graduates for 2025:

Graduates from Holyoke: Ileana Casillas, Yamaira Dejesus, Ritah Mutesi, Luz Santos, Victoria Smith, Chelsea Taxman.

## Garden Tour

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Preservation Trust has announced it will host the Fifth Annual Garden Tour in the city. This year's event will feature new gardens, a photography contest, a tree tour with Forester Tom Kass, and a lecture from Bernie Conway, Assistant Gardener at NY Botanical Garden. The event will be held on Saturday, June 28 and admission is \$20 per person with children 12 and under free of charge. For more information and to purchase tickets, go to [www.holyokepreservationtrust.org](http://www.holyokepreservationtrust.org)

## Council for Human Understanding holding fundraiser

HOLYOKE – The Greater Holyoke Council for Human Understanding welcomes you to the Student Scholarship Awards and Sponsor Appreciation Event! Join us under the Pavillion at Summit View,

555 Northampton Street, Holyoke, for a casual evening of music by Green Street Trio, BBQ, celebrating the achievements of our talented students and showing gratitude to our generous sponsors. The event will

be held on Tuesday, June 10 at 5:30 p.m. This in-person event promises to be a night filled with recognition, inspiration, and appreciation. Tickets are \$40 with proceeds going to the CHU Student Scholarship Fund.

## Car Show June 14 will close portion of High Street

HOLYOKE – A Car Show on Saturday, June 14, will involve closing a portion of High Street between Cabot Street and Appleton Avenue from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m.

The "Wheels for Hope" Car Show is an annual, family-friendly fundraiser that supports cancer research and patient care and raises awareness. The 2025 edition

will feature 25 categories of cars and motorcycles. Trophies, presented by a cancer survivor, will be awarded to the top winners in each category.

Activities for children include wheelers and face painting. Food trucks will be on the scene. There will also be music and raffles.

Police officers will be on hand to help drivers navigate around the show.

## Therapy dog to visit library

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Public Library will host a visit from Maki the Therapy Dog. He will appear on June 9, 16, 23, July 7, 14, 21, and 28, Aug. 18 and 25 from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. on the fourth floor.

Call for a 15-minute time slot.

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## MassDOT to provide updates on High-Maple Street project

HOLYOKE – A public information meeting will be held by MassDOT on Tuesday, June 24, at 5:30 p.m. at the Holyoke Public Library to discuss the proposed corridor improvements project on High and Maple Streets.

The purpose of this meeting is to provide the public with an update on the project and to solicit input. All views and comments made at the meeting will be reviewed and considered.

The project consists of transportation safety and mobility improvements along the High Street and Maple Street corridors from South Street to Lyman Street in downtown Holyoke. The project is still in the design phase.

At the June 24 meeting, MassDOT and its team will provide an update on the project status, share preliminary design concepts, and solicit feedback from the community to help to inform the further development of the design. Safe and accessible conditions for all modes of transportation including walking, biking, transit (bus), and driving will be provided in accordance with applicable design guidelines.

This library is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides 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, 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. For more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten 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/high-way-division/events>.

## Stop & Shop re-opens Lincoln Street store

HOLYOKE – Stop & Shop is celebrating the official grand reopening of its newly remodeled Holyoke location (28 Lincoln Street) on Friday, June 6. The new remodel is part of the brand's multi-year commitment to refresh stores across its footprint and improve the customer shopping experience.

Highlights of the remodeled Willimantic store include:

- Expanded Grab & Go Prepared Foods
- Remodeled Produce Department
- Remodeled Bakery Department
- Over 300 new products across the store including and expanded Multicultural assortment featuring:
  - Popular Puerto Rican and Latin American favorites
  - Caribbean favorites
  - Asian meal starters and marinades

"Our team is excited to help our customers explore the hundreds of new products at shelf and provide them with an enhanced experience in store," said Mark Chapdelaine, Manager of Stop & Shop Holyoke. "We are also very proud of the community we have built here, from our relationships with our customers to the partnership we have created in the community, including our support of students at Holyoke Community Charter School."

To celebrate the store's official reopening, Stop & Shop is hosting sampling and giveaways on Friday June 6 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Stop & Shop will hold a ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday June 6th and present a check for \$15,000 to Holyoke Community

Charter School to help support the "HCCS Family Food Pantry" as part of its School Food Pantry Program. Established in 2019, the Stop & Shop School Food Pantry program was created to help limit barriers impacting students' ability to succeed in the classroom by making sure that they have consistent access to food. The program currently serves over 260 schools across the Northeast and is one of the largest school food pantry programs in the country. This is the fourth year that Stop & Shop has partnered with Holyoke Community Charter School and with this donation has provided the school with over \$45,000 in total to ensure students have consistent access to healthy foods. This support enables the school to provide fresh produce, proteins, and per-

sonal care items to meet the rising need among students.

"The Holyoke Community Charter School is truly a community-educational institution, dedicated to nurturing students both academically and socially. Our valued partnership with Stop & Shop has allowed us to support many families facing food insecurity during these challenging times. We are immensely grateful for the generous grant we have received, as businesses like Stop & Shop play a vital role in strengthening our school community and making a real difference in the lives of our students and families," said Dr. Sonia Correa Pope, School Principal.

Stop & Shop Holyoke is open from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Sundays. For more information visit [Stopandshop.com](http://Stopandshop.com).

## Yoga classes offered Thursday at Stanley Park

WESTFIELD – Yoga will be starting for the 2025 season on Thursday evenings beginning through Aug. 21 from 6 to 7 p.m., on the Acre Lawn next to the Pavilion Annex. Please join certified instructor Michelle Gagnon, as she leads the yoga classes. This class is for all levels of yoga practitioners, and all abilities are welcome. The poses are foundational,

and modifications are always available. As a class we will harness the power of our breath in alignment with the movement of our bodies.

Children 10 and up are welcome accompanied by an adult. Please bring your own mat and any props as needed, wear comfortable and stretchy clothes. Prepare to strengthen, stretch your body, and open your minds. Bring lots of

water (you might also want a small towel). Pre-registration is strongly encouraged.

Donations to the Park are welcome, with a suggested donation of \$5 per person per class.

Registration forms are available on our website at [www.stanleypark.org](http://www.stanleypark.org) and will also be available at class. You may sign up on our website, by e-mailing us for the regis-

tration form at [development@stanleypark.org](mailto:development@stanleypark.org), or register at the Park at your first class.



## HPS Communications team wins national awards

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Public Schools communications team has earned national recognition for their work on key initiatives tied to some of the district's highest priority focus areas, including attendance, inclusive learning opportunities, and school culture.

The National School Public Relations Association recently announced its 2025 Publications and Digital Media Excellence winners, representing some of the best communications work produced by public relations professionals from school districts across the United States and Canada. Winning entries will be recognized during the Annual Meeting and Celebration of Achievement during NSPRA's 2025 National Seminar July 20-23 in Washington, D.C.

HPS submitted a total of six entries this year, and all six were selected for national recognition. These include:

- Awards of Excellence for two stand-alone videos produced in-house, including an inside look at Sullivan School's new innovative learning spaces and an overview of the lasting impact that the Student Summit has had on learning and school culture at Holyoke High School North.

• An Award of Merit for a series of videos produced in-house that showcase the positive, inclusive atmosphere at Holyoke High School Dean Campus.

• An Award of Excellence for Writing for a news article that highlights the colorful contributions of a local artist whose sidewalk art has enhanced Morgan School's walking school bus route.

• An Award of Excellence for a marketing campaign to engage and inform families and staff around health guidelines for school attendance. Elements of that campaign can be found on the Attendance

page of the district website.

• An Award of Merit for an infographic developed last year to aid families and staff in their understanding of how Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) support students and their families and to help break down the complexities of special education for all stakeholders.

The awards were presented to Media Center Director Michael Hines, Senior Communications Coordinator Kat Johnson, and Communications Director Jennie Oesterreicher for their respective work on these projects.

## UCCH features Pizza Night

HOLYOKE – Some combinations work so well together that they're classics. One such combination is pizza for dinner on a Friday night. It just so happens that the June Community Meal at the United Congregational Church of Holyoke will feature pizza and salad.

Dinner will be served at 5 p.m., with a family movie following at 6 p.m.

The Community Meal is hosted on the second Friday evening of each month at the church at 300 Appleton Street.

All Are Welcome to attend, and the meal is completely free of charge.

The menu changes

monthly; past meals have featured lasagna, Thanksgiving dinner, breakfast for dinner, steak sandwiches, and more. Parents must accompany their children.

The United Congregational Church of Holyoke is an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ. We welcome all individuals, regardless of where they are on their journey.

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

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Guest Column

## SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor



### I'm a retired veteran; why must I pay for Medicare?

Dear Rusty:

I'm a retired Navy veteran, who is going to be turning 65 years old this year.

My question is concerning mandatory Medicare sign-up requirements. Why do I have to sign up for Medicare coverage at 65 when I can't start collecting full Social Security benefits until I turn 67? My Social Security benefits will not pay for my mandatory Medicare because I can't start collecting full Social Security benefits until I'm 67.

I currently pay for Tricare and utilize my local Veterans Administration medical facilities and referrals for my healthcare. With me turning 65 and having to wait until I'm 67 for my full Social Security benefits, it just seems unfair that I'll have to pay out of pocket Medicare monthly expenses for two years. Is there any way to avoid this unfair penalty?

Signed: Retired Navy Vet

Dear Retired Navy Vet:

First, I want to thank you for your military service to our country. Please know that here at the AMAC Foundation we care a lot about our veterans and you may find the "For Veterans" section of our Foundation website interesting - visit [www.amacfoundation.org](http://www.amacfoundation.org).

Regarding your question, you should be aware that enrolling in Medicare is not mandatory, but there are consequences if you do not enroll when you become eligible, normally at age 65. For one thing, if you are a retired veteran on military TriCare, you will lose your TriCare benefits if you don't enroll in Medicare when you are eligible.

TriCare requires that you enroll in Medicare when eligible. And, since you are not yet collecting Social Security, you will be required to separately pay the Medicare Part B premium directly to Medicare; they will bill you when you enroll in Medicare. Another potential consequence is that if you do not enroll in Medicare Part B when you are first eligible, you may incur a lifetime late enrollment penalty for enrolling in Part B later.

Something else to keep in mind is that there are two "parts" to Medicare - Part A, which is coverage for inpatient hospitalization services and Part B, which is coverage for outpatient healthcare services - doctors, medical tests, etc. Medicare Part A is free to you, but there is a premium for Medicare Part B (\$185/month for 2025).

Note that you will need to pay a Part B premium as long as you are enrolled in

Medicare Part B (it doesn't go away after you are collecting Social Security, but it is taken from your Social Security payment). And there is no way for you to avoid the Part B premium after enrolling and enrolling in Part B is necessary for you to continue your military TriCare-for-life benefits. Note that Medicare Part A and Part B do not include prescription drug coverage, but your TriCare coverage usually does.

It's important to note that Medicare and Social Security are two independent senior programs with different eligibility rules. As you may know, you can collect early (reduced) Social Security at age 65 (and have your Medicare Part B premium deducted from your SS payment). But you would be collecting Social Security early and, in addition to a reduced benefit, you would also be subject to Social Security's annual earnings test if you are still working. The SS earnings test limits how much you can earn before some of your SS benefits are taken away if you exceed the earning limit prior to your full retirement age.

So, is it unfair that you must pay for Medicare Part B before you are collecting Social Security? Well, I think not, because the two programs are completely independent benefits (the Social Security Administration merely administers Medicare payments as a convenience). Remember your Medicare Part A is free, but you must pay a premium for Part B, and you must take both to retain your military TriCare-for-Life benefits. You can visit this site to see how to pay your Medicare premiums until it is later deducted from your Social Security payment: [www.medicare.gov/basics/costs/pay-premiums/online-bill-pay](http://www.medicare.gov/basics/costs/pay-premiums/online-bill-pay).

Once again, thank you for your service to our country.

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](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at [ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.



Guest Column

### The peony takes the stage in June

As I look out my living room window, I can see the chubby round buds of one of my favorite June-bloomers, the peony. No doubt, the plant will be in full flower just in time for my birthday, as it has for a number of decades.

Read on to learn all you need to know, straight from the archives!

Who doesn't love the peony? Its frilly flowers, fine fragrance and fit form make it a favorite in the June perennial border.

And although it only blooms for a short while, the plant itself is reliably hardy and notably long lived in our climate. In fact, the peony that grows in my garden is one my great grandmother grew in the 1930s!



by Roberta McQuaid



If your soil is average, the addition of a balanced fertilizer may be all that is necessary at planting. Soils that are lean should be improved prior to planting by amending the hole with roughly equal parts good soil and aged compost or manure. Peonies prefer a pH of 6.0-7.0, a wide enough range to accommodate most home garden situations. If your soil is more acidic than that, bring up your pH by adding lime.

Mail order plants usually arrive bareroot. These can be soaked in a bucket of water overnight to rehydrate prior to planting.

When it comes time to plant, remember this: eyes point up, roots point down! Eyes should end up no more than two inches below the soil surface; any deeper than that and flowers may be sac-

Here are a few tips to keep your peonies thriving for the next seventy years.

#### Planting

Peonies are best planted in the fall, September or October in our area. This timing will give the plants an opportunity to develop a healthy stand of feeder roots before the ground freezes.

Choose a location that receives six or more hours of sun a day. Don't skimp on the size of the planting hole; one that measures a foot and a half deep by two and a half feet wide will sustain the plant for many years.

See GARDEN page 5



By Ellenor Downer

A Brimfield resident reported a yellow bellied sapsucker pair in his yard.

He said in an email, "I began seeing a male yellow-bellied sapsucker at a dogwood tree in front of the house. The bird was there every day last week. On Saturday, I saw a female on the same tree. I'll try to find a nest, I did find a sapsucker nest in the Brimfield State Forest a few years ago." He also has a mountain ash in his yard with lots of sapsucker holes.

Yellow-bellied sapsuckers lap up the leaking sap and any trapped insects with its specialized, brush-tipped tongue from holes they makes in a variety of trees especially birch and maples

Like many of the woodpecker family, it has barred black and white feathers with a red cap. The male also has a red throat. They sit still on tree trunks for long intervals

while feeding. To find one, listen for their loud mewing calls or stuttered drumming.

Sapsuckers inhabit young deciduous forests. To find a sapsucker's territory, people should keep an eye out for their distinctive, neatly organized rows of sap wells. They cling motionless to trees while calling, birders should look closely at the trees around the for their sharply contrasting black-and-white face stripes and the bright-red patches on their heads.

The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker makes two kinds of holes in trees to harvest sap. Round holes extend deep in the tree and are not enlarged. The sapsucker inserts its bill into the hole to probe for sap. Rectangular holes are shallower and must be maintained continually for the sap to flow. The sapsucker licks the sap from these holes, and eats the cambium of the tree too. New holes



Yellow bellied sapsucker

usually are made in a line with old holes, or in a new line above the old.

The sap wells made by yellow-bellied sapsuckers attract hummingbirds, which also feed off the sap flowing from the tree. Other birds as well as bats and porcupines also visit sapsucker sap wells. Although a few individuals remain throughout much of the winter in the southern part of the breeding range, most head farther south, going as far south as Panama. Females tend to migrate farther south than do males.

#### Other birds

The Brimfield resident reports the return of the rose-breasted grosbeak, catbird and great crested flycatcher. His wife saw two great crested flycatcher near the nest box a pair used last year.

See YARD, page 5

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Letters to the Editor have a maximum of 350 words. We require writers to include their name, address and phone number in order for our office to authenticate authorship prior to publication. Addresses and phone numbers are not published.

Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions. Libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks or defamation of character are not allowed.

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon. Please email (preferred) letters to [thesun@turley.com](mailto:thesun@turley.com). Mailed letters can be sent to *The Sun*, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

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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](mailto:thesun@turley.com). Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered for that Friday's

newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election.

For more information, call 413-283-8393.

#### Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspa-

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

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

**HOUSING**, from page 1

discussed the issue at their meeting on Oct. 15.

During the meeting many property owners came forward to share the problems they were facing and how this issue put them at risk of losing their properties or being forced to increase rent prices to pay off the fines.

Following their presentation, the council passed the first reading of two ordinances. The first ordinance requested that the city establish a moratorium to give multi-family property owners more time to come into compliance with the order.

Within the order it stated that the two-month roll-out for the property owners to come into compliance was unrealistic and that, based on state regulations, the property owners should have had 18 to 36 months to

come into compliance.

The city councilors agreed that this was a substantial issue that needed to be looked into.

"This was a horrible, horrible roll out," City Councilor David Bartley had said. "Everything should just be rescinded, go back to ground level here."

The council also passed the first reading of an ordinance requesting an ad-hoc committee made up of representatives from the building commission, the city council and multi-family homeowners.

Mayor Joshua Garcia agrees that creating an ad-hoc committee could be beneficial, and the council plans to continue to consider the idea. That committee still has to be established.

After the city council meeting several property owners came to a public safety committee meeting where they continued to dis-

cuss the matter further.

In that meeting the committee decided that owner-occupied five dwelling units or less would get a grace period of two years to come into compliance with the building code.

Non-owner occupied five dwelling units or less will have a period of one year to come into compliance and the other larger properties have six months.

The reason for the shorter grace period for the larger properties is that the city sent out a notice to those properties in 2018 asking them to come into compliance with the building codes.

Those notices were never enforced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but property owners were still aware of the expectation.

However, these larger property owners still had some leeway within this six-month grace period.

**GARDEN**, from page 4

ricified. Get your plants off to a good start by watering occasionally until the ground freezes. Once it does, a light mulch can be applied over the peonies to prevent them from being heaved out of the ground during periods of freeze and thaw.

**Fertilizing and Watering**

Peonies fertilized at planting time require no additional food until the following fall. Bear in mind that too much nitrogen will encourage lots of leaves but few roots and flowers. For that reason choose a fertilizer that is lower in nitrogen than the other nutrients.

After the third season fertilize after blooming, as well as in the fall. An established peony is drought resistant, but if spring rains are scarce, a weekly watering will promote good flowers.

**Staking**

Heavy peony flowers, especially the old-fash-

ioned types will no doubt bow down to the ground in the wind and rain unless staked. I usually pick some for the vase in the bud stage in an attempt to avoid this task, but nevertheless it makes the plant nice and tidy and should be accomplished. Middle weight bamboo stakes inserted into the ground on the outer edge of the plant cut to three-quarters its height, work well. Run two rows of twine or jute at one third and two thirds up the bamboo, respectively. Simply start by tying a knot on one stake, wrapping around the next and tightening as you go.

If green bamboo and jute are used the staking will hardly be visible, especially if you don't tighten so much that it looks unnatural. I have been using a three rung, large tomato cage with success for the last several years. The key is to get the cage in place early!

**Diseases**

One year my peony buds wilted and dried up just prior to bloom. The culprit was

botrytis.

Good hygiene can reduce the risk of this fungus invading your garden. Each fall simply cut the stems of herbaceous peonies down to the ground. Haul them off to the trash, don't compost.

If watering is necessary, do so early in the morning and water at the plant's base rather than overhead to keep foliage dry. Any stems that show signs of wilting should be cut away and thrown in the trash as well. Disinfect clippers in between cuts.

By next weekend, I am sure there will be peonies in a vase, perfuming the entire room, just like they have for a number of decades each June...

*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.*

**Judith Ann Szwaya**



On May 29, 2025, Judith Ann Szwaya nee Roy of Front Royal, Virginia, passed away peacefully surrounded by her family.

Judith was born and raised in Holyoke, to parents, Lionel and Olga. She met and married her husband in college, and eventually settled down in Hamden, CT. She ran the Make Way for Ducklings Daycare from her home for almost 20 years.

She loved baking, shopping at thrift stores, and her flowers. She was very gen-

erous with her time and love. Her family was the pride of her life.

Judith is survived by her husband Jerry; her chil-

dren, Kristina Staton (Christopher) of Centreville, Virginia, Michael Szwaya (Rachel Brown) of Portland, Oregon, and Jeffrey Szwaya (Jessica Stechmann) of Mandeville, Louisiana; her nine grandchildren, Ian Szwaya (Sarah Fowler), Rachel Rich (Jonathan),

Owen Szwaya, Megan Staton, Everett Szwaya, Brian Staton, Alyssa Staton, Nathan Szwaya, and Cameron Szwaya; her siblings, Elizabeth Rossmeisl (James), John Roy (Joanne), Jeffrey Roy (Bonnie), and Melissa Roy (Drew Flaherty), and siblings in law, Daniel Szwaya (Pamela) and Margaret Zyniewicz (Robert), as well as 20 nieces and nephews; and eight great-nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers donations can be made to St. Jude Children's Hospital or the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

**DEATH NOTICE**

Szwaya, Judith Ann  
Died May 29, 2025

**OBITUARY POLICY:** Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries. One is a free, brief Death Notice listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place. The other is a Paid Obituary, costing \$275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. Death Notices & Paid Obituaries should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com. Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

**YARD**, from page 4

**Eagle nests**

The Brimfield resident also reported a tree with a bald eagle nest at the Stebbins Wildlife Refuge in Longmeadow fell down and the fire department rescued two chicks. They have been placed in the care of a local raptor rehabilitator. The chicks look to be fully grown, but unable to fly. He will care for the birds until they are old enough to release.

In Ludlow there is another eagle nest and there

are two chicks in that nest also but they are still very young, their heads are just visible above the rim of the nest.

**Solitary sandpiper**

The Brimfield resident reported seeing a solitary sandpiper at one of the ponds in Warren. He said he has seen spotted sandpipers there, but this was the first time he saw a solitary sandpiper at that location.

**Black bear**

Saturday, May 24 I saw a black bear walking down

the side of my road about 4:30 p.m. I slowly followed him in my car. He left the road and went up a steep path leading into some woods. At the top of the hill, he turned and looked toward the road. He had a healthy, dark black coat of fur.

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

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**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Marsh plant
- 6. Southern constellation ("The Peacock")
- 10. Fogginess
- 14. Home to Fools' Day
- 15. Absence of the sense of pain
- 17. Popular November holiday
- 19. Consume food
- 20. Buddy
- 21. Long-haired goat-antelope
- 22. Japanese honorific
- 23. Actor Malek
- 24. One point south of southeast
- 26. Illegal acts
- 29. As fast as can be done
- 31. Prevents harm to young
- 32. Exclamation of satisfaction
- 34. African nation
- 35. Slow-moving animal
- 37. Oh, goodness!
- 38. A team's best pitcher
- 39. Cleanser
- 40. Radioactivity units
- 41. Expectorated matter
- 1. Satisfy
- 2. European health advocate
- 3. Expression of annoyance
- 4. Strong liquor
- 5. Large red deer
- 6. Holder of less common religious beliefs
- 7. West Indian shrub
- 8. Family of proteins
- 9. Wealthy, influential business leader
- 10. Low spirits
- 11. Approves food
- 12. Monetary unit of Iran and Oman
- 13. Mary \_\_, cosmetics
- 16. Expressed in pithy maxims
- 18. Relaxing spaces
- 22. The NFL's big game
- 23. Proof of payment (abbr.)
- 24. Starchy preparation of dried orchid tubers
- 25. Indicates near
- 27. Minneapolis suburb
- 28. Herring-like fish
- 29. Doctors' group
- 30. Pouches
- 31. Bread dipping in sauce
- 33. Commercials
- 35. A reminder of past events
- 36. Affected by injury
- 37. Geological time
- 39. Stationary part of a motor
- 42. Brings together
- 43. Of sound mind
- 44. Personal computer
- 46. Without (French)
- 47. A bank might give you one
- 48. Agricultural testing organization
- 49. A small island
- 50. Type of gene
- 51. Murre
- 52. Card game
- 53. A measure of human health
- 54. Australian airline (abbr.)
- 55. One point south of due west
- 56. Affirmative

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 10

**CHURCH DIRECTORY**



**Your Community Church**

**Blessed Sacrament Parish**

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frduyle@blessedsacramentholyoke.org  
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WEEKEND MASSES:  
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Sunday 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.  
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HOURS: Sunday worship service (winter hours) at 10:30 a.m. (summer hours) at 10 a.m.  
Wednesday Bible Studies, one at 11 a.m. and one at 5:30 p.m.

**Our Lady of the Cross Catholic Parish**

Pastor: Fr. Albert Scherer, OFM Conv.  
Email: pastor@ourladyofthecross.com  
Holy Cross Ave., Holyoke  
Parish Offices are located at: 15 Maple Street, Holyoke (413) 532-5661  
parish@ourladyofthecross.com  
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Saturday 4 p.m.  
Sunday 7:30 a.m., 9 a.m. (Polish), and 10:30 a.m.  
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Legal Holidays Mass 9 a.m.  
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Saturday 3:15pm  
Anytime by Appointment  
DEVOTIONS  
Monday - Saturday  
Divine Mercy Chaplet - 7:50 a.m.  
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Rev. Debora Stein  
34 Jarvis Ave., Holyoke  
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Pastor: revdebma@gmail.com  
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Sunday: 8 a.m.  
Sunday: 10 a.m.  
Sunday: 5 p.m. (Spanish)



Students gathering in the cafeteria before heading out to the football stadium for their commencement ceremony



The seniors walk through the halls one last time, ending their high school careers.



The students walk through a human tunnel on their way out onto the field.

# Congrats, CLASS OF 2025!



After passing through the human tunnel the students shuffle into their seats on the field.



The stands fill up with family, friends, and other supporters for the senior class.



A massive crowd was on hand to support the graduates.



The Class of 2025 assembles at Roberts Field.

*Turley Photos By Abigail McCoy*



The faculty and guest speakers lead the stadium in the Pledge of Allegiance after which they all stay standing for the Star Spangled Banner performed by the High School Choir.



The Holyoke High School Marching Band provides the background music for the choir singing the Star Spangled Banner.



The Class of 2025 applauds one of the speakers.

## GRADUATION, from page 1

counselor Mr. Rogers, and classmates who helped him grow. "This diploma isn't just a piece of paper...it's proof I made it."

Closing out the ceremony, Mayor Joshua Garcia, a proud graduate of Holyoke's Class of 2004 and a district leader, brought the crowd to its feet with energy, pride, and one final message of belonging.

"You helped bring this district out of receivership," he reminded the Class of 2025, praising their contributions to a community in transformation. "You've learned from this city...about poverty, addiction, culture, and resilience."

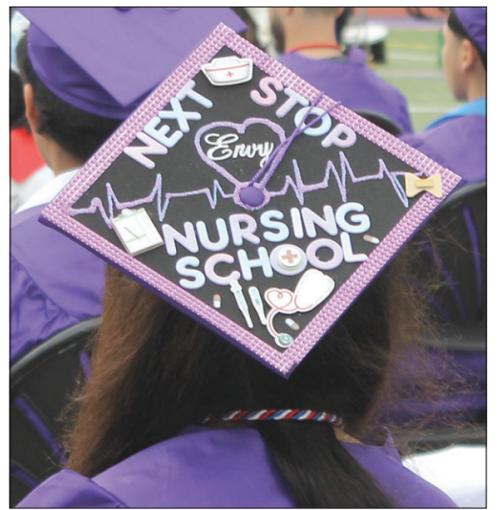
Garcia emphasized that the knowledge the students

carried wasn't just academic, it was lived. "Even if you've never traveled far, you've gained a global understanding here."

He urged graduates to remember where they come from, and to return one day. "Holyoke is a city of migrants and immigrants. It's a city of compassion. Holyoke is your home."

He ended with a celebratory shout: "Let's go!!!"

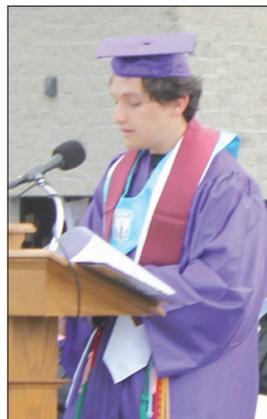
From humorous pop culture references to profound reflections on identity and adversity, the Class of 2025 marked their graduation with voices as diverse and powerful as the city they come from. Together, they reminded their community, and each other, that resilience, courage, and connection will carry them forward, no matter what comes next.



Decorated mortarboards filled the field with excited graduates.



Salutarian Michael Melendez giving his speech to his fellow classmates



Valedictorian Nicholas Rodriguez reciting the Bee Movie monologue to the audience for his valedictorian speech.



Dr. Yadilette Rivera-Colón, vice chair of the school committee and a university biology chair, sharing her story of perseverance as a neurodivergent woman who came from an underfunded community.



Student Perseverance Speaker Gedeon Ortiz-Torres heading back to his seat after delivering his speech.



Graduates listen to their classmates speak.

## In The News

# Eversource to install smart meters

SPRINGFIELD – With work to prepare the electric system to support Eversource’s transition to smart meters nearly complete in Western Massachusetts, the energy company is alerting customers that crews will begin upgrading meters in the next few months. Eversource will begin installing the first smart meters at customers’ homes and businesses in late July and continue through the following months. At the same time, the energy company will expand to Eastern Massachusetts its work installing network devices—technology that will extend the range of Eversource’s meter network and help the smart meters safely and securely communicate important information back to the energy company.

customers in Western Massachusetts a series of notification letters approximately 90, 60, and 30 days in advance of work to install smart meters starts in their community. The energy company is also reaching out directly to customers in Eastern Massachusetts with information about what to expect as work to support the transition to smart meters begins in their neighborhood.

“Now more than ever, we’re focused on empowering our customers with greater control over their energy use, and smart meters are key to those efforts,” said Eversource Senior Vice President of Customer Operations, Digital Strategy and Chief Customer Officer Jared Lawrence. “Upgrading to smart meters is like replacing an old flip phone with

a smart phone. This modern, smart tech will enable our customers to monitor their energy use in near real time—including how they use power, how much they use and peak times of use during the day—so that they can make informed decisions about the most effective ways to reduce their energy consumption and bill. The information smart meters provide will also significantly improve service for our customers by enabling our team to proactively address power outages before they occur and to deliver enhanced, real-time outage alerts.”

In addition to helping customers better manage their energy use and speeding power restoration outside storms, smart meters will enable Eversource to start or end a customer’s service remotely when

they move in or out of their home, eliminating the need to schedule a crew to come out. Customers will also be able to sign up to receive high usage alerts if the amount of energy they use exceeds a set threshold based on their historical energy usage and other helpful notifications.

The transition to smart meters for all Eversource’s Massachusetts electric customers is expected to take approximately three years to complete. Eversource will send a letter to customers whose meters are being upgraded to the latest technology in the next few months, and all customers will be notified several times in advance of work to install their new smart meter. Learn more about Eversource’s transition to the modern power grid of the future.

# Paper Festival to take place June 7

HOLYOKE – The inaugural Holyoke Paper Festival is set to bring a one-day celebration of art, paper, and place to downtown Holyoke on Saturday, June 7 at the De La Luz Soundstage, 114 Race Street.

This new event celebrates Holyoke’s unique identity as The Paper City, once producing an estimated 80% of the writing paper used in the U.S. during the late 1800s. Today, artists and community members continue to be inspired by Holyoke’s history of innovation, its vibrant arts scene, and its powerful connection to the Connecticut River and the land of the Pocumtuc, Agawam, and Nonotuck peoples.

Festival attendees can look forward to a full day of programming including a

fine art exhibition, interactive workshops, guest speakers, local tours, and more—all highlighting the legacy and future of paper as a creative medium. Entries to the art exhibition have been received from artists across the country, underscoring Holyoke’s national significance in paper and printmaking culture.

The Holyoke Paper Festival is made possible by support from MassDevelopment, the Holyoke Local Cultural Council, Holyoke Community College, and local business and property owners.

To learn more about the festival or to get involved as a sponsor, volunteer, or donor, visit [www.holyokepaperfestival.com](http://www.holyokepaperfestival.com) for the latest updates and details.

# Veterans to lead grave restoration

HOLYOKE – The Veterans Services is honored to host a Graves Restoration Event on Saturday, June 7 at the Elmwood Cemetery located at 2190 Northampton Street. The event will begin at 10 a.m. Rain Date will be on June 14. This event is to restore and preserve our deceased veterans markers so that they are kept in a presentable form for posterity. Tools and supplies will be provided. If you have any questions, please contact Wayne Klinge at [klingew@holyoke.org](mailto:klingew@holyoke.org) or 413-322-5630. All are welcome.

# Wistariahurst Museum holding events to celebrate Pride Month

HOLYOKE – Wistariahurst Museum is celebrating Pride month with informative and celebratory events at the museum. Coming up Wednesday, June 4 from 6 to 7 p.m. is Becoming Better Neighbors: LGBTQ+ Inclusion and Empathy in Action, a workshop facilitated by Dr. Nina Tissi-Gassoway (they/she) and Cas Rego-Martin, MPPA (they/he). This workshop will engage participants in interactive learning methods to give them insight and tools on how to support Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Queer (LGBTQ) people within their com-

munity. Tissi-Gassoway is a Professor of Practice in Higher Education and Social Justice Education and Coordinator for the Social Justice Education program at University of Massachusetts Amherst. Cas Rego-Martin, MPPA (they/he) is a social justice educator and facilitator based in Western Massachusetts. Rego-Martin is passionate about co-creating brave and joyful spaces with marginalized students and educators. Becoming Better Neighbors: LGBTQ+ Inclusion and Empathy in Action will foster understanding and community

building- the perfect way to start Pride Month this June.

The following week is the second annual celebration event for the LGBTQ+ community: Celebrate Pride during our Sensory-Friendly Sunday Funday Passport Series this summer! Join us on Sunday, June 8 from 12 to 3 p.m. to enjoy lawn games, activities, and support local businesses and artists that are a part of the LGBTQ+ community or allies. Families and guests will be able to interact with fun historical activities based around Wistariahurst, and help staff search for our sleepy lion, Winston.

Serenity Lockhart

will be leading our first Drag Storytime with a performance afterwards consisting of family-friendly songs everyone will jam to. Holyoke residents may recognize Serenity from her many amazing performances at Fame Eatery/Lounge, and we’re excited to welcome her to Wistariahurst.

Wistariahurst Museum is dedicated to creating more sensory-friendly events for families with sensory sensitivities in mind. Lights will be dimmed around the inside of the museum, all activities will be low or mess free, and areas will be available with reduced noise levels. Our

Sensory Friendly Sunday Fundays are hosted so that everyone in our community can enjoy a celebratory afternoon in our museum and gardens.

These events are free and open to all who want to celebrate Pride at Wistariahurst. These events will foster understanding and celebrate the LGBTQ+ community.

Becoming Better Neighbors: LGBTQ+ Inclusion and Empathy in Action is funded in part by a grant from the Holyoke Local Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

# SPORTS

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## Blue Sox pitching fans 15 batters, defeat Gulls



Chris Walsh swings and makes contact.

Turley photos by Sofia DiGrande

HOLYOKE – The Valley Blue Sox, managed for the first time by 2018 NECBL Best Starting Pitcher award winner Endy Morales, defeated the defending two-time champion Newport Gulls to open their season on Tuesday 1-0.

In a pitcher's duel, the Blue Sox staff retired 15 Newport batters via strike-out.

"You set the tone with that," said Morales of his team's performance on the mound. "It's kind of what we needed. Sure, it'd be great if the offense came out and was hitting and scoring a bunch of runs. But at the end of the day, we all know pitching is what gets it done ... I feel like the guys came out and just commanded

their best stuff."

Returning Blue Sox All-Star Gregory Shaw earned the win, throwing five innings and fanning six batters. Ethan Slowik struck out the side in the sixth, while Jack Potteiger and Jack Geiser took care of the seventh and eighth, striking out three total batters.

The ninth inning belonged to Andrew Wertz, who struck out the side to secure the win and the save.

The lone run, which ended up being the winner for Valley, came in the bottom of the third inning. After the bases were loaded on an error by Gulls' third baseman Petey Craska, Chris Walsh brought in Valley's winning run on a weak ground ball that resulted in a

double play.

Valley's Andrew Loikits went 1-2 with a BB, while Clay Burdette stole the lone base of the game. For Newport, Shane Williams, Andreus Lewis and Randy Seymour picked up base hits. Pitchers Drew DeLucia, Finbar O'Brien and Blake Julius were calm on the mound, striking out 11 Valley batters and only allowing one run.

Tuesday's win for the Blue Sox represented redemption, as they knocked off a Newport team that swept them in the NECBL playoffs a season prior. However, Morales is more concerned with his team this season.

See BLUE SOX, page 9



Rees Kozar heads for third base.



Mikey O'Connor makes an off-balance throw to first.



Ethan Slowik was one of the relievers that preserved a 1-0 win for the Blue Sox.



Mike Lucarelli slides safely into third.



Gregory Shaw starts for the Blue Sox in the season opener.

## Morales enjoys debut as new Blue Sox head coach

HOLYOKE – With revenge on their minds and the new era underway, The Valley Blue Sox came into opening night with a chip on their shoulder looking to defeat the Newport Gulls who ended their season last year. New Head Coach Endy Morales prided himself on defense as his squad retired 15 Newport batters and came out on top with a 1-0 victory.

"The highlight was the pitching. We punched out 15 guys and offensively punched out 13 but we did one job better than they did," said Morales on his team's overall performance.

It was an emotional night for Coach Morales as he won back-to-back cham-

pionships with the Blue Sox as a player during the 2017-2018 seasons and now returning to Mackenzie Stadium with a new title leading his team out onto the field.

"I was a little nervous I'm not going to lie. I just saw how Raiola did it so well when I was playing for him. I didn't want to mess it up and at the end of the day what calmed me down was that we have a good group of guys and I felt confident in their abilities."

Coach Morales looks to build on their momentum when they travel to Connecticut to face the Mystic Schooners on Wednesday night.

## After pair of big wins, Western Mass. Pioneers draw in home opener

By Tim Peterson  
Sports Correspondent

LUDLOW – Putting the ball into the back of the net wasn't a major issue for the Western Mass. Pioneers in their first two regular season matches.

The Pioneers, who outscored Boston City and the Albany Rush, 15-0, on the road, played a 1-1 draw against the Seacoast United Phantoms in the home opener at historic Lusitano Stadium on May 23.

"I thought it was a very good game tonight," said longtime Pioneers head coach Federico Molinari. "Seacoast won the championship last year and they're a very good team again this

year. They defended very well against us. We did play much better during the second half than we did in the first half."

The Pioneers first home match was played on a miserable night weatherwise.

Eleven different players scored a goal in the Pioneers' first two road matches.

Israel Neto led the way offensively with three goals. Matt Cence and Robbie Lyons both scored two goals. The other goals for the Pioneers were scored by Oskar Kaufmann, Aiden Kelly, Austin Bush, Jose Suarez, Jose Bustamante, Gustavo Barbosa, and Mamadi Jiana, who's a former member of the Chicopee boys' soccer team.

The Phantoms (0-1-1), who are the defending USL League Two National champions, had won the previous three matchups between the two rivals held at Lusitano Stadium.

The home team had an opportunity to take an early lead, but a breakaway opportunity by Kaufmann in the second minute of the match was saved by Seacoast goalie Jahn Tobias.

With 15 minutes remaining in the first half, Tobias made a diving save on another shot attempt from Kaufmann.

Down at the other end of the field, Western Mass. goalie Cameron Hall also

See PIONEERS, page 9



Israel Neto looks to clear the ball away.



Cameron Hall, Pioneers goalie, sends a free kick away.

# Basketball Hall of Fame series coming to TD Garden

BOSTON – Position Sports, in partnership with the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame, announced that projected preseason Top 10 teams UConn and BYU will meet in the Hall of Fame Series Boston event on Saturday, Nov. 15, at TD Garden. This marks just the second meeting between the programs, with the Huskies defeating the Cougars in the first matchup during the opening round of the 2003 NCAA Tournament.

“We’re thrilled to establish TD Garden as our new-

est Hall of Fame Series venue, creating a basketball showcase in the heart of New England, just a short journey from our home in Springfield,” said John L. Doleva, President and CEO of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. “The matchup between UConn and BYU brings together one of the sport’s premier programs and one of its most exciting up-and-coming teams, led by a local talent in AJ Dybansta. This event not only highlights elite college basketball but also reinforc-

es our ongoing relationship with the Boston Celtics and our shared commitment to celebrating the game’s rich history in the region.”

This will be UConn’s second appearance in the Hall of Fame Series, following a win over Gonzaga at Madison Square Garden last December. The Huskies are led by two-time National Champion Alex Karaban, who hails from Southborough, Mass. BYU, featuring Brockton, Mass., product and consensus No. 1 incoming recruit A.J.

Dybansta, is also set to participate in the Hall of Fame Series Las Vegas event on Opening Night, Nov. 3.

“Bringing the Hall of Fame Series to Boston for the first time is an exciting milestone, especially just down the road from the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield,” said Melissa Meacham-Grossman, President of Position Sports. “UConn’s championship legacy and BYU’s emerging star power—highlighted by Massachusetts’ own A.J.

Dybansta—set the stage for a memorable night at TD Garden, in a city where the game’s history runs deep, thanks to the tradition of the Boston Celtics and the legacy of their many Hall of Famers.”

Further details regarding ticketing, game times, broadcast details, and media credentials for the event will be shared at a later date.

The Hall of Fame Series, owned and operated by Position Sports, is a premier collection of multi-game, singular events that

feature top collegiate basketball programs in high-profile non-conference matchups played both domestically and abroad. Past stops have included the following cities: Baltimore (2024), Charlotte (2023), Las Vegas (2023-24), New York (2024), Phoenix (2023-24), San Antonio (2023), and Toronto (2023).

For more Hall of Fame Series information and updates, please visit [HOFSeries.com](http://HOFSeries.com) or follow @HOFSeries on all social platforms.

## Thunderbirds announce home opener for 10th season

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds announced six guaranteed home game dates at the MassMutual Center for the 2025-26 season.

The franchise will kick off its 10th Anniversary celebration on Saturday, Oct. 11 for Opening Night. Additionally, the following dates will be on the home ice schedule next season:

- Friday, Nov. 7
- Saturday, Dec. 6

- Saturday, Jan. 10
- Saturday, Feb. 21
- Saturday, March 7

Promotional information and opponents for these nights, as well as the rest of the 2025-26 season schedule, will be unveiled later this summer. Stay tuned for more information on what promises to be a historic 10th year for the Thunderbirds franchise.

The 2024-25 regular season may be over, but the

Thunderbirds’ front office staff and Boomer will remain as active as ever in the Springfield community throughout the late Spring and Summer.

For more information on upcoming events, stay tuned to the T-Birds on social media @ThunderbirdsAHL, or visit the Community Tab on [www.SpringfieldThunderbirds.com](http://www.SpringfieldThunderbirds.com).

## New exhibit opens at Volleyball Hall

HOLYOKE – There’s never been a better time to visit the International Volleyball Hall of Fame. As we gear up for the 2025 Induction Ceremony this October, we’re unveiling a series of exciting new exhibits that celebrate the global spirit and rich history of our sport.

“Volleyballs Around the World”

Take a journey across continents and cultures to see how volleyball connects communities worldwide. From backyard courts to

Olympic arenas, this exhibit highlights the sport’s universal appeal.

“The History of Puerto Rican Volleyball”

Discover the passion and pride of Puerto Rico’s volleyball legacy, featuring iconic athletes from the Puerto Rican Volleyball Hall of Fame, landmark moments, and the island’s lasting impact on the international stage.

Reimagined Beach Volleyball Exhibit

Get a fresh look at the sand-side of the sport

with a dynamic update to our Beach Volleyball exhibit—featuring new stories, legendary players, and Olympic highlights that defined eras.

Whether you’re stopping by this summer or joining us in October for Induction Weekend, don’t miss these powerful additions to the Hall experience. They’re more than exhibits—they’re celebrations of the game we all love.

Plan your visit today—and make history part of your journey.

## BLUE SOX, from page 8

“I think when you’re writing the story of the Blue Sox, obviously we lost to [Newport] last year in the playoffs, and [tonight] is to open up the season. That does feel good. But at the

end of the day, it was less about the opponent and more about us.”

Morales also mentioned that the team is looking forward, not back.

“In the grand scheme of things, their roster is going to look a little bit different, but I still feel confident about what we did ...

when they do get more of their guys that are coming in, obviously that roster is going to look different, but we’ll find out next weekend.”

In the short term, Morales is focused on the task at hand.

“Tomorrow’s the most important one,” he said.

## PIONEERS, from page 8

made a couple of key saves, which kept the contest scoreless until the second half.

The Phantoms also had nine corner kicks during the first 45 minutes.

Early in the second half, the referee awarded the Phantoms a penalty kick following a foul inside the box.

Hall, who posted shut-outs in the first two match-

es, made a diving save on the shot taken by Taig Healy. The ball was deflected away by Hall, but Healy was in the right spot to knock home the rebound shot giving the visiting team a 1-0 advantage.

The Pioneers scored the equalizer a little more than ten minutes later.

The scoring play began with Suarez sending a crossing pass from the left side of the penalty area to Kaufmann, who fired a shot into the lower right corner of

the net.

Neither team was able to score another goal during the last 30 minutes of regulation.

The second meeting of the regular season between the two squads is scheduled to take place on June 25th.

The Pioneers played a road match against the Boston Bolts on June 3 before returning home three nights later to face NEFC, who’s competing at the USL-League Two level for the first time this season.



Oskar Kaufmann grabs a quick stop.



Mamadi Jiana advances up the field.



Jaiden Williams sets for a throw-in.



Santiago Blasco Gomez balances the ball.



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# Public Notices

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
**The Trial Court**  
**Probate and Family Court**  
**Hampden Probate and Family Court**  
**50 State Street**  
**Springfield, MA 01103**  
**Docket No. HD25P1093PM**  
**In the matter of:**  
**Zahra Bagheri**  
**Of: Boston, MA**  
**RESPONDENT**  
**(Person to be Protected/ Minor)**  
**CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF CONSERVATOR OR OTHER PROTECTIVE ORDER PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, §5-304 & §5-405**

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by **Massachusetts General Hospital** of Boston, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that **Zahra Bagheri** is in need of a Conservator or other protective order and requesting that **Kimberly Benjamin-Prokop** of Westfield, MA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Conservator to serve **With Surety** on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is disabled, that a protective order or appointment of a Conservator is necessary, and that the proposed conservator is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court.

**You have the right to object to this proceeding.** If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before **06/20/2025**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

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

Witness, Hon. **Barbara M. Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.  
 Date: May 22, 2025  
**Rosemary A. Saccomani**  
 Register of Probate  
 06/06/2025

**City of Holyoke**  
**Notice of Public Hearing**  
 The Ordinance Committee of the Holyoke City Council will hold a public hearing on **Monday, June 16th, 2025 at 6:30pm** to hear a special permit application amendment of Blue Fox Brands Inc. at 1 Cabot St (048-01-010) a marijuana manufacturing facility, adding a CID1 extraction booth. Meeting will take place at Holyoke City Hall 536 Dwight St., Holyoke and can be accessed remotely via zoom. us Meeting ID 836 5145 1244 Meeting Passcode 213456 or by call in at 1-646-558-8656 with same Meeting ID and Passcode.

For an electronic copy of the application or to submit a comment for this public hearing, please contact City Council Admin Asst Jeffery Anderson-Burgos at Anderson-BurgosJ@holyo.ke.org or by phone 413-322-5525.  
 Ordinance Chair  
 Israel Rivera  
 05/30, 06/05/2025

**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. HD25P1127EA**  
**Estate of:**  
**Kenneth P Chamberlain**  
**Date of Death: 03/16/2025**  
**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 **Melissa L McAndrew of Holyoke, 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: **Melissa L McAndrew of Holyoke, 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 06/24/2025. 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: May 27, 2025  
**Rosemary A Saccomani**,  
 Register of Probate  
 06/06/2025

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
**The Trial Court**  
**Probate and Family Court**  
**Hampden Probate and Family Court**  
**50 State Street**  
**Springfield, MA 01103**  
**Docket No. HD23P1829GD**

**In the interests of Kei'Rael J Davila of Holyoke, MA**  
**Minor**  
**NOTICE AND ORDER: Petition for Resignation or Petition for Removal of Guardianship of a Minor**  
**NOTICE TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES**

**1. Hearing Date/Time:** A hearing on a Petition to Resign as Guardian of a Minor or Petition for Removal of Guardian of a Minor filed by **Shaira Grisell Rodriguez** on **May 14, 2025** will be held **06/16/2025 08:30 AM Motion**. Located **Hampden Probate and Family Court, 50 State Street, Springfield, MA 01103**  
**2. Response to Petition:** You may respond by filing a written response to the Petition or by appearing in person at the hearing. If you choose to file a written response, you need to:  
 File the original with the Court; and  
 Mail a copy to all interested parties at least five (5) business days before the hearing.

**3. Counsel for the Minor:** The minor (or an adult on behalf of the minor) has the right to request that counsel be appointed for the minor.  
**4. Presence of the Minor at Hearing:** A minor over age 14 has the right to be present at any hearing, unless the Court finds that it is not in the minor's best interests.  
 Date: May 15, 2025  
**Rosemary A. Saccomani**  
 Register of Probate  
 06/06/2025

**Invitation to Bid IFB 2025-41SD**  
**Dean Tech High School Paving Project**  
 The City on behalf of the School Department is inviting qualified Asphalt Contractors to submit bids for Paving & Patching at Dean Tech High School. Scope of work is to include but not limited to Approximately 6,211 Square Feet of patching and paving work. Areas to be saw cut into square shape for preparation of new hot asphalt paving to be 3-4" depth. Patching to be done with bond & binder coat. Where paving is deteriorated, the area must be prepped for the correct paving procedure. D.O.T. rated materials must be used. All materials demoed by the contractor must be disposed of by the contractor.  
 Proposal is to include all materials, labor and disposal. Prevailing wages must be paid. City reserves the right to use Federal Funds and respondents will be verified for their eligibility to receive Federal Funds.  
**Documents will be available starting on June 4th, 2025 at 10AM by requesting electronically from mrowj@holyo.ke.org. Bids will be received until 2PM on 6/18/2025, where they will be opened publicly and read. Bid submittals should be sent to City of Holyoke, Office of Purchasing RE: IFB 2025-41SD, 536 Dwight Street, Room 3, Holyoke, MA 01040. The city of Holyoke follows MGL CH 30B, Ch. 149, and all applicable local, state and Federal Purchasing Laws. No electronic submissions allowed.**  
 The city reserves the right to reject any and all bids.  
 06/06/2025

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
**The Trial Court**  
**Hampden Probate and Family Court**  
**50 State Street**  
**Springfield, MA 01103**  
**(413)748-7758**  
**Docket No. HD22P0338EA**  
**Estate of:**  
**Henry J Holubecki**  
**Date of Death: 12/03/2021**  
**CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL APPOINTMENT OF SUCCESSOR PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE**

To all interested persons:  
 A Petition has been filed by: **Lisa Knowles of Springfield, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order that **Lisa Knowles of Springfield, MA** be appointed as Successor Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.  
 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 **07/01/2025**. 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.  
 The estate is being administered under formal 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 recipients 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.  
 WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M. Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.  
 Date: May 27, 2025  
**Rosemary A. Saccomani**  
 Register of Probate  
 06/06/2025

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
**The Trial Court**  
**Hampden Probate and Family Court**  
**50 State Street**  
**Springfield, MA 01103**  
**(413)748-7758**  
**Docket No. HD22P0338EA**  
**Estate of:**  
**Henry J Holubecki**  
**Date of Death: 12/03/2021**  
**CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL APPOINTMENT OF SUCCESSOR PERSONAL REPRESENTATIVE**

To all interested persons:  
 A Petition has been filed by: **Lisa Knowles of Springfield, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order that **Lisa Knowles of Springfield, MA** be appointed as Successor Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.  
 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 **07/01/2025**. 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.  
 The estate is being administered under formal 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 recipients 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.  
 WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M. Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.  
 Date: May 27, 2025  
**Rosemary A. Saccomani**  
 Register of Probate  
 06/06/2025

your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this court before 10:00 a.m. on **07/01/2025**. 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 date, action may be taken without further notice to you. .

The estate is being administered under formal 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 recipients 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.  
 WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M. Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.  
 Date: May 27, 2025  
**Rosemary A. Saccomani**  
 Register of Probate  
 06/06/2025

**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. HD24P0369EA**  
**Estate of:**  
**Katherine Priscilla Kisiel**  
**Also known as:**  
**K. Priscilla Kisiel, Katherine P Kisiel**  
**Date of Death: 08/14/2023**  
**CITATION ON PETITION FOR ORDER OF COMPLETE SETTLEMENT**

A Petition for **Order of Complete Settlement** has been filed by **Thomas K. Kisiel of San Diego, CA and Bank of America, N.A. of Hartford, CT** requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including the allowance of a final account and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition.  
**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 07/02/2025.**

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.  
 WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M. Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.  
 Date: May 28, 2025  
**Rosemary A. Saccomani**  
 Register of Probate  
 06/06/2025

**NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE DIVISION OF CAPITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE**  
 Electronic Bids submitted in the format furnished by the Division of Capital Asset Management & Maintenance (DCAMM) and clearly identified as a bid will be received through DCAMM's E-Bid Room at [www.bidexpress.com/businesses/10279/home](http://www.bidexpress.com/businesses/10279/home) no later than the date and time specified and will forthwith be publicly opened remotely by DCAMM Bid Room personnel and read aloud over a conference call line. Persons interested in accessing the remote bid opening can do so by using the following phone number: Audio Conferencing Dial-In Number (617)-315-0704, Meeting Number 2333 916 4237#. If prompted for attendee ID, please press #.  
 Mass. State Project No. JOCAD-4

**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. HD25A0048AD**  
**In the matter of:**  
**Muziik Ishmayah Otero**  
**CITATION G.L. c. 210, §6**

TO:  
 Yancy Marie Otero  
 any unnamed or unknown parent and persons interested in a petition for the adoption of said child and to the Department of Children and Families of said Commonwealth.  
 A petition has been presented to said court by:  
**Nancy Otero of Springfield, MA**  
 requesting for leave to adopt said child and that the name of the child be changed  
**If you object to this adoption you are entitled to the appointment of an attorney if you are an indigent person.**  
 An indigent person is defined by SJC Rule 3.10. The definition includes but is not limited to persons receiving TAFDC, EACDC, poverty related veteran's benefits, Medicaid, and SSI. The Court will determine

Job Order Contract for General Contractor Services – Central and Western MA Region  
 General Bids at 2:00 PM:  
 June 30, 2025  
 Every General Bidder must be certified by DCAMM for the category of work listed below and for no less than the bid price plus all add alternates of this project, if applicable.  
 This notice is for three contracts bid in accordance with Chapter 9, Section 49 of the Acts of 2011, as amended by Chapter 119, Sections 23 and 24 of the Acts of 2015, by chapter 113, Sections 22 through 24 of the Acts of 2018 and by Section 63 of Chapter 42 of the Acts of 2022 (collectively, the "Act").  
 Category of Work:  
 General Building Construction  
 Job order projects under this Contract may include alteration, conversion, maintenance and/or repair (as defined in the Contract Documents) of state buildings and facilities located in the following counties: Berkshire County, Hampden County, Hampshire County, Franklin County, Worcester County. All municipalities within each county are included.  
 Each Job Order project will have an estimated cost of construction of not more than \$150,000. Total of all Job Orders performed by a Contractor under an awarded Contract may not exceed \$1,000,000 subject to terms of the Contract Documents. Job Orders will be priced based on Bidders' Contractor's Coefficient(s) multiplied by applicable Unit Prices in the Contract Documents.  
 Contract term is two years.  
 A Pre-Bid/Site Visit will be held online for both JOCAD-3 and JOCAD-4 on June 11, 2025 at 10:00 AM using the following link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85763092332?pwd=enNMWnZTN3c5U1F5RzIadVNVQVZ6QT09>  
 Minimum rates of wages to be paid on the project have been determined by the Commissioner of the Department of Labor Standards. These rates are incorporated into the bid documents.  
 Bid documents for this project may be accessed or downloaded at no cost to potential bidders exclusively through DCAMM's E-Bid Room <https://www.bidexpress.com/businesses/10279/home>. A hard copy set can be made available for viewing in DCAMM's Bid Room located at One Ashburton Place, 15th Floor, Boston, MA during normal business hours **by appointment only** by contacting DCAMM's Bid Room.  
 In order to access bid documents and submit bids through DCAMM's E-Bid Room potential bidders must first be verified by DCAMM's Bid Room and then register with the E-Bid Room vendor. Instructions on the processes can be found on DCAMM's website [www.mass.gov/dcammbids](http://www.mass.gov/dcammbids) or contact DCAMM's Bid Room at [bidroom.dcammb@mass.gov](mailto:bidroom.dcammb@mass.gov) or (617)727-4003.  
 Adam Baacke  
 COMMISSIONER  
 06/06/2025

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 General Bids at 2:00 PM:  
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 Adam Baacke  
 COMMISSIONER  
 06/06/2025

**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. HD25P1119EA**  
**Estate of:**  
**Louis Anthony Rigali**  
**Also Known As:**  
**Louis Rigali**  
**Date of Death:**  
**December 16, 2023**  
**INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE**

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Clare R. Rigali of Holyoke, MA**  
 a Will has been admitted to informal probate.  
**Clare R. Rigali 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.  
 06/06/2025

**Quotes for Sidewalk Replacement 2 Schools 2025-30SD**  
 The City on behalf of the School Department is inviting qualified Contractors to submit quotes for the front sidewalk replacement Donahue Elementary at 210 Whiting Farms Road and E.N. White School at 1 Jefferson Street Holyoke MA 01040. Each concrete sidewalk area is to be mechanically removed and disposed of to the sub base and will be prepared with ¾" crushed stones, fines and mechanically compacted. Then install a minimum 3,500 psi concrete product at a depth of 3" to 4" or whatever height needs to be met to match the surrounding sidewalks. All new concrete will be tooled and finished to match the surrounding, existing concrete at each site while installing expansion joints as needed to prevent cracking. All materials demolished in preparation for the new concrete sidewalks are to be disposed of properly by the contractor. All fees associated with it are to be included in the proposal.  
 Each proposal must include the labor and materials, including disposal for each school, while submitting separate proposals for each. All labor rates must use the Massachusetts prevailing wage. **Documents will be available starting on June 4th, 2025 at 10AM by requesting electronically from mrowj@holyo.ke.org. Bids will be received until 1PM on 6/18/2025, they can be submitted electronically to mrowj@holyo.ke.org.** Bid submittals should be sent electronically to the Office of Purchasing RE: IFB 2025-30SD. The city of Holyoke follows MGL CH 30B, Ch. 149, and all applicable local, state and Federal Purchasing Laws.  
 The city reserves the right to reject any and all bids.  
 06/06/2025

**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. HD25A0048AD**  
**In the matter of:**  
**Muziik Ishmayah Otero**  
**CITATION G.L. c. 210, §6**

TO:  
 Yancy Marie Otero  
 any unnamed or unknown parent and persons interested in a petition for the adoption of said child and to the Department of Children and Families of said Commonwealth.  
 A petition has been presented to said court by:  
**Nancy Otero of Springfield, MA**  
 requesting for leave to adopt said child and that the name of the child be changed  
**If you object to this adoption you are entitled to the appointment of an attorney if you are an indigent person.**  
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 Adam Baacke  
 COMMISSIONER  
 06/06/2025

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#### FIREWOOD

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All hardwood.

Tree length available  
\*Also have seasoned softwood for outdoor boilers (Cheap). Quality & volumes **guaranteed!!** New England Forest Products (413)477-0083

**MORE HEAT LESS WOOD.** Central Boiler Classic Edge HDX Outdoor Wood Furnace. EPA Certified. Titanium Stainless Steel. \$2K Tax Credit. Call (508)882-0178

## JUNK REMOVAL

### ARA JUNK FURNITURE REMOVAL

Full house cleanouts, attics, basements, garages, pools, hot tubs, sheds, decks. Same day service. 8am-9pm. Credit cards accepted. Free estimates on phone.

Fully insured.  
Call Pete 413-433-0356.

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CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

## SERVICES

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Cellars, attics, garages cleaned, yard debris. Barns & sheds demolished. Swimming pools removed. Cheaper than dumpster fees and we do all the work. Lowest rates. Fully insured. (413)283-6512, cell (413)222-8868.

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### NEED AN ELECTRICIAN?

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LICENSED & INSURED

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### ZEN ELECTRIC COMPANY LLC

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## HOME IMPROVEMENT

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Residential/Commercial  
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## LANDSCAPING

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

## HELP WANTED

**PANTRY COORDINATOR** for Community Survival Center in Indian Orchard. Application available at [www.communitysurvivalcenter.org](http://www.communitysurvivalcenter.org)  
Must be able to lift 40 pounds and stand for extended periods of time. Four-day work week; 34-hours/week; Pays \$1750/hour

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Post your job openings in our classifieds.  
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## REAL ESTATE

### FOR RENT



All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.

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 advertising 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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CLASSIFIED DEADLINE IS 2 P.M. ON FRIDAY

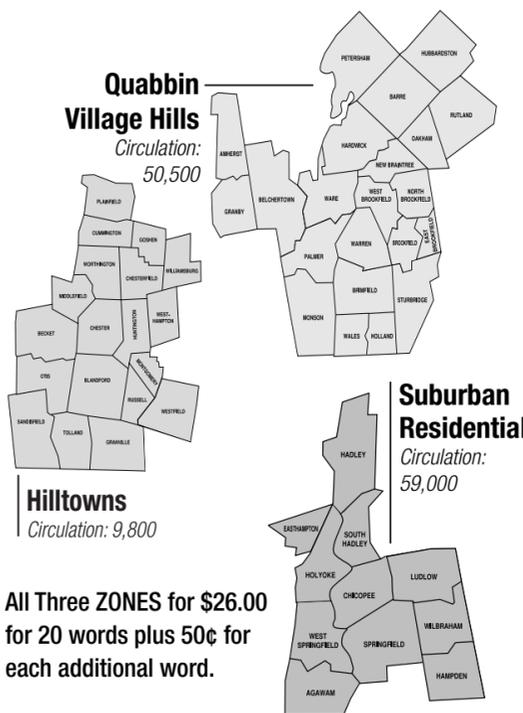
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# Gulluni shares recent narcotics investigations

SPRINGFIELD – Hampden District Attorney Anthony D. Gulluni today announced the results of three major drug trafficking investigations that have dismantled significant narcotics distribution networks operating in and around Springfield.

“These operations reflect the power of collaboration between my office and our local, state, and federal law enforcement partners,” said District Attorney Gulluni. “Together, we’ve made a significant impact on the availability of dangerous drugs in our region and brought dozens of traffickers to justice.”

DA Gulluni was joined by Massachusetts State Police Lieutenant Colonel Marc Lavoie of the Division of Homeland Security and Preparedness; Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Tucker of the Division of Investigative Services; Springfield Police Superintendent Lawrence Akers, among other representatives.

The investigations were led through DA Gulluni’s office and the Hampden County Narcotics Task Force (HCNTF), the Strategic Action & Focused Enforcement Task Force (SAFE), and the Massachusetts State Police’s Commonwealth Interstate



Hampden District Attorney Anthony D. Gulluni addresses the media at the Hampden District Attorney's Office's May 27 press conference sharing details of three major operations that disrupted dangerous supply lines of drugs in our region. To his left are Springfield Police Department Deputy Chief Steven Kent and Springfield Police Superintendent Lawrence Akers. To his right are Massachusetts State Police members Lt. Colonel Marc Lavoie, Lt. Colonel Daniel Tucker, and Detective Lt. Liam Jones. *Submitted photos*



The three operations represent a collaboration between the District Attorney's office, state, local, and federal law enforcement organizations, to get dangerous drugs and weapons off the street.

an extensive trafficking network. The area has long been plagued by gun violence, with over 80 firearm-related calls to police during the investigation period.

On May 15, investigators executed arrests and seizures, resulting in:

- 12,138 grams of cocaine
- 530 grams of fentanyl
- 15 firearms
- 19 individuals arrested

The defendants face a range of charges including drug trafficking, firearm possession, child endangerment, and stolen property offenses.

**Operation Two:** Springfield-Bronx Drug Pipeline

In the summer of 2024, CINRET West began investigating Anthony Perez of Springfield for heroin/fentanyl distribution. Surveillance revealed that Perez was supplied by a large-scale drug trafficking organization operating in both Hampden County and the Bronx.

In collaboration with HSI and DEA agents in New York and Massachusetts, investigators conducted a months-long investigation, leading to:

- 2,061 grams of heroin/fentanyl
- 3,060 grams of cocaine
- 29 firearms
- 30 individuals arrested

The defendants face trafficking, firearm, and conspiracy charges. The most recent arrests occurred on May 14.

**Operation Three:** Luna Drug Trafficking Organization

In a recent investigation, the Massachusetts State Police Gang Unit and Springfield Police Department uncovered a cocaine trafficking network run by Ruben Luna and asso-

ciates. Search warrants executed on May 22 at three Springfield locations uncovered:

- Approximately 20 kilograms of cocaine
- 437 grams of cocaine
- 570 grams of cocaine
- 78 grams of heroin
- Additional narcotics and pills

• Three individuals arrested

The defendants are facing trafficking and conspiracy offenses.

All defendants are presumed innocent of all allegations until proven guilty.

Use of Advanced Detection Technology

Gulluni also highlighted the role of new technology, including the MX908 Drug Analyzer and the TruNarc Analyzer, provided through a partnership with the Massachusetts National Guard. These devices enabled investigators to detect substances such as fentanyl, cocaine HCL, xylazine, eutylone, tramadol, and several cutting agents, enhancing field-level narcotics identification.

“These three operations have disrupted dangerous supply lines and removed dozens of high-level traffickers from our streets,” said DA Gulluni. “Our priority remains saving lives, preventing overdoses, and holding accountable those who profit from addiction and violence.”

As the region heads into the summer months - when drug trafficking and violence historically rise - Gulluni emphasized that these proactive operations send a strong message and are intended to protect public safety in Springfield, Hampden County, and beyond.

*Are you having difficulty communicating with your partner, struggling with boundaries, and healthy relationships?*

**We invite you to join us Friday afternoons from 1-2:30 pm to explore these topics and more.**

This group will be held in zoom, is educational, confidential, and free.

Please contact **Pat James 413-726-8661.**

Narcotics Reduction Enforcement Team Western Region (CINRET West). The operations were supported by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) New York, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) New York and Springfield, the Massachusetts State Police Gang Unit, and the Springfield Police Department Firearms

Investigation Unit. **Operation One:** Garcia Market Drug Trafficking Organization Since October 2022, investigators with the DA's HCNTF and SAFE units have been investigating drug trafficking activity centered around Garcia Market (344 Orange St.) and Angel's Used Appliances (167 White St.), which served as fronts for

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