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Committee announces tourism initiatives

HOLYOKE – The Tourism Advisory Committee (TAC) is thrilled to announce three tourism-related initiatives that aim to support local retail businesses and restaurants this fall and winter season and the launch of the Puerto Rican Cultural District.

Mark your calendars — here's what's coming up:

Puerto Rican Cultural District Blowout Party - Come join us on the first day of Hispanic Heritage Month, September 15th at Beyond Armour Yard between Race and Main Street between Appleton and Dwight for the official opening for the Puerto Rican Cultural District. In coordination with Monday Nights at Armour Yard this event will be an evening filled with music, food, and culture.

The three tourism related initiatives are:

2025 Doors Open Holyoke (DOH) – Back for its fifth year. This beloved annual event returns Saturday, Oct. 11, as part of the 3rd Annual Day in The Yoke. The day will be packed with unforgettable experiences, including The Great Holyoke Brick Race, the Paper City Food Festival, and more surprises that showcase

See TOURISM, page 6

Citizenship Award recipient announced

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

HOLYOKE – Last Thursday, the Holyoke St. Patrick's Day committee officially announced that the Miracle League of Western Massachusetts (MLWM) was named the recipient of the 2026 Citizenship Award. The reveal came via a gathering at the Elks Lodge in the Paper City.

The award is one of the Parade's highest honors, and it is presented annually to an individual or organization that has made substantial contributions to the communities within Western Massachusetts or the Parade.

Providing insight into, along with a bit of background info about, the league was

Kerry Parsons, a member of the Miracle League of Western Massachusetts' Board of Directors. "Our organization was founded in 2015 by Ernie and Tammy Fittzell on the belief that every child deserves the opportunity to experience the joy of play," Parsons said. "The Miracle League of Western Massachusetts provides adaptive baseball to children of all abilities, which has transformed the lives of countless children and families in the region by creating inclusive opportunities for kids of all abilities to participate." Parsons also touched upon what this distinction means to her organization and everyone involved. "It is such an incredible honor to be part of



The Miracle League of Western Massachusetts board with 2026 Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade President Jim Wildman. Submitted photo



the Miracle League of Western Massachusetts, and we are deeply grateful to the St. Patrick's Committee for recognizing our mission," she said. "Each Sunday, our players take the field - many of whom may never have had the chance to play otherwise - and discover not only the game of baseball, but also friendship, confidence, and joy."

Parson also added an ode of recognition and ample gratitude to all of the working pieces and the

abilities can play together without limitations.

Parsons said, "Our board, families, and athletes are beyond excited to celebrate together at the 73rd Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade."

In addition, the Miracle League's impact extends beyond the baseball diamond, as over Kennedy Field in Holyoke, lies the 'Miracle League Playground for All', which is Paper City's first all-abilities park, designed to ensure that children of all physical

abilities can play together without limitations.

Taking a moment to discuss how the decision was made was Jim Wildman, 2026 Parade President, who said it's a lengthy process before coming to a decision. By noting, "Each year, the Citizenship Award recognizes an individual or organization whose impact strengthens our community and reflects the values of service, inclusivity, and pride." Wildman added that, "The Miracle League embodies those ideals through their unwavering dedication to

See AWARD, page 6

DPW works to keep city's infrastructure going

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

HOLYOKE – Holyoke DPW interim director Mary Monahan is working hard to help further the city's various infrastructure responsibilities.

She recently discussed some of the working pieces in effect from subjects such as renewed contracts, and the valuable partnership she has built with Holyoke Mayor Joshua Garcia, highlighting the future of Holyoke going forward, as the element of renewable green energy now is a main driving factor of production and industrial growth, that the Paper City continues to showcase.

"I'll begin by stating that in my position, it should



Jason Swain, Veolia Project Manager, Scott Urban, Deputy Leader, Veolia, Mary Monahan, Interim DPW Director, and Kristin Rode, Executive Director of the NREC. Submitted photo

be noted that in any municipality, nothing works without the DPW," Monahan admitted. "That includes your roads, bridges, maintenance, public safety, and public health, as each element is tied directly to the core of the DPW."

Monahan then put out a call for action to the general public and elected officials to "ramp up" and bring further attention to the acknowledgement of how critical the DPW in all of its functionality truly is, before drawing the realization that when budgets are being proposed to be trimmed, the DPW is the first casualty, something Monahan offered perspective on.

"I think part of it is

See DPW, page 8

Rotary Club holding celebrity bartender event

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Rotary Club invites the community to its celebrity bartending fundraiser on Wednesday, Sept. 24 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the WineHaus & Vineyard at Jameson Farm, 16 East St., Granby, Mass. All celebrity bartender tips and raffle proceeds from the evening will benefit the Holyoke Rotary Club.

"This is our second annual celebrity bartending event. We hope the community will join us for a great evening of fine wine, beer, food, friendship, and fun," said event organizer and Holyoke Rotary Club board member Barbara Baran.

The event will include wine, beer and nonalcoholic beverages, raffles and local food trucks. Celebrity bartenders will include:

- Holyoke Mayor Josh Garcia

- Joseph McGiveren - retired probation officer, long-time member of the Holyoke City Council, acting as City Council President and President of the Holyoke Merry-Go-Round.

- Annie Cote - Active town member of Granby, past soccer & T-Ball coach, CCD teacher, past-President of the Booster Club, member of the Granby Legion Auxiliary and #1 Patriots Fan.

See ROTARY, page 6

HCHS, HHS combined classes planning big reunion two-day event

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

HOLYOKE – Earlier this week, the reunion planning committee for both Holyoke Catholic (HCHS) and Holyoke High School (HHS) alumni met at JP's Restaurant to finalize and smooth out all details for their upcoming double reunion, which is slated to be a two-day event, set to take place next weekend, which is expected to have more than 100 people in attendance, to celebrate and rekindle fond memories of the highly prestigious honor of nearly 60 years as the Purple Knights class

of 1965 and 1966 and the Gaels classes of 1965 and 1966 who were once cross-town rivals, many years ago are now longtime friends who are set to meet up as part of a 'Mid-Sixties Reunion'.

Providing a bit of insight about the event was Maura Murphy Maggi, HCHS alumnus from '65, who revealed this event has been something that has been in the planning stage for a couple of months, and that the consensus from everyone involved is 'excited to see old friends and catch up.'

"We're really looking

See REUNION, page 8



The combined committees representing the HCHS classes of '65 and '66 and the HHS classes of '65 and '66' are planning a reunion set for next weekend. Submitted photo

Great Holyoke Brick Race returns to Paper City Oct. 11

HOLYOKE – Ready, set...brick! One of Holyoke's most creative and quirky traditions is back on the starting line: The Great Holyoke Brick Race zooms into downtown on Saturday, Oct. 11 from 1 to 3 p.m., taking over Race Street along the canal in front of Paper City Studios and LightHouse Holyoke.

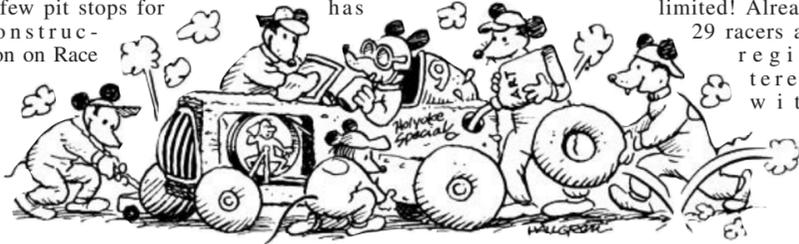
Part art project, part engineering challenge, and part pure community fun, the Brick Race invites families, artists, school groups, and teams of all kinds to design wild, wheeled contraptions that all share one common

element: a standard building brick at their core. From sleek racers to wacky rolling sculptures, no two creations are alike—except for the brick.

Now in its 14th year, the race began in 2011 thanks to artists Dean Nimmer and Bruce Fowler. After a few pit stops for construction on Race

Street and the pandemic, the event has grown into a crowd-favorite tradition with 50–60 race car builds and 400+ spectators cheering along the 100 foot concrete track built by artist Micheal Karmody.

This year, the Brick Race team has



been working with students and faculty at LightHouse Holyoke, weaving the planning and build process into their school curriculum. It's all part of the spirit of creativity, problem-solving, and collaboration that makes this event truly unique.

Want to race? Spots are limited! Already 29 racers are registered, with

just 21 spots left—so don't wait. Register your brick racer now: Registration Form: <https://forms.gle/HZ9mJNYmtRehNkBr7>

For those who want to give their racer a trial run, there will be a Test Day & Workshop on Saturday, Oct. 4, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at LightHouse Holyoke / De La Luz Soundstage (114 Race Street). RSVP here: RSVP for Test Day <https://forms.gle/VeBFuAKM11S9RalC9>

The Great Holyoke Brick Race is made possible thanks to the Holyoke Local Cultural Council and generous local sponsors

including Holyoke Gas & Electric, Witman Properties, Hampshire Towing, Clean Crop Technologies, BankESB, and many more. The event is also proudly supported by Holyoke Art Inc., the nonprofit providing fiscal and technical support for art spaces, programs, and cultural events in the city. Learn more at holyoheart.com. So mark your calendars, grab your friends and family, and start building your brick racers! On Oct. 11, the bricks will roll, the crowd will cheer, and creativity will take the fast lane in downtown Holyoke.

Nominees sought for veterans awards

HOLYOKE – The City of Holyoke's Patriotic Events Committee is searching for nominations for this year's awards which are to be presented at the Veterans Day ceremony, on November 11th, 2025. The awards are Public Safety of the Year, Veteran of the Year, Citizen of the Year, and Local Business of the Year.

The criteria for these awards are as follows:

For Public Safety of the Year, we are seeking an individual who has shown outstanding performance in the protection of the general public and has exhibited a willingness to exceed

expectations.

For Veteran of the Year, we are pursuing a veteran who has shown grand support and dedication for others in the community.

For Citizen of the Year, we are searching for an individual who has exhibited inspiration through their leadership, volunteerism, and dear contributions to the advances of the community.

For Local Business of the year, we are seeking a local business that has shown great patriotism and support for the veteran community.

Nominees must be residents of Holyoke or individ-

uals who have made valuable contributions to the City of Holyoke. Anyone can nominate.

Nominations can be sent by email to rual@holyo-oke.org. Deadline for nominations is Oct. 25.



Skeletal Secrets with the Skinner Servants

HOLYOKE – As the night grows long and a chill lingers in the air, Wistariahurst Museum is delighted to announce a new, frightfully fantastic character tour: Skeletal Secrets with the Skinner Servant on Oct. 24 at 5:30 p.m. Join a ghostly guide as former residents of this historic house manifest to speak of eerie events and strange happenings that occurred during their mortal lives. Discover dark tales of death, loss, and spirits that are said to still roam our halls to this day as you wander through the home. This unique character tour of Wistariahurst Museum

includes standing, walking, and transitioning between the first and second floors using our Grand Staircase in dim lighting. This tour may include loud noises, challenging subjects, and possible jump scares. Parents are advised to consider these factors before purchasing tickets. If any guest has a question about accessibility and how to fully enjoy this immersive tour, we ask that you email us with your inquiries.

"Our volunteers are eager to reveal these tales to our community," Penni Martorell, City History, comments. "This tour is the best way to learn some of the

secrets hidden beneath our walls."

This new, spine-tingling tour offers a unique way to experience a guided tour of the historic house with our volunteers as they portray the spirits guests will encounter. Join us for a memorable journey through the ghastly tales of Wistariahurst. Venture into where history intersects with the supernatural this fall with general admission tickets selling at \$18. Museum Members can use their discount for \$15 tickets. Our specialized character tours are beloved by our community and sell fast, so make sure you secure your tickets before they are gone.

Hibernians hosting annual clothing and food drive

HOLYOKE – The Ancient Order of Hibernians of Hampden/Hampshire Counties along with the Polish National Credit Union Announce the Annual Clothing and Food Drive for Providence Ministries from September to Dec. 1.

Please drop off gently used clothing, blankets, sleeping bags, and/or non-perishable food items to the Polish

National Credit Union 270 Westfield Rd. Holyoke. Make a donation and be entered to win a raffle basket.

Please help those who are experiencing food insecurity and assist Providence Ministries as they continue to transform lives through their life-changing programs. Stop by the PNCU—your efforts will be greatly appreciated.

City seeks volunteers to serve on Opioid Advisory Committee

HOLYOKE – The City of Holyoke seeks Holyoke residents (18+ years old) to serve on a volunteer Citizens Opioid Advisory Committee (COAC) overseen by the Office for Community Development to review grant applications and make funding recommendations to the Mayor.

Up to nine members will be selected. Committee members should live, stay, or otherwise have a strong connection to the City as the Committee will be making decisions that affect all Holyokers.

The COAC is an opportunity to actively participate in local government, and to make meaningful decisions regarding the use of opioid litigation settlement funds awarded to the city. Mayor Joshua A. Garcia seeks community members who have personal or lived experience with opioid use or substance use disorders including those actively using opioids, those in recovery, those with family members impacted by opioid use disorder, those who have experienced a loss associated with opioid use disorder and

young adults.

COAC members will meet in the evening approximately three times per year depending on the grant cycles. Training and professional staff support will be provided. Committee members will be required to complete the Massachusetts State Ethics Training Program (free, online) prior to serving and comply with applicable City of Holyoke policies and procedures.

Those interested are asked to mail or email a letter of interest and resume (if

available) to Mayor Joshua A. Garcia, City of Holyoke, Room 1, 536 Dwight Street, Holyoke MA 01040 or by email to fays@holyo-oke.org describing:

- (1) Your experience with opioid/substance use disorder;
- (2) Why you would like to serve on the COAC
- (3) Your connections to the City of Holyoke

Other ways to apply will be made available if requested. Apply by Oct. 1.

For additional information: <https://www.holyoke.org/opioid-response/>

Hear some ghost stories at library

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Public Library will present, New England Ghosts on Tuesday, Sept. 30 at 6 p.m. This is an adult program of supernatural story and magic.

You will hear a legend from each New England state, true stories, information on how to visit sites, and it will be performed by Jonah Knight. The event is rated PG-13.

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Holyoke Community College list events to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College is recognizing Hispanic Heritage Month with a series of events celebrating Latinx history and culture, including a film festival, a fiesta, and a panel of local "artists" talking about art and activism.

HCC's "Latinx Heritage Month" celebration begins Sunday, Sept. 14, when a large contingent of students, faculty, and staff will march in the Springfield Puerto Rican Day Parade alongside President George Timmons and HCC Police Chief Jacqueline Robles, the parade's 2025 Civil Service Ambassador.

New this year, El Centro, HCC's bilingual student sup-

port program, is sponsoring a "Pop-Up Cinema: Latinx Film Festival" on Thursdays throughout the month, featuring documentaries and feature films from Latin America and the United States.

Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated nationally each year from Sept. 15 through Oct. 15 to recognize the cultural and historical influences of Hispanic/Latinx Americans. On the HCC campus, it is called "Latinx Heritage Month."

"This year's Latinx Heritage Month events at HCC are a testament to the resilience, strength, and hope of our community," said Julissa Colón, director of El Centro. "We are sharing the

breadth of our cultures, our heroes, our art, and our history. We invite everyone to participate in the wonderful shared events."

Latinx Heritage Month events at HCC:

Sept 25, 11 a.m.: Latinx Film Festival: "El abrazo de la serpiente" (Embrace the Serpent), an adventure story that follows two separate journeys 30 years apart, one by an indigenous shaman, the other by an American botanist as they search the Amazon jungle for yakruna, a rare plant. (Campus Center, cafeteria)

Oct. 1, 11 a.m.: Latinx Fiesta, a celebration of Latinx heritage with food, music, and crafts. (Campus Center, second floor).

Oct. 2, 11 a.m.: Latinx Film Festival: "Todavía Estamos Aquí" (We Are Still Here), a student-made documentary about the lives and experiences of the residents of Barrio Rucio in Puerto Rico and their historic resistance to government intrusion. (Campus Center, cafeteria)

Oct. 2, 1:30 p.m.: "Froteria." Enjoy fried treats and play the lottery with members of El Centro and HCC's ALANA Men in Motion programs. (Campus Center 224).

Oct. 9, 11 a.m.: Latinx Film Festival: "Dolores," a documentary about American activist, feminist, and labor leader Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United

Farm Workers Union with Cesar Chavez. (Campus Center, cafeteria)

Oct. 14, 11 a.m.: "Our Stories, Our Voices, Our Lens," a conversation with local Latinx "artists," talking about how art contributes to the preservation and celebration of history and culture. (Campus Center, second floor, outside El Centro).

Continuously, throughout the month: "Our Heroes, Our History." View the mural painted last year by artist Betsy Casañas featuring activists, artists, athletes, musicians, and educators who have made a deep impact on Latinx history and culture. (Campus Center, second floor outside El Centro)

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SUPPORT COMMUNITY BUSINESSES

HCC president honored at '100 Men of Color' gala

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College President George Timmons was honored Friday, Sept. 12, as one of the “100 Men of Color” during a black-tie gala at The Bushnell Theater in Hartford, Conn.

The “100 Men of Color” awards ceremony, sponsored by The Archer Foundation, recognizes the contributions of men of color in education, business, government, entertainment, and other industries, and the impact they have made on the lives of people in Connecticut and western Massachusetts.

A Hartford native who now lives in West Springfield, President Timmons was chosen to speak on behalf of all 100 honorees as the 2025 class “valedictorian.”

“There was a time in my life when I would not have imagined standing before you tonight,” he said. “Growing up right here in the north end of Hartford, raised by my grandmother, I wasn’t sure college was even in the cards for me. My grandmother taught me the value of education ... she showed me the value of

a strong work ethic. But it wasn’t just her wisdom that got me here. Like many of you, I am successful today because people saw something in me and cared about my future.”

Timmons, HCC’s president since July 2023, holds a bachelor’s degree in financial management from Norfolk State University, a master’s degree in higher education from Old Dominion University, and a Ph.D. in higher education from Bowling Green State University. He is the first African American man

to serve as HCC president.

“We have all arrived here on different paths, with different stories, different blessings, and different challenges,” Timmons said. “But the common thread that binds us is that we all arrived here, and I, for one, am humbled by that journey.”

A portion of the proceeds from the annual gala support mentorship pro-



HCC President George Timmons

grams and scholarships for young men of color who graduate from high school and plan to attend college.

“Our goal is to provide financial support for programs that support the advancement of young men of color,” said June Archer, entrepreneur, philanthropist and founder of the Archer Foundation. “On this day, we believe these 100 indi-

viduals should be honored for their achievements and celebrated for their accomplishments.”

The theme of this year’s gala, the 12th annual, was “Building Bridges, Breaking Barriers.”

“This event,” Timmons said, “is so important because it showcases what young people – especially young men of color – need to see: that success comes in many forms, that leadership looks like us, and that their dreams are not just possible, but inevitable with the right support and determination.”

HCC to celebrate expanded child watch center

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College will celebrate the grand reopening of its Itsy Bitsy Child Watch Center in a newly renovated and expanded space on Wednesday, Sept. 24.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony and reception will take place in its new location on the second floor of the Frost Building beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Among those scheduled to attend are Amy Kershaw, commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, state Sen. John Velis, state Rep. Pat Duffy, HCC President George Timmons, and representatives from the Irene E. and George A. Davis Foundation.

Itsy Bitsy Child Watch is a free, drop-in service for student parents who need short-term child care while they attend classes, study, or meet with tutors and advisers. It opened as a pilot program in fall 2022 after a \$100,000 state allocation. At the time, HCC was only the second community college in Massachusetts – and the only one in western Massachusetts – to offer a free child watch service.

“Our first semester, we had 19 students enrolled,” said Kimm Quinlan, director of HCC’s Early Childhood Initiatives. “By the end of the second semester we had more than 40 and it became clear that there was



HCC staffers put the finishing touches on the college’s Itsy Bitsy Child Watch Center in its new location. Submitted photo

a demonstrable need and demand for expansion.”

Expansion became possible after HCC received a \$600,000 grant from the Davis Foundation in December 2023.

The new center occupies the space where HCC’s culinary arts program resided before it moved into the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute in downtown Holyoke.

The space required extensive and lengthy renovations and improvements. The new Itsy Bitsy Child Watch Center is double the size of the original center, which was located on the

first floor of the Marieb Building, and will nearly double the capacity of children served at any given time, from 10 to 19.

The new center has two full classrooms instead of one, a dedicated children’s bathroom, an office, an adjoining gym/gross motor room, and an expanded kitchenette with a full-size refrigerator and dishwasher.

The relocation also puts the Itsy Bitsy Child Watch Center at the same end of the second floor hallway as the HCC Parent Learning Center (a study lounge and play area for parents and their children), and

the Marieb Adult Learner Success Center, a support program for student parents and students 24 and older.

“This investment will enable our early childhood team to provide high-quality early learning experiences for more children,” said President George Timmons. “The remodeled space will provide the youngest members of our campus community with ample opportunities to explore, play, and learn. Dozens more HCC student parents will be able to attend classes and access campus-based student resources without having to worry about child care.”

Wistariahurst offers at Forestdale Cemetery tour

HOLYOKE – Step past the cemetery gates and peer behind the veil with Wistariahurst as our volunteers channel the spirits of Holyoke’s ancestors, leading you through the meandering paths of Forestdale Cemetery. Established in 1860, Forestdale Cemetery is a serene yet beautiful landscape and the final resting place for many of Holyoke’s founding families, politicians, and other notables who helped breathe life into the city. Guests will walk amongst the monuments, markers, crypts, and crosses to discover the mystique of Holyoke’s vibrant heritage.

“Learn some of Holyoke’s history through the tales of the people that lived and died here,” Penni Martorell, City History, shares. “Forestdale Cemetery is such a unique and beautiful setting to reflect on the history we share with the

people you will see represented in our tour.”

Discover all there is to know about living and dying in Holyoke from narratives of the people who now find solace beneath these hallowed grounds. Cemetery Tours at Forestdale Cemetery include walking and standing on cement and gravel walkways with tours lasting around forty-five minutes. To fully enjoy this tour, we ask that guests wear comfortable shoes and weather-appropriate clothing. In the event of rain, the tours will be canceled, refunded, and not rescheduled.

Wistariahurst Museum’s Cemetery Tours blend history, concepts of the afterlife, and local connections to create an unforgettable outing. Tickets for this delightfully spooky and educational tour sell fast, so make sure to purchase your tickets before they’re gone

Residents requested to fill out opioid community survey

HOLYOKE – The City of Holyoke Opioid Community Survey is now accepting responses until Oct. 3. The survey is provided in both English and Spanish from one link.

Ten survey takers will be randomly selected for prizes and announced at the Nov. 3 public meeting. Prize winners

do not need to be present.

Please share the link with your networks. The survey link is also available on Facebook and <https://www.holyoke.org/opioid-response/>

People without internet access may call 413-322-5610 and take the survey over the phone.

Nurse Appreciation Free Car Wash set for Sept. 27

HOLYOKE – Gary Rome Hyundai and MiraVista Behavioral Health Center are teaming up to honor nurses with Scrubs to Suds!, a free nurse appreciation car wash on Saturday, Sept. 27, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Gary Rome Car Wash • Dog Wash • Detail Center, 180 Whiting Farms Road, Holyoke, MA.

All nurses who present a work badge will receive the “Best in Show” wash (a \$24 value) at no cost as a thank-you for their dedication to patient care. On site, MiraVista staff will share information about behavioral health services, highlight nursing career opportunities, and showcase how the organization supports individuals and families across the region. Light refreshments will be available, and nurses will receive a small free gift courtesy of the Gary Rome Car Wash • Dog Wash • Detail Center and MiraVista (while supplies last).

“I believe it is important to support those who give selflessly to our community,” said Gary Rome, President of Gary Rome Hyundai. “Nurses are the heartbeat of healthcare, and they deserve recognition not only for their skill, but also for the compassion they show every single day. This partnership with MiraVista allows us to say ‘thank you’ in a meaningful

way, and we are proud to celebrate their contributions.”

“This innovative event is a wonderful way to thank not only our own dedicated nursing team, but also nurses throughout the community,” said Kimberley Lee, Chief of Creative Strategy and Development at MiraVista Behavioral Health Center. “It is also an opportunity for nurses to learn more about the meaningful work being done at MiraVista and how they can be part of a growing and supportive healthcare organization. We are especially grateful to Gary Rome for his partnership in bringing this fun and unique appreciation event to life.”

As an added show of appreciation, Emergency Services employees are eligible for a 25% discount on car wash memberships at the Gary Rome Car Wash • Dog Wash • Detail Center—another way the dealership recognizes the critical contributions of those on the frontlines.



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Guest Column



I'd like to retire early, but don't want my Social Security reduced

Dear Rusty:

I will be 65 this year and my husband is 72 (he retired in 2019 at age 66).

I would like to retire and enjoy some time with him before he gets too much older. I do not want to have my benefits cut by retiring earlier, but I don't see a way to be able to do that. My benefit will be \$1,343 on my Full Retirement Age.

If I took half his retirement when he retired, it would be less than mine. If I take early retirement and he passes away before me, would I get his full benefit as his survivor or will it be cut? We are trying to figure it out. His current benefit (before Medicare Part B) is \$2,978. It's very confusing.

Signed: Confused and Wondering

Dear Confused:

Whenever any Social Security benefit is claimed earlier than Full Retirement Age, the monthly amount is permanently reduced. If you were to retire at age 65, your Social Security benefit would be reduced by about 13% - in other words, if your FRA (age 67) amount is \$1,343, at 65 you would get about \$1,164. And at age 66 you would get about \$1,253 per month.

Whether you would be entitled to a "spousal boost" from your husband depends on how your FRA amount compares to 50% of his FRA entitlement. If your FRA amount is less than 50% of his FRA amount, then you would get a "spousal boost," but the amount of that boost would also be reduced if you claim before your FRA. Note: from the numbers you provided, you may be entitled to a spousal boost and, if so, it would be applied by Social Security when you claim.

Also, FYI, if you take SS before your FRA and are still working, Social Security has an annual earnings test which limits

how much you can earn while collecting early benefits. If you earn more than \$23,400 in 2025, you will likely not get all of your monthly SS payments (SS will take away some monthly benefits if you exceed the earnings limit). Of course, if you retire from working, this will not be a problem, because earnings before you claim SS won't count toward the limit.

When you claim your SS retirement benefit now will not affect your survivor benefit from your husband later. If your husband passes first, your benefit as a surviving spouse would be based on the amount your husband was receiving at his death. But if you were to claim your widow's benefit prior to your FRA, your survivor benefit would also be reduced (the amount of reduction depends on how much before your FRA you claim your survivor benefit). If you claim your widow's benefit at or after you FRA, you will get 100% of the amount your husband was receiving at his death instead of your own smaller amount. It will only be reduced if you claim before your full retirement age.

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

Check us out on the web www.sun.turley.com



Guest Column

Plant exodus, coming soon

Just this past week I put a call in to the herb gardeners at Old Sturbridge Village where I work part time.

I asked them to let me know they'd like me to deliver the pots and soil for the annual "exodus." We will be moving the tender perennials from their summer residence in the herb garden to my domain, the maintenance department's greenhouse.

There are some wonderful and very familiar plants in our living collection: rosemary, bay, lemon verbena and scented geraniums are some of my personal favorites.

Before the interpreters dig up the plants, I always ask that they give them a bath to cut down on the number of insects that will be brought into the greenhouse. For the home gardener this is equally important.

I say "bath" because my pesticide of choice is a natural and fairly benign one- made of potassium salts of fatty acids (soap) that weaken the insect's outer shell and cause dehydration. It is sprayed on leaves and stems until they are soaked, and can be reapplied every seven-10 days as needed.

This product is especially effective on insects that make their home on herbs and houseplants: whitefly, aphids and mealy bugs.

Once the insects have been eradicated, it is time to get out the shovel and get to work digging up and repotting the plants. You will be amazed at how large some of them can become after only a few months in the ground.

It is important to salvage as much of the root ball as possible to minimize the shock of being potted up. To do this, position your shovel

along the "drip line" of the plant and dig straight down, completely around its circumference. After you've made your way around, get your shovel underneath and lift.

Have a pot ready - one that is an inch or two bigger than the root ball is sufficient, and will allow for minimal winter growth. My container of choice is always plastic, but glazed pottery is fine too. I steer clear of clay; it dries out too quickly.

I usually put a couple of inches of moist potting soil into the container, set the plant and then fill in with more as needed before watering well. Oftentimes I leave the plants outside until a frost threatens, then I bring them in and back out until the weather turns decidedly cold.

Home gardeners often ask how to overwinter their favorite herbs without a greenhouse.

Perhaps the most cherished of all tender herbs is Rosemary (*Rosemarinus officinalis*), the herb of remembrance. The key to growing it successfully indoors is "cool but sunny."

My old house affords me many such microclimates. If you aren't as lucky, try for a sunny window away from dry heat, in other words far from heat vents, the wood stove etc.

Bay tree (*Laurus nobilis*) is another favorite and can be grown right through the winter with little or no coddling provided it is given medium to bright light and consistent watering. Do be on guard for the waxy-looking scale insect;

one giveaway is leaves covered in a sticky, shiny sap called honey dew.

Try to "Q-tip" individual insects with rubbing alcohol or use insecticidal soap or horticultural oil to smother larger infestations. If the bugs have been active for awhile, sooty mold may have formed. This thick, black coating will likely need to be scrubbed off leaf by leaf to allow the plant to photosynthesize properly.

To have success overwintering scented geraniums (*Pelargonium* spp.) indoors, situate them in bright light where daytime temperatures are 65-70 degrees, and night temps are in the 50s. Fertilize every other month during the fall and winter.

Smaller leaved varieties will be easier to manage; large leaved cultivars will get top-heavy quickly- take terminal or "tip" cuttings of these instead.

Lemon Verbena (*Aloysia triphylla*) may start out looking great, but a month or so into indoor culture will likely begin to lose its leaves. Fear not, leaf drop is completely normal and to be expected! You may be tempted to throw it out; instead, position in a sunny spot, water as needed and await new growth in the spring.

Enjoy your favorite tender herbs over the winter and again come springtime and summer when they return to the garden.

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



the HOLYOKE Sun

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Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

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

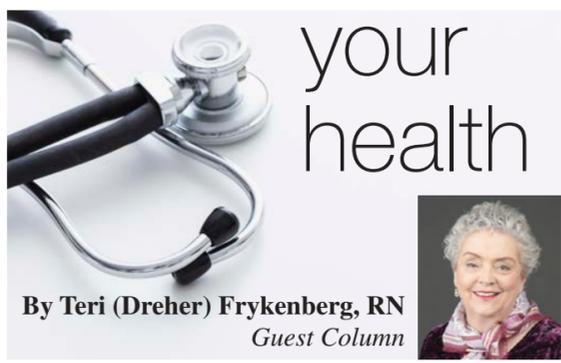
Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

Please email (preferred) letters to thesun@turley.com. Mailed letters can be sent to *The Sun*, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

Measles are a serious business

All it takes is one kid with measles to infect up to 18 others in their classroom. With school beginning soon, public health and education officials around the country are concerned about new outbreaks.

In the not too distant past, measles was considered "eliminated" in the U.S. because cases were almost unknown and 95 percent or more of Americans were vaccinated



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

against it or had it in childhood. That herd immunity is slowly eroding, and our children are at greater risk of illness because of it.

Measles is one of the most contagious diseases out there, even more so than COVID and flu virus. It spreads through tiny droplets when people cough or sneeze, and can live in the air and on surfaces for up to two hours (think school desks, cafeteria tables, lab stations).

And while today's measles is no more dangerous than before, it can still result in pneumonia, encephalitis (brain swelling) or even death in very young children or those with immunocompromised systems. We've seen three deaths in Texas attributed to measles.

In addition, measles can leave someone with a weakened immune system, mak-

See HEALTH, page 5

The Holyoke Sun welcomes election letters to the editor

The Holyoke Sun welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to *The Holyoke Sun*, care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to thesun@turley.com. Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered for that Friday's

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

For more information, call 413-283-8393.

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspa-

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

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



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HPS among recipients for Gov. Healey's literacy grant

EVERETT – The Healey-Driscoll Administration announced this week that it is awarding over \$9 million in Partnership for Reading Success - Massachusetts (PRISM) I continuation grants to 15 school districts as part of Governor Healey's Literacy Launch initiative. These grants enable districts to implement high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction through literacy materials, technical support, coaching and professional development.

The Holyoke Public Schools were among the districts receiving a grant.

Literacy Launch: Reading Success from Age 3 through Grade 3 is a multi-year early literacy initiative to help districts transition to evidence-based early literacy programs. This funding represents a key investment in the future of early learners, helping equip students with the reading and writing skills necessary for academic success and lifelong learning.

"Literacy Launch is a

historic investment in early literacy for our students. These continuation grants represent our commitment to make sure all of our students can read and read well," said Governor Maura Healey. "I want to thank the Legislature for their continued support of Literacy Launch and partnership in this important work."

"Ensuring every student has access to high-quality, evidence-based instruction in early literacy is essential for Massachusetts families," said Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll. "Through PRISM I continuation grants, we are providing children the support they need to excel and thrive in the future."

The second year of this multi-year strategy is supported by the fiscal year 2026 budget and the federal Comprehensive Literacy State Development grant. Awardees will receive professional development; support to continue partnerships with community-based preschool providers to align evidence-based early curriculum, instruc-

tion and assessment across the community; and funding for early literacy screening assessments, coaching support and to cover staffing costs for roles like literacy coaches or reading specialists through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in partnership with the Department of Early Education and Care.

"Culturally and linguistically sustaining practices and evidence-based early literacy are fundamental to achieving excellence and equity in education," said Secretary of Education Dr. Patrick Tutwiler. "The PRISM I program will continue to help districts improve literacy programming, ensuring that our youngest learners build a strong literacy foundation that will support their success throughout their education."

"The PRISM I continuation grants are designed to help districts make lasting improvements in how they deliver early literacy instruction," said Pedro Martinez, commissioner of elementary and secondary education.

"These structures will continue supporting student success long after the grant period ends."

"The continuation of the PRISM I grants is essential to advancing our statewide commitment to early literacy," said Department of Early Education and Care Commissioner Amy Kershaw. "Providing educators with the tools and training they need to strengthen literacy instruction ensures that every child has the opportunity to build a strong foundation in reading to support success in school and beyond."

The grant awards come after a summer of investments the administration and state legislature have made in literacy:

- The administration launched the first Literacy Launch Institutes, providing free in-person early literacy training and professional development for nearly 600 educators from across the state in August.

- The administration visited Easthampton to award

\$9.3 million in Literacy Launch PRISM II grants to 30 school districts to help implement high-quality early literacy instructional materials.

- The administration also awarded \$3.3 million in PRISM III literacy grants to 25 school districts to support the purchase of high-quality instructional materials for grades 4-12 and professional learning support.

- The administration celebrated Massachusetts' \$25 million investment in no-cost, high-dosage early literacy tutoring for 272 elementary schools with a classroom visit to Dewing Elementary School in Tewksbury.

- The administration awarded \$800,000 in grants to 17 school districts and 14 colleges to support over 350 teacher candidates this year to complete their elementary, early childhood, or moderate disabilities teacher preparation programs.

"Few things are more important than ensuring every child has access to

high-quality reading and literacy education from a young age," said Senate President Karen E. Spilka (D-Ashland). "The Senate was proud to secure these dollars in our budget, and I applaud the Healey-Driscoll Administration for their commitment to this initiative and for quickly delivering these resources to districts across the Commonwealth."

"Strong investment in evidence-based and culturally responsive early literacy programs supports our children from day one and sets them up for success down the line," said Senator Jason Lewis, Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Education. "These grants will support professional development for teachers, the purchasing of evidence-based literacy materials, costs for reading coaches and specialists, and more to ensure students have the tools they need to learn to read."

The Holyoke Public Schools received a grant for \$248,144 to be used for the program.

HEALTH, from page 4

ing them more susceptible to other infections.

Illinois generally has experienced herd immunity, with vaccination rates at or above 95 percent. The state has seen 10 cases of measles this year, some in Cook County and others in the southern part of the state. There's evidence, however, that vaccination rates are dropping in some Chicago schools and among kindergartners.

Massachusetts hasn't seen a single case – yet – because its citizens maintain a vaccination rate of about 98%. There's evidence, however, that the vaccination rate is not as strong among incoming kindergartners.

We all play a role in keeping our communities safe and healthy. The best

way to keep the measles away from your child is to make sure they've had two doses of the MMR (measles-mumps-rubella) vaccine, which has been proven safe and is 97% effective at prevention. Even if they do catch the virus, the illness is likely to be mild and short-lived.

That said, it's possible there will be children in your child's class who are unvaccinated and could well bring measles to school along with their homework and lunchbox. It will be easy for them to infect other unvaccinated children, causing an outbreak.

To help stop measles in its tracks:

If you're unsure of your immune status and believe you were exposed to the measles, consult your healthcare provider right away. An MMR immunity blood test

can show whether you have measles antibodies. (If you were born before 1957, you likely had measles and enjoy "presumptive immunity.")

Consider getting an MMR booster shot, especially if you were immunized between 1963 and 1967. The vaccine used during those years was less effective because it was made from a killed rather than live virus. A booster is a harmless precaution, as long as your doctor says you are eligible to receive a live virus vaccine.

Regularly disinfect surfaces and common touchpoints, like door handles and light switches.

Keep your unvaccinated child home if any of these symptoms show up. It could be a cold or the flu, but it could also be measles. Symptoms usually appear seven to 14 days after exposure.

- High fever
- Cough
- Runny nose
- Red, watery eyes
- White spots inside the mouth (Koplik spots)
- A red, blotchy rash that starts on the face and spreads downward

Wait four days before going to a hospital to reduce the chance that the disease will be transmitted to others.

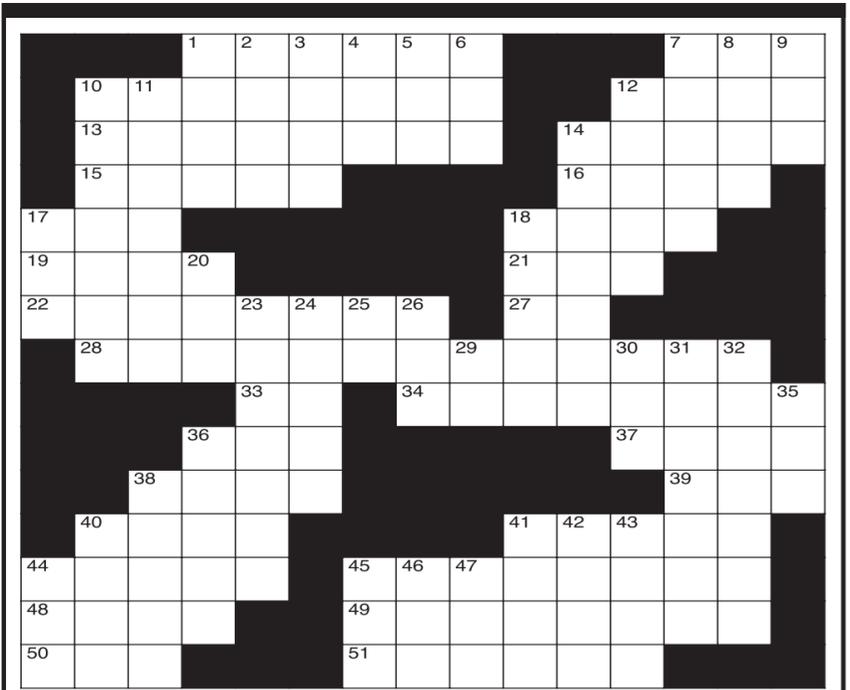
As a registered nurse and someone who's worked in the medical field for most of my life, I advocate for science, not social media or crackpot theories about cod

liver oil. (Cod liver oil, by the way, contains a lot of Vitamin A, which can be toxic in large doses, particularly with children.) Measles, once someone has it, is incurable – it has to run its course. It is a virus, not a bacteria, so it can't be treated with antibiotics.

Fall is approaching, and with it will come flu season and RSV season. Cases of COVID are already on the rise around the country. We are so lucky to live in an era in which vaccines can keep us and our children safe from some of the most common

human diseases. Please take advantage of it.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, is a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate and founder of www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. Teri offers a free phone consultation to *Turley Newspaper* readers as well as to nurses interested in becoming advocates. Reach her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com.



CLUES ACROSS

- Carved into
- ___ Rogers, cowboy
- Unruly locale
- Edible mushroom
- Influential noblemen
- Rattling breaths
- David ___ George, Brit. P.M.
- Musician Clapton
- Small Eurasian deer
- Invests in little enterprises
- Perimeter
- Chicago ballplayer
- Animal body part
- It's everywhere these days
- Fictional ad exec
- Mr. T character

CLUES DOWN

- Root of taro plant
- Against the current
- Subway rodent
- Armor plate
- Hair on the head
- Strong insect
- Swollen lymph node
- A way to lessen
- Walter White
- Sleeveless garment
- Long accompanied song
- Without features
- Yankee great
- Mattingly
- Removes from record

- Those ones
- Appliances have one
- A way to sing
- Midway between east and southeast
- Animal dwelling
- An object that as survived from the past
- Oil cartel
- Affirmative
- Foul smell
- Brisk tempo
- S. American indigenous person
- Restored
- Official
- Skin lesions
- Electroencephalograph
- Middle Eastern country
- Extremely angry

- Title used before a woman's name
- British thermal unit
- By the way (abbr.)
- Anger
- Nullifies
- Ones who acquire
- Time zone
- Arabic name
- Protein in mucus
- Ballpoint pen
- Mimics
- Humans have a lot of it
- Expressions of good wishes
- Cool!
- One point east of due south
- City of Angels
- Football team (abbr.)
- A way to save for retirement

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 8

Blessed Sacrament Parish

Rev. Duy Le
frduyle@blessedsacramentholyoke.org
 1945 Northampton St., Holyoke
 PARISH RECTORY: 413-532-0713
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 Friday 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
 WEEKEND MASSES:
 Saturday 4 p.m.
 Sunday 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
 DAILY MASS AND ROSARY
 Monday - Friday: ROSARY 6:15 a.m.
 Monday - Friday: MASS 6:45 a.m.
 Legal Holidays: ROSARY 7:30 a.m.
 Legal Holidays: MASS 8 a.m.
 ROSARY AND MEDITATION
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First Baptist Church

Pastor Theresa Temple
 1976 Northampton St., Holyoke
 (413) 533-7728
firstbaptistchurchholyokeye@comcast.net
 Facebook: First Baptist Church of Holyoke, MA
 HOURS: Sunday worship service (winter hours) at 10:30 a.m. (summer hours) at 10 a.m.
 Wednesday Bible Studies, one at 11 a.m. and one at 5:30 p.m.

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Pastor: Fr. Albert Scherer, OFM Conv.
 Email: pastor@ourladyofthecross.com
 Holy Cross Ave., Holyoke
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parish@ourladyofthecross.com
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 Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
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 Legal Holidays Mass 9 a.m.
 Reconciliation (Confession)
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 Saturday 3:15pm
 Anytime by Appointment
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The Rev. Canon Joel Martinez
 485 Appleton St., Holyoke
 413-532-5060
Office@StPaulsholyoke.org
StPaulsholyoke.org
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stpaulsepiscopalchurch_holyoke
 OFFICE HOURS:
 Tuesday - Friday 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
 Days and Hours of Services:
 Sunday: 8 a.m.
 Sunday: 10 a.m.
 Sunday: 5 p.m. (Spanish)

COLLEGE NEWS

HCC announces Summer Dean's List

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College is proud to recognize the students who earned Dean's List honors for Summer 2025.

Each term, HCC recognizes superior scholarship through the Dean's List. A student is placed on the Dean's List if their G.P.A. is 3.2 or higher.

The students listed below have earned Dean's List honors for the Summer 2025 term.

Raulisha Agramonte, Fatima Bergman, Pearl Abigail Burns, Yarilis Beatriz Conde Estremera, Jordan Gagner, Adaryn Livingston Hagar, Karen Diane Howery, Wesley Kulig Jr., Cadence Lelani Mason, Dominick Josiah Mastromonaco, Rose Adrienne Michaud, Misteny Montano, Kearney Grace O'Malley, Yamaya Perez, Anna Claire Puttick, Nicole Rivera I, Junna Sreileak San, Jayla Santiago, Enid Magaly Soto, Daniel William Sullivan, Gabriella Asselin Vermes.

Fall Festival coming to St. Paul's

HOLYOKE – St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 485 Appleton Street, Holyoke will hold their Fall Festival on Saturday, Sept. 27 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Parish Hall and on the Church grounds.

There will be something for everyone: Gift

basket raffles, \$5 fun raising raffle, vendors, plants, bake sale, a cafe', and outdoor activities for families.

Free ample parking is located behind the church and all are welcome.

For more information, please call the church office at 413-532-5060.

Paper City Food Festival on Oct. 11, 12

HOLYOKE – Nueva Esperanza will host the 5th Annual Paper City Food Festival on Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 11 and 12 transforming downtown Holyoke into a two-block, open-air celebration of local cuisine, culture, music, and community.

This year's festival will also serve a special purpose: a portion of activ-

ities will support Grace "Gracie" Gianna Falcon, a courageous four-year-old from Holyoke who is battling B-Cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (B-ALL).

"The Paper City Food Festival is about the best of Holyoke—our flavors, our music, our small businesses, and our heart," said Paper City Food Festival

organizers. "By coming together this year, we'll not only enjoy an incredible weekend downtown, we'll also stand with Gracie and her family."

On Saturday, Oct. 11, the event will take place from 2 to 10 p.m. and then 12 to 8 p.m. on Sunday, Oct., 12. It will span two city blocks from Appleton to Dwight St.

TOURISM, from page 1

Holyoke's creative, cultural, and culinary side.

Holidays in Holyoke is a citywide initiative that brings together cultural traditions, local businesses, and community celebrations from early November through January. From the colorful marigolds and community Ofrenda of Día de los Muertos, to shopping local on Small Business Saturday, to the beloved Tree Lighting and Puerto Rican holiday festivities, and culminating with Three Kings Day and Las Octavitas, Holidays in Holyoke highlights the city's rich cultural heritage and vibrant community spirit. This collaborative effort showcases Holyoke as a festive destination where residents and visitors alike can experience joy, tradition, and togetherness throughout the season.

STEP OUT HOLYOKE!

A variety of locally owned and operated small businesses throughout the City of Holyoke are banding together to promote a more healthy lifestyle for its residents and visitors. On first Saturday of the month Starting in January 2026, one of a kind incentive-laden experiences will be packaged and offered at discount to individuals and groups who'd like to explore fun, recreational, fitness-focused activities throughout the city, river and mountain, coupled with a delicious, health-conscious snack or meal at one of its many fine eateries, farmers markets and food-focused establishments. STEP OUT HOLYOKE! will be an amazing new way to stay in shape, discover cool attractions, meet new friends and enjoy a bunch of hidden culinary hidden gems in Holyoke.

All three of these initia-

tives will feature ways for Holyoke residents and visitors to get more engaged with the great businesses, restaurants and experiences Holyoke has to offer.

TAC is excited to bring on three project managers for these initiatives. "We received overwhelming responses to our call for project managers and it wasn't easy to choose, but these three people had some great ideas on how to expand these initiatives and all have a deep rooted passion for Holyoke," director of the Office of Planning and Economic Development (OPED) Aaron Vega said.

Heather Kies will be leading the Doors Open Holyoke initiative, Sasha Viands will be leading the Holidays in Holyoke events and Alex Torres will be managing the Step Out Holyoke initiative. They will be knocking on doors and working with our business

community to bring these initiatives to fruition.

"As someone who was born and raised in Holyoke, I am deeply honored to serve as a TAC Project Manager for the Doors Open initiative." Heather Kies said, adding "This city has given me so much throughout my lifetime and I am passionate about contributing to projects that will help Holyoke grow, thrive, and realize its full potential. I look forward to working alongside our community to create meaningful and lasting impact. Come unlock Holyoke's history with us, one door at a time."

OPED has been leading the work on expanding the tourism sector for the city. With support from the Massachusetts Gaming Mitigation Funds, a grant the city receives, the Explore Holyoke marketing and social media campaign has been built. "We

are so lucky to work with the team at cdeVision and our Explore Holyoke influencers Bill Alatalo and Kiari Martinez." Our goal is to highlight the great restaurants, business and natural resources the city has to offer residents and visitors, in particular those visitors to the MGM casino to really explore all Western Mass has to offer." Aaron Vega added. "Our partners at Explore Western MA, the Wistariahurst Museum, the International Volleyball Hall of Fame, De La Luz, Holyoke Art, Beyond Walls and more are a testament to the collaboration and shared vision we all have for Holyoke".

Visit exploreHolyoke.com for more information on these and other happenings in the city.

For more information visit ExploreHolyoke.com or email Aaron Vega at vegaa@holyoke.org.

AWARD, from page 1

making sports accessible to every child. Their work truly reflects the spirit of the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade."

Offering a similar reflection to Wildman's comments was the current MLWM President Brian Feeley, who provided a sense of achievement when asked about what the award means to everyone across

all levels of involvement with the Miracle League of Western Mass.

"Ten years of a lot of hard work, and we have seen just record growth this year," Feely said. "We have sold out already for our Fall registration in four hours, and every year has been a record," Feely revealed that at first, registration numbers would sell out in increments of 24 hours, then demand skyrocketed to 8 hours, and now it's at four

hours, with up to 90 players in our program." He also revealed that the range of coverage stretches quite far.

"We have families from the Berkshires to Sturbridge, Deerfield, so you know we cover everybody," Feely said. "And they come every Sunday for a 45-minute game because they want those kids to feel included, and seeing all the success on the story and the smiles on the field truly say it all."

The Citizenship Award will be formally presented to the Miracle League of Western Massachusetts at the Grand Coronation Ball on Saturday, Feb. 14, 2026.

From there, Parade season carries on in full effect as the 49th Holyoke St. Patrick's Road Race on Saturday, March 21, 2026, and the 73rd Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade caps off the weekend on Sunday, March 22, 2026.

REUNION, from page 1

forward to this reunion, and we all feel it's going to be a great time," Maggi said. Offering similar thoughts about the chance to see everyone again while confessing ample gratitude to the hard work and effort put forth was Pam Brough, HCHS alumnus from '66.

"This committee (HCHS '65 reunion coordination) would like to thank all of the committees for partnering with us to create this special moment, and we had a great time meeting. We are all looking forward to having a great day," she said.

Echoing Brough's comments as well was Peggy Shevlin McMahon, HCHS alumni from '65', who said, "I think it's wonderful that it's not just the class of

Holyoke Catholic class of 65, but we also have class of 66, and Holyoke High Class of 65, and 66', and it's wonderful because most of us have connection with somebody."

In addition, it was revealed that alumni from all across the country are expected to return home to the Paper City, as some are coming from as far as Arizona, Kentucky, Florida, and just across the border in Connecticut. As noted before, the reunion starts next Friday, Sept. 27 at 4 p.m. with a meet-and-greet gathering set to take place at the Holyoke Knights of Columbus, where pizza will be served along with a cash bar. On Saturday, Sept. 28, is a full catered event at the Summit View Banquet and Meeting House, which will run from 12 to 4 p.m.

ROTARY, from page 1

• Lisa Wong - South Hadley Town Administrator. "The Holyoke Rotary Club includes Holyoke, South Hadley, and Granby, Mass. The funds raised at

the celebrity bartending event will allow the Club to continue philanthropic work throughout our community and around the world," said Baran "Admission to the event is free, with encouragement to please tip your

celebrity bartenders generously."

Since 2008 the Holyoke Rotary Club has raised over \$150,000 to fund various projects, including the Miracle League of Western Massachusetts Inclusive

Playground at Kennedy Field, the media room at the Holyoke Library, K-9 vests for the Holyoke Police Department, and literacy projects with Kelly School and Holyoke Boys' and Girls' Club, among others.



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Early struggles hurt Holyoke in opening loss

HOLYOKE – Last Friday night, former conference rivals Chicopee Comprehensive and Holyoke matched up in independent action.

Comp would score 29 points in the first half, taking advantage of Holyoke's offensive struggles as well as a blocked punt en route to a 43-8 win over the Knights.



Devin Velez rears back for a pass attempt.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli



Darel Sierra-Feliciano picks up a kickoff and returns up the middle of the field.

Boys soccer battles Rams to tie

GRANBY – Looking to start a winning streak following a 3-2 win at Smith Vocational, the Holyoke High School boys soccer team traveled to Granby High School. Both teams battled for 80 minutes, but no goals were scored in the game and it ended in a scoreless draw.

Holyoke's Jaybriel Rivera-Soto made 10 saves while Holyoke returned with eight shots on goal, all saved by Granby's Daniel Santiago.

The Knights are now 2-2-1 on the season and have a matchup with the High School of Commerce on Friday, Sept. 19.

Following that, Holyoke will travel to Ware for the first of two matchups this season with the Indians.

The Ware match-up will be on the road Monday evening at 7 p.m. at Ware High School.



Jose Feliciano is met with a tackler after making a catch.



Jesus Morales heads into the pack on a carry.



Avery Feliciano make a block on the offensive line.

Knights fall in slugfest to Chicopee

CHICOPEE – On Tuesday afternoon, Holyoke High School girls soccer was defeated by Chicopee despite being tied 5-5 with

20 minutes remaining in the game. Chicopee scored a pair of late goals to take the match 7-5. Kyra Lippman scored

three times and assisted on a fourth goal. Lellany Figueroa had two goals scored. Holyoke is 0-5 on the season.



Kyra Lippman sends the ball up the middle of the field.



Lellany Figueroa attempts to settle the ball under pressured.



Issabella Byers is pressured while still possessing the ball.



Goalie Jennaya Torres punts the ball away for the Knights.



Kyleigh Dorman stops the loose ball.



Scarlett Mendes looks to pass.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Stafford Speedway hosts first responder race

STAFFORD SPRINGS, CT – Stafford Speedway hosted USNE First Responder Friday on Sept. 12 with the TC 13 Shootout joining Stafford's five weekly divisions in feature action. The SK Modified® division ran their regularly scheduled 40-lap feature as well as the 3rd Annual TC 13 Shootout, a 13 lap race contested between the top-13 finishers from the 40-lap feature. Michael Christopher, Jr. was the big winner of the night taking home the TC 13 Shootout trophy and the \$1,313 to win TC 13 Shootout. Also as part of the TC 13 Shootout festivities, the Ted Christopher Safety Initiative, orchestrated by Quinn Christopher, donated

a Bell helmet with the winner determined by the winner of the TC 13 Shootout drawing from a list of the five drivers who finished in 13th place in their respective feature events. Christopher drew the Street Stock division which made Bill Cote the winner of the Bell helmet for his 13th place finish in the Street Stock feature.

In the 40-lap SK Modified® feature event, Michael Gervais, Jr. took the early lead with Anthony Flannery and Todd Owen going wheel to wheel for second. Owen took second on lap-2 with Andrew Molleur going around Flannery to move into third on lap-3. Flannery was able to get back in line in fourth, just in

front of Cory DiMatteo and Alexander Pearl, who were side by side fighting for fifth place.

Molleur made a move to the inside of Owen on lap-6 to take second with Michael Christopher, Jr. getting around Pearl for sixth. Molleur took the lead from Gervais on lap-8 with DiMatteo moving into third on lap-9. With 10 laps complete the order was now Molleur, Gervais, DiMatteo, Owen, and Christopher. Flannery was sixth followed by Pearl, Marcello Rufrano, Tyler Chapman, and Jon Puleo.

DiMatteo streaked by Molleur to take over the lead on lap-13. Gervais was third behind DiMatteo and

Molleur with Christopher fourth and Owen fifth. Christopher took third from Gervais on lap-16 and then took second from Molleur on lap-17. Wesley Prucker spun on the backstretch to bring the caution flag out with 18 laps complete.

Molleur spun from third place on the restart to bring the caution flag right back out. The next restart saw Gervais shoot out of line going down the backstretch and into turn 3 and his car came back up on the track and collected several cars including Curt Brainard, David Arute, Timmy Solomito, and Wade Gagner to bring the caution right back out again before a lap could be completed.

Christopher was sent to the rear of the field for making contact with Gervais.

The third lap-19 restart saw DiMatteo take the lead with Flannery in second. Puleo and Owen were wheel to wheel for third with Mikey Flynn and Tyler Chapman wheel to wheel for fifth. Flynn and Chapman touched going into turn 3 with Chapman spinning into the wall to bring the caution flag back out with 20 laps complete.

DiMatteo took the lead on the restart with Puleo moving into second. Flynn took third after a side by side lap with Flannery with Rufrano in fifth behind Flynn and Flannery. Rufrano got around Flannery to take

fourth place on lap-23 and then took third from Flynn on lap-24. Puleo was looking high and low for a way around DiMatteo but DiMatteo was able to maintain the lead.

With 5 laps to go it was still DiMatteo and Puleo fighting for the win with Rufrano and Flynn fighting for third and Flannery and Keith Rocco fighting for fifth. Rocco took fifth from Flannery on lap-37 while Flynn made a move to get back by Rufrano for third on lap-39. Puleo couldn't get close enough to DiMatteo as DiMatteo took down his second win of the 2025 season. Flynn finished third with Rocco and Rufrano rounding out the top-5.

Westfield State football falls to Bridgewater

WESTFIELD – Eric Lovell's 80-yard interception return for a touchdown highlighted Westfield State's efforts as the Owls dropped a hard-fought 29-16 decision to Bridgewater State University in the Massachusetts State Collegiate Athletic Conference football opener for both teams.

Westfield is now 0-2 overall and 0-1 in the MASCAC, while Bridgewater is 1-1 and 1-0 in the league.

The Owls fell behind 9-0 at the half.

Lovell picked off a pass on the right side of the field and outsprinted everyone to the endzone midway through the third quarter, and Dino Stellato converted the extra point for the Owls to trim the

Bears' lead to 9-7.

Bridgewater answered with a 29-yard field goal from Joey Naso, and then capitalized on an Owls turnover, as Lucas Lambert returned an interception 23 yards to the Owls 21, and a penalty on the tackle set the Bears up 1st and 10 at the Westfield 11. Bridgewater QB Shamus Whiting found Jack McCarthy for an 11-yard TD pass on the next play to extend the lead to 19-7.

Westfield got two points back on a safety, after a 52-yard Brian Carlin punt pinned the Bears back on their own one-yard line, and Justyn Gardener sacked Whiting in the end zone to cut the lead to 19-9 with 1:26 left in the third quarter.

On the ensuing drive, Westfield marched 75 yards on eight plays, capped by an 18-yard scoring strike from Westfield QB Miles Foerster to Will Brewster that trimmed the lead to 19-16 after the extra point with 12:57 left in the game.

Bridgewater responded with a sharp 6-play, 60-yard drive of their own, with Whiting connecting with Josh Registre for 34-yard TD to boost the lead to 26-16. The Owls answered by driving the ball to the Bears 7-yard line, but a bad snap and hold foiled a field goal attempt.

A late 42-yard field goal from Naso late in the fourth quarter capped the scoring and effectively ended the Owls comeback chances.

Foerster finished 10-26

passing for 94 yards, a TD and an interception, and ran for 57 more yards. Manny Mengata led the Owls with 63 yards on 22 carries. Brewster caught five passes for 56 yards.

For Bridgewater, Whiting finished 8-19 for 158 yards with two TDs and 2 int's, and Joseph-Dube Garrett threw a TD pass as well. Isaiah Wright carried 20 times for 74 yards, and Registre caught three balls for 75 yards and a TD. Bridgewater held a 327-263 margin in total offense, and led 19-18 in first downs. Westfield held a slight 30:58 to 29:02 edge in time of possession.

Budder Ferreira led westfield with eight tackles, Lovell added seven.

Kessy re-signs with T-Birds for 2025-2026 season

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds announced today they have re-signed forward Kale Kessy to a one-year AHL contract extension.

Kessy, 32, is entering his 13th professional season and has logged 359 regular season games of AHL experience, posting 43 points (21g, 22a) and 961 penalty minutes. He has additionally skated in 13 Calder Cup playoff contests, including all three

games of the Thunderbirds' postseason series against the Providence Bruins last April.

Originally a fourth-round pick by the Phoenix Coyotes in the 2011 NHL Draft, Kessy has also dressed in the AHL for the Oklahoma City Barons, Bakersfield Condors, Manitoba Moose, Cleveland Monsters, Colorado Eagles, Hershey Bears, Iowa Wild, and Syracuse Crunch.

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► In The News

DPW, from page 1

because we are that unseen agent of making things happen," she said. "Our work is generally on the side, but we notice that when we don't do certain things, such as facilitating trash pickup, fixing potholes, we are drawn into the spotlight with a negative perception; however, the more important stuff isn't what always gets noticed." She did respond to that criticism by highlighting some of the new technology at disposal along with reiterating the protocols that the DPW must follow saying, "It's a quiet process that can sometimes involve fixing a sinkhole that the neighbors noticed, that you probably didn't if you drove down the street, but if the public noticed we are out there, and that can be a big issue depending on what's underneath the sinkhole," Monahan said. "And when it comes to figuring out what the deeper issue could be the foreman or supervisor sticks his camera phone into the hole to take a picture, to highlight how big the issue we're potentially dealing with is, then based on how big that hole is, we can determine if we need a steel plate over it, to wait to find a funding source to fix it, or holy cow this is a problem right

now," Monahan added. She also noted that in the case of those 'big' emergencies, staff will be pulled from other problems to come and assist in digging up the road, and ensure it's safe to travel.

Monahan said the role of the DPW is also in charge of the overall continued maintenance of all buildings outside of the school department.

"It should be known that our custodial service is limited to five buildings, and we only have a funded staff of five," she said. "So all of the other building improvements, such as the Fire and Police Station, which also includes HVAC, elevators, essentially anything that deals with the envelope of the building, DPW is responsible for both staffing and leading those efforts, but the budget for all of those services comes through the DPW."

Understanding how vital public works truly is to the citizens of Holyoke, Monahan noted that the number one priority currently is trash pickup, as she declared it under the umbrella of 'public health issue', before touching upon the fact that she understands that frequency of service hasn't been up to par due to eight positions being cut in the city's most recent budget, but acknowledged the DPW is trying

their best with the circumstances they are faced with.

"So when staff is out for vacation, or when we don't have enough employed people at this point and time, that trash pickup crew, we then have to steal from other divisions, meaning that the best plans from the day before go to not because those employees are now doing trash," said Monahan. "We do a lot with the least given," she added. "And having been working in Public works for more than two decades, being the chair of the board for 3 years, and interim director for 4 months, this is a team to be proud, and I wish the public and city council knew that."



A centrifuge that is in need of replacement.

Submitted photos



A waste truck is readied at one of the bays.



City officials view the condition of the centrifuge.

The Holyoke Sun
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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.

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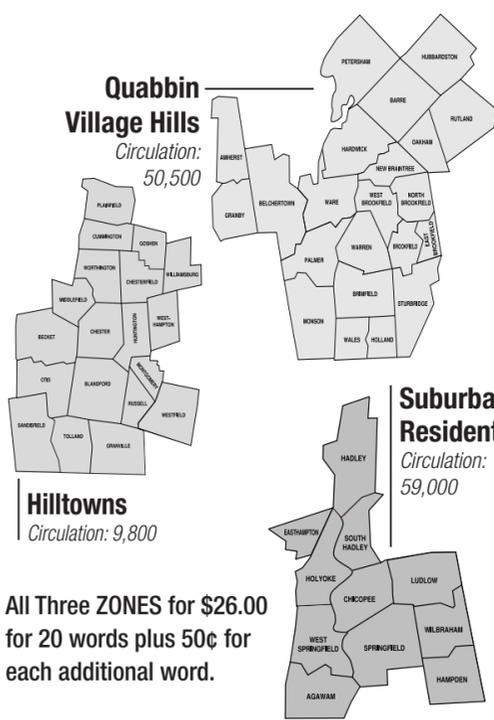
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Donovan's Irish Pub celebrates 25th year milestone

By Amanda Munson
amunson@turley.com

HOLYOKE – Donovan's Irish Pub on Sept. 13 celebrated 25 years at their new location at 80 Jarvis Ave. in Holyoke, MA. Owners Frank and Justine Garaughty and the staff of Donovan's thanked Michael and Diane Donovan for entrusting them with their legacy and hosted a celebration with a day full of entertainment from the Holyoke Caledonian Pipe Band, Jimmy McArdle and Jerry Murphy, The Healys, and Dee Reilly, with Irish Step Dancers from the Cassin Academy of Dance and Irish Set Dancing demonstration.

The event also offered hors d'oeuvres that were mini samples of their entrees, appetizers, and desserts with plenty of Guinness. Sitting down with the Garaughtys on the back patio overlooking the location's expansive view, Justine began sharing how grateful they were in having a location that offers more than just a bar space.

Justine began, "Donovan's Irish Pub was started in 2000 by Michael and Diane Donovan. Frank and I actually met at Donovan's in 2009 and now we've owned the bar now for 10 years. We've been married for nine years so we bought the bar first! Neither of us had any idea what we were doing in this business, so the staff that we had really trained us and helped with everything. When we bought it, we knew the Eastfield Mall was coming to an end from what they were saying. We actually looked at 14 to 15 different locations trying to stay in the area and by chance, somebody found this location online and let us know about it. It was around Jan. when we started talking to the broker of the location, we left the mall in July, and we were the last business since we stayed a week longer than anybody else. We are now coming up on two years at this location," said Justine.

People may recognize Donovan's Irish Pub from the former location at the Eastfield Mall and now, people can find them in their bigger location in Holyoke, offering more space for events that can offer business meetings, weddings, parties,

and more. Justine commented that since they've moved to the new location, she felt that business had doubled compared to the previous mall location and both are very pleased with the customer response.

When the Garaughtys first moved in, the first floor was completely renovated and the bar is Frank's design and was built by Mike Jr., previous owner's son. The booths are from the mall location with a lot of the same staff that followed the Garaughtys.

"Even the clientele, we're getting a lot of the same people coming here and coming out to see us," said Justine.

Frank added, "The patio is larger than the previous location and now we have the event space upstairs, which we didn't have anything like that; it was a very rare occasion when we could do any real function. We would have to shut off half the room or shut the regular business down just to hold the event. That's been new for us, it's gone quite well. The image of the pub or the bar, some people may take a dim view of it, but it's really a refuge for a lot of people. People come to celebrate or come when they have problems, you come very close to them and a lot of our staff have built up close relationships over the years," said Frank.

Frank shared that the one year celebration for Donovan's was only a few days after 9/11, then years later the financial crisis, the wars, the pandemic and the retail apocalypse; the business survived through it all and resonated with their customers. "When we were closing the previous location, it really came more to the surface how important it was to a lot of people, it's quite a legacy."

Diane stated that both of them want to keep the Irish traditions alive as much as they can, like offering live Irish music twice a week on Fri. and Sat., with hopes of bringing in more demonstrations of set dancing in the near future. Throughout the conversation, Justine and Frank mentioned their past trips to Ireland and shared how the pubs are the social center of the community.

Frank continued, "It's a place to share a drink, some



The staff of Donovan's Irish Pub on the back patio, excited to celebrate 25 years together.

Turley photos by Amanda Munson



Owner Justine Garaughty smiling with a form from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, recognizing the pub for its 25 years of serving sustenance and fun, signed by the Speaker of the House Ronald Mariano.



Music by Jimmy McArdle and Jerry Murphy played loud and proud on the top floor of the pub, with dancers that included Owner Justine Garaughty.



The members of the Holyoke Caledonian Pipe Band smiling with their Guinnesses.



The Holyoke Caledonian Pipe Band playing on the main floor of the pub, right next to the bar in the event space.

food and good times, forget about the world for a little while."

Justine added that the farmers would actually take their tractors into the pub after the work day because they didn't have many people to talk to, "It's where you're able to go, meet people and friends, have a drink and have a good time. Enjoy the craic as they say!"

When asked about the Donovan's Irish Pub menu and what they would suggest first time customers order, the owners both agreed on

their corned beef, shepherds pie, fish and chips, and of course a Guinness.

The Garaughtys both thanked and expressed their gratitude to the Donovan's for entrusting their business with them and thanked their staff for how grateful they are for them. "They're the ones that keep the place going," said Justine and Frank.

Visit the Donovan's Irish Pub website and social media for upcoming events, like the upcoming St. Patrick's season.

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