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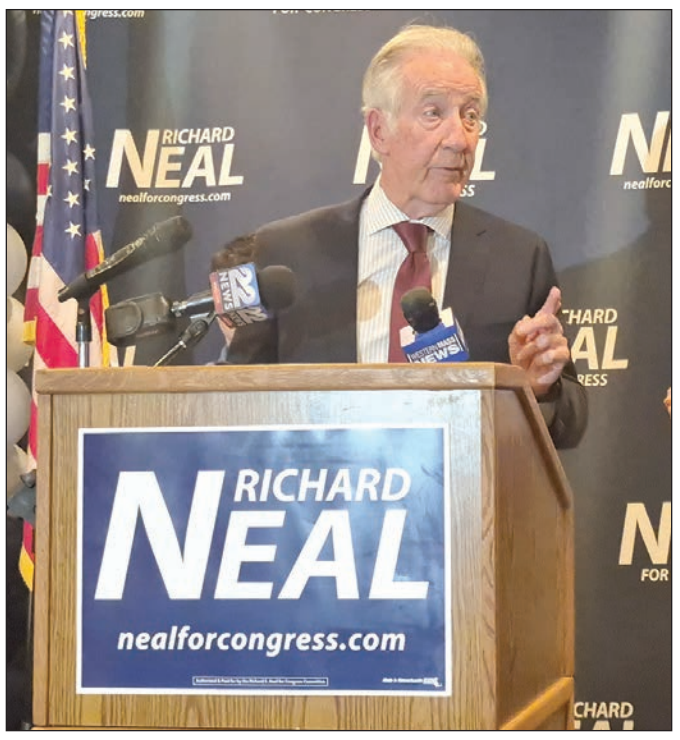
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Turley photos by Brendan Rooney

U.S. Rep Richard Neal addresses his supporters upon victory.

Neal defeats Milleron in election rematch

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

SPRINGFIELD – U.S. Rep. Richard Neal is officially on his way back to the House in Washington for a 20th term representing Massachusetts' 1st Congressional District, after defeating Independent Candidate Nadia Milleron in a rematch of their 2024 contest this past Tuesday.

By 10:30 p.m. Tuesday, 24% of ballots had been counted; early returns showed Neal winning 68%, or 52,037 votes; Milleron had 31%, or 24,356 votes. As of Wednesday morning, various reports stated Neal's lead jumped mightily as he garnered 149,322 votes or 65.4%, compared with Milleron's 78,944 or 34.6%—a 70,378-vote margin that sealed a landslide victory.

Earlier that night, Neal's supporters—including family, friends, and local and state elected officials—gathered inside Nathan Bill's Irish Bar & Restaurant in Springfield to await the Congressman's arrival.

Neal entered just after 9:30 p.m., exchanging pleasantries and shaking hands as Queen's "We Are the Champions" echoed throughout the venue, signifying victory achieved.

Minutes later, Neal's daughter, Maura Fitzpatrick, took the stage to offer an ode of gratitude to her father,

See NEAL, page 6

New era for veterans home

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

HOLYOKE – Last Thursday, October 29, the new, state-of-the-art Massachusetts Veterans Home—a long-awaited sanctuary built to serve our nation's greatest heroes for generations to come—officially opened its doors.

Originally estimated as a $485 million project with a completion target of fall 2027 when first put out to bid in 2023, officials instead lauded the facility during Thursday's ribbon-cutting for coming in both ahead of schedule and under budget. The current project budget stands at $465 million, representing one of the largest public investments in Western Massachusetts history—backed by a $400 million state bond authorization approved by the Legislature alongside $263.5 million in matching funds from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) State Veterans Home Construction Grant Program.

Additionally, overhauling state veterans' homes was established early on as a core mission of Governor Maura Healey's administration, fulfilling a promise to deliver the level of facility veterans deserve.

Echoing Healey's ode to commitment was Veterans Home Executive Director Michael Lazo.

"This project is more than improvements to our facility," Lazo shared during the ceremony. "It represents an investment in a state-of-the-art environment designed to meet the evolving needs of our veterans and reflects our ongoing commitment to providing exceptional care and the safe, welcoming, and supportive environment where

See HOME, page 10



An exterior shot of the new Holyoke Veterans Home.



The ribbon is cut on the new Holyoke Veterans Home last Thursday morning.

Turley Photos by Brendan Rooney

Healey visits town, announces expansion of Veterans Memorial Cemetery

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

AGAWAM – Last week, Gov. Maura Healey announced a major initiative at the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Agawam, pledging that her administration would pursue acquiring adjacent land to expand the cemetery and preserve burial opportunities for future generations of veterans.

"We need to start planning now before space becomes a challenge, so that we can understand what investments may be needed and ensure that future generations of Massachusetts veterans have access to the burial benefits and recognition that they've earned," Healey said. "Our veterans answered the call. We owe it to them, and their families, to make sure we're prepared to honor that service long into the future."

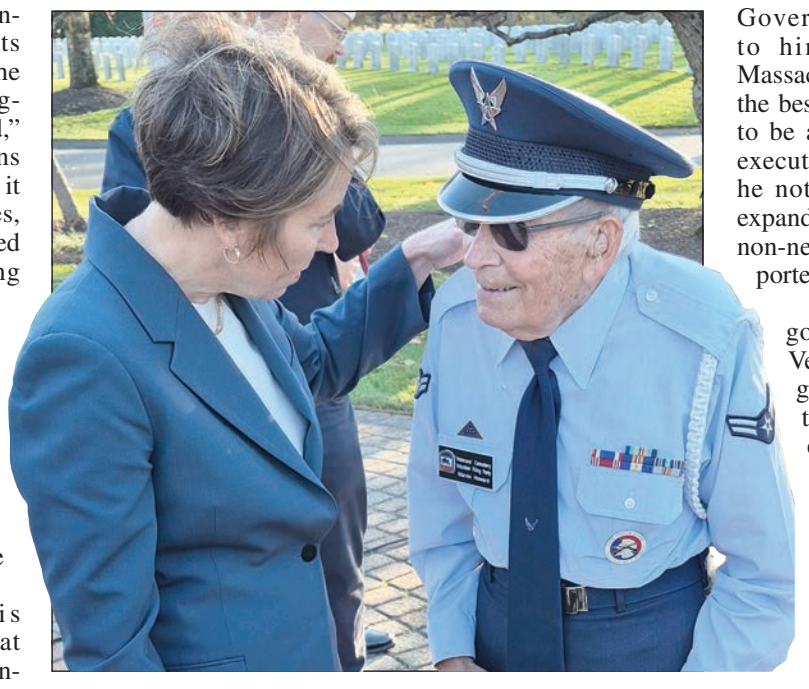
Echoing Healey's urgency was State Sen. John Velis (D–Westfield), a current member of the Army National Guard whose efforts earlier this spring helped secure a $700,000 bond authorization for the long-standing initiative.

Velis opened his thoughts by recalling that within five minutes of signing the historic HERO Act, Governor Healey turned to him and asked how Massachusetts could remain the best place in the country to be a veteran—a level of executive commitment that he noted underscores why expanding the cemetery is a non-negotiable priority supported by all parties.



A group photo consisting of Gov. Maura Healey, elected officials, and veterans.

Turley Photos by Brendan Rooney



Gov. Maura Healey talks to a veteran in attendance.

"This is a basic government function," Velis said. "If you can't give a level of dignity or care, and at the end of the day, a resting place to the less than one-half of 1% who serve, what are we doing here?" He emphasized that the demand for burial space will rise rapidly, pointing to aging Vietnam-era veterans as well as service members from the Global War on Terrorism who served in Afghanistan, Iraq, and parts of Africa.

"We need to make sure this place is here for years and years and years to come and is able to meet any need that may arise," Velis said.

A Personal Connection

To help continue this effort locally, Velis commended Agawam City Council President Anthony Russo for leading the expansion alongside area veterans' groups, setting the stage for Russo to address the crowd.

"What drove me to do this... was my father," Russo said, as he became emotional, strengthening his com-

See VETS, page 5

Next HHS production to feature pair of plays

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke High School Theater Company invites the community to an evening of mystery, mayhem, and laughter with two one-acts: "And Then There Was One – A Spoof" and "And Then There Was One, Too – Another Spoof" by Michael Druce. Performances will take place Nov. 18, 19, and 20 at 6:30 p.m. in the John F. Sears Auditorium at Holyoke High School North, 500 Beech Street.

This two-part comedy mystery puts a playful spin on the classic whodunit, bringing together suspicious characters, unexpected twists, and plenty of reasons to laugh. Join our student performers and backstage crew for a night of live theater—and see if you can solve the mystery before it all unfolds live on stage at Holyoke High School.

This production is co-directed by class of 2027 Performing & Media Arts student Darius Baez and includes students from grades 9-12 in all areas of the production from acting to set

See PLAYS, page 6

Wistariahurst to hold holiday open house

HOLYOKE – Wistariahurst's upcoming Holiday Open House and Festive Market is back for a 6th year and perfect for those pine-ing for some holiday cheer. The museum will be open Dec. 5 and 6 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. for this joyous event. The halls will be decked with the splendor of the holiday season, complete with our massive Wisty Railroad train set running throughout Wistariahurst's gallery. Visitors will be able to explore the first and second floors of the museum, listen to holiday-themed music, and discover one-of-a-kind goodies from local vendors and artists. The festive market will feature a variety of products such as art, jewelry, apparel, and other amazing items perfect for your gift exchanges this year. Our Holiday Open House is guaranteed to bring joy to your world with historical fun and holiday cheer.



But that's not all! Guests can enjoy family-friendly activities like a holiday story-time, family photos in our historic carriage, live music from the Brookline Trio on Dec. 6, and holiday balloon animals. On the second floor of the museum, the Tenement Room and Skinner Servants Room exhibits will be open for guests to explore.

Wistariahurst Museum's 6th Annual Holiday Open House and Festival Market truly offers something for everyone, and we're so excited to welcome the entire community to join us and share in the joy of the season. Our event is a time for celebration and a time to make cherished memories, so we've made sure to make admission to this event free and open to the public. It's the most wonderful time of the year.

Interested sponsors or vendors should contact info@wistariahurst.org.

HPL History Room sponsors lecture

HOLYOKE – On Saturday, Nov, 14 at 1 p.m., Amy Mittelman will talk on Constance and Donald Green: An Unsolved Mystery. While doing research for her recently published book, Dames, Dishes and Degrees: Faculty Wives in America, Amy stumbled across an unsolved mystery concerning the sudden death of Donald Green, a prominent Holyoke businessman, in 1946. He was the husband of Constance Green, author of Holyoke, Massachusetts: A Case History of the Industrial Revolution in America (1939), an in-depth narrative of Holyoke's history. Mittelman will discuss the mystery surrounding Green's death, the Greens' connection to Holyoke history, and her book, which reveals what really went on behind ivy-covered walls and in faculty wives' clubs. Mittelman's writing is informed by her varied experience as a nurse, historian, business-owner, and spouse of a college professor.

Clock tower lights up blue for National Diabetes Awareness Month

HOLYOKE – The City Hall's clock tower will glow blue November 14 for World Diabetes Day and National Diabetes Awareness Month, shining a light on the people who live with type 1 diabetes (T1D). Holyoke Mayor, Joshua A. Garcia joined Tax Collector and T1D advocate Laura Shaw as well as Breakthrough T1D, the leading T1D research and advocacy organization, to raise awareness of T1D and celebrate the local champions driving toward cures.

"Holyoke is a community that shows up for its own," said Mayor Garcia. "Type 1 diabetes is often invisible. It's managed day and night, in classrooms, at ball games, and around kitchen tables, and many of us may not realize how many of our neighbors are living with it. Lighting the Clock Tower blue is our way of saying to every family facing T1D 'We see you, and we stand with you.'"

The lighting coincides with Breakthrough T1D's national "See T1D" campaign. Throughout November, the campaign will share the stories of some of the 1.5 million Americans who live with the condition through social media, digital, and out-of-home advertising. In Holyoke, those stories start close to home.

"Living with T1D means balancing it every day, often in ways no one else can see," said Laura Shaw. "As a Holyoke resident and City Tax Collector, I am proud to see our City Hall Clock Tower shine blue for this community. I hope it prompts conversations, and I hope people will join us in showing awareness for our neighbors, friends, and families who live with T1D every day, because when we see them, we support them."

Laura also serves on the committee for Party with 1 Purpose, which was held October 17 at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield. This year's event has raised more than $500,000 in support of Breakthrough T1D's mission to drive toward cures and make everyday life with type 1 diabetes better. Holyoke Gas &Electric, a sponsor of Party with 1 Purpose in 2025 and 2026, has helped make this community effort possible.

"Advocates like Laura are the heart of our movement," said Teri Yoder, Territory Executive, Breakthrough T1D Northeastern States Territory. "We're grateful to Mayor Garcia and the City of Holyoke for helping the world see T1D. Together, we're driving towards cures while making everyday life better for the people who face it."

Residents and visitors are encouraged to see the blue clock tower and to join Breakthrough T1D throughout November to raise T1D awareness and support those affected by the condition. To learn more about Breakthrough T1D, National Diabetes Awareness Month, and how to join the movement, visit SeeT1D.org or BreakthroughT1D.org.

Pair named Ambassador Award recipients

HOLYOKE – The St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke is proud to announce Caroline Boland and the late Mary Ferriter as the recipients of its 2027 Ambassador Award, recognizing their contributions to promoting Irish culture, hospitality, and the longstanding relationship between Ireland and the United States.

Through their respective work in tourism, hospitality, and cultural exchange, both women have helped build lasting connections between the Dingle Peninsula and Western Massachusetts. Their involvement with the Dingle Peninsula Showcase at The Big E is just one example of the friendships and partnerships they have fostered across the Atlantic.

"Caroline has an incredible way of bringing people together, whether we're visiting Ireland or she's here with us in Western Massachusetts. She makes connections, builds friendships, and makes everyone feel welcome. Mary shared that same warmth and love for bringing people together, and her impact continues to be felt today," said Stephanie Joyce, 2027 Parade President.

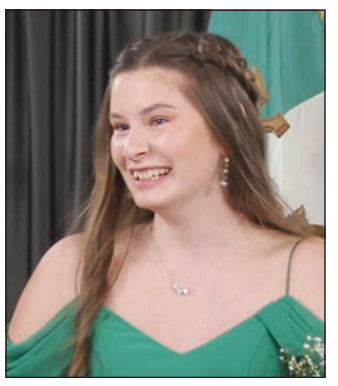
Both women will be honored at the 2027 Ambassador Award Breakfast on Sunday, March 21, during Holyoke's St. Patrick's Parade weekend. Caroline Boland will attend to receive her award, while members of the Ferriter family will be present to accept the award on behalf of the late Mary Ferriter.

Applications now open for Colleen Pageant

HOLYOKE – The St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke is pleased to announce that applications are now open for the 71st Annual Holyoke Grand Colleen Pageant, a cherished tradition celebrating Irish heritage, community involvement and the accomplishments of young women throughout the region.

For more than seven decades, the Grand Colleen Pageant has served as a signature event of Holyoke's St. Patrick's celebrations and the kickoff to Parade season. The pageant offers young women the opportunity to represent their communities, celebrate their Irish ancestry and become part of a longstanding tradition that plays an important role in one of the region's most beloved annual celebrations.

"The Grand Colleen Pageant is a wonderful tradition that brings together Irish heritage, community pride and the next generation of young leaders," said Kate Caligaris, Colleen Committee Chair. "It's an opportunity for these young women to make lasting memories, build meaningful connections and take an active role in the celebrations that make Holyoke so special. We look forward to welcoming this year's contestants and celebrating all they bring to the tradition."



Jadyn Christie is elated after learning she is the 2026 Grand Colleen. *Turley photo by David Henry*

Young women residing in Holyoke, South Hadley, Easthampton and Southampton are eligible to apply.

Contestant Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be 17-22 years of age as of March 17, 2027
- Resident of Holyoke, South Hadley, Easthampton or Southampton
- Be single (never married, not a parent)
- Claim Irish ancestry
- Complete a resume and application

Awards & Opportunities

The Grand Colleen will receive:

- $3,000 to be used as a scholarship or trip to Ireland
- Professional portrait
- Tiara

The Grand Colleen and Court will receive:

- Gifts from local businesses and Colleen Patrons
- A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to serve as community ambassadors during Parade season

Important Dates

- **Oct. 1:** Applications open
- **Dec. 27:** Deadline to submit application to enter the Grand Colleen Pageant
- **Dec. 27:** Colleen Orientation 2 p.m., location TBD
- **Dec. 30:** Grand Colleen Pageant Rehearsal, at Holyoke High School, 6 to 8 p.m.
- **Jan. 2:** Grand Colleen Pageant at Holyoke High School Auditorium, 6 to 9:30 p.m.
- **Feb. 20:** Grand Coronation Ball at The Log Cabin, Holyoke

For application information and additional details, please visit the Holyoke St. Patrick's Committee website at holyokestpatricksparade.com or contact Kate Caligaris, Colleen Committee Chair at 413.627.8716 or holyokecolleens@gmail.com.

For more information about the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade and Parade Week events, visit holyokestpatricksparade.com.





Author publishes history of city's Jewish community

HOLYOKE – Local historian Olivia Davis Mausel will give a reading and sign copies of her newly published book, "Their Stories: The Holyoke Jewish Community," on Saturday, Nov. 7, at 10 a.m. at the H.H. Richardson-designed train station at 12 Bower Street. The train station played an integral part in the lives of many individuals featured in "Their Stories."

Through first-person interviews, Mausel has compiled oral histories that present a vivid picture of what life was like in the late 19th and early 20th centuries for Holyoke's Jewish community. The result is a series of depictions of their work, their families, their traditions, their struggles and their joys.

The book is the latest publication of The Republican's Heritage Book program which has been highlighting the untold stories and contributions of Western Massachusetts' diverse population for more than a decade.

Editors Joseph Carvalho III and Cynthia G. Simison noted that Holyoke was home to of one of the region's earliest Jewish communities. Mausel's research and interviews provide the reader with significant insight into the Jewish experience in our region.

A retired teacher, Mausel is a former member of the Holyoke Historical Commission and the Local District Commission and currently a board member of the Holyoke Preservation Trust. Over the course of more than 20 years, her interest in Holyoke cultural and historical issues spurred her efforts to gather the oral histories presented in her book.

"Their Stories" was designed by Michelle Johnson, creative lead for The Republican's Headline Studio Massachusetts. Available for $25, it can be purchased at any of the upcoming reading events.

Along with the train station, the events include: Nov. 17, 6 to 7 p.m., Holyoke Public Library, Chestnut Street; and Nov. 23, 9 a.m. to 12 noon, Holyoke Senior Center, 291 Pine St.

"Their Stories" also is available for purchase daily during regular business hours at Holyoke Hardware, 917 Hampden Street. Cash or check only.

Information: Olivia Davis Mausel, 413-237-1950

"The voices of Sadie, Max, David, Lil, Sam, Jacob, Lena, Mae and Harry describe growing up and coming of age in what was once a small town of graceful meadows," Mausel said. "Their first-person recollections share a slice of life that mirrors the evolution of Holyoke as it grew into a robust industrial complex."

HMC welcomes new orthopedic surgeon

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Medical Center has expanded its orthopedic services with the addition of Benjamin Snyder, MD, MPH, MS, to the HMC Orthopedic Center team and the opening of a new office in East Longmeadow. Located at 294 North Main Street, Suite 102, the office is now accepting new patients. To schedule an appointment, call 413.536.5814.

"Dr. Snyder is a well-known and respected orthopedic surgeon who has served patients in the Pioneer Valley for more than 7 years. We are excited to welcome him to the HMC team," said Spiros Hatiras, President and CEO of Holyoke Medical Center. "Opening our new East Longmeadow office reflects our commitment to making high-quality orthopedic care more convenient and accessible for patients close to home and work."

Dr. Snyder earned a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering and a Master of Science in Bioengineering from the Pennsylvania State University. He subsequently earned a Master of Public Health and his Medical Degree from Dartmouth Medical School. Dr. Snyder completed an orthopedic surgery research fellowship and residency at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, followed by a fellowship in Joint Replacement and Adult Reconstruction at Stanford University. He is board-certified by the American Board of Orthopaedic Surgery.



Dr. Benjamin Snyder

"My philosophy is to understand each patient's unique story and what brings them into the clinic. I use my knowledge and experience to help guide patients through their different treatment options that will optimize their health and their wellbeing," said Dr. Snyder.

Dr. Snyder specializes in hip and knee replacement surgery and the treatment of arthritis affecting these joints. He works with patients to explore treatment options tailored to their individual needs.

The HMC Orthopedic Center is accepting new patients in both East Longmeadow and Holyoke. To learn more or schedule an appointment, call 413.536.5814.

Planning Board to hold hearing on Walmart project

HOLYOKE — The city's Planning Board will hold a public hearing Tuesday, Nov. 10, at 5:30 p.m. to review the site plan for a 184,900-square-foot Walmart Supercenter to be located at the former Kmart site at 2201 Northampton Street.

The meeting will be conducted via Zoom.com. The ID number is 819 6511 7810. Call in *67 646 558 8656.

According to Walmart's application to the Planning Board, the 211,000-square-foot vacant Kmart building will be demolished.

The proposed store will provide retail and grocery sales, a garden center, and a drive-through pharmacy. The development will also include an online pickup service that will allow customers to place orders in advance, drive to the store, park in designated pick-up spaces, and have their orders delivered directly to their vehicles by a Walmart employee without having to enter the store.

The development plans call for 699 parking spaces including 27 accessible parking spaces, 10 electric vehicle (EV) parking spaces, and 60 designated online pickup spaces. The plan describes enhanced pedestrian access and connectivity throughout the Site, including a dedicated pedestrian walkway along the main access drive and pedestrian connections from the parking areas and to the store.

Mall announces holiday hours

HOLYOKE – The countdown to the holidays has begun and Holyoke Mall is excited to share their extended hours to provide guests with increased flexibility during the busy holiday shopping season.

"The holidays are a time for creating memories, and in-person shopping is part of that tradition," said Marketing Director Kristen Hinckley. "Customers can enjoy the festive atmosphere, discover products firsthand, visit with Santa, and share a meal together all in one place."

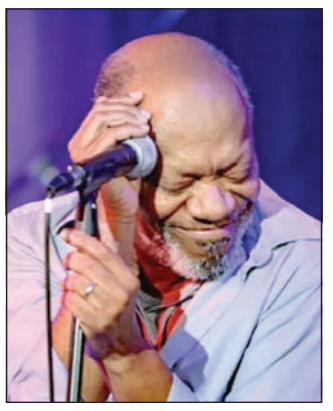
Holyoke Mall will close on Thanksgiving, November 26, except for Planet Fitness, which will be open from midnight to 2:00pm, and Round 1, which will be open from 10:00am-2:00am. The center will reopen from 7:00am to 9:00pm on Black Friday, November 27. Visit here for a complete calendar of Holyoke Mall's extended holiday shopping hours for the 2026 season.

Santa Claus will be at Holyoke Mall starting November 20 for visits and photos in Café Square, with his Grand Arrival Event taking place on November 21. More details about the event will be shared soon.

Please note, anchor, restaurant, and entertainment venue hours may vary. Guests are encouraged to call ahead to confirm a specific venue's hours of operation.

Kemp Harris performs at Wistariahurst Museum

HOLYOKE – Wistariahurst Museum is excited to welcome musician and storyteller Kemp Harris to the museum for a performance on Saturday, Nov. 21, starting at 6 p.m. Harris' concert, being held in the historic music room, will take visitors on a journey. His program will focus on family-friendly storytelling. Kemp's repertoire includes African folk tales, original stories, and familiar stories in literature.



Kemp Harris to perform Nov. 21.

Tickets to this concert are available at a sliding scale price from $5-$20. Tickets are available online and can be purchased through Wistariahurst's Eventbrite page. They can also be purchased at the door.

For more information on this program and to get tickets visit: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/kemp-harris-concert-at-wistariahurst-musuem-tickets-2002239506262?aff=oddtdtcreator&keep_tld=true

This program is supported by the Holyoke Local Cultural council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

Kemp Harris is a singer and songwriter, a master weaver of American musical styles. He's an actor, activist, author, and storyteller, and an award-winning educator who has taught young public school students for more than 40 years.

"It's all about communication," Kemp says. "Everything I do."

Born in segregated Edenton, North Carolina, and transplanted to Massachusetts, where he bounced between homes, Kemp learned to adapt to whatever world he found himself in - a talent that has come to define him as a person and an artist. He began writing songs at 14 and recording them in college, using a pair of old cassette players to track parts, and has been delighting audiences ever since with his earthy, soulful creations. Learn more about Kemp Harris at https://www.kempharris.band/

Children's Museum presenting 'Sensory Sundays'

HOLYOKE – The Children's Museum of Holyoke is excited to bring back a specially designed program for families with children affected with sensory challenges (official diagnosis not required).

The Sensory Sunday program is held the first Sunday of each month during special off hours from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. For sensory-sensitive visitors, enjoy a dimmer, quieter museum open to exploring with your child. There are also handouts with tips on how you can best cater to your child's unique ways of learning and living.

We strive to be an impactful community resource for your family. It is our hope that this program allows families who may typically avoid crowded or stimulating environments to come and join in on the fun.

For more information, call the museum at (413) 536-7048.

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Saturday Night
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Guest Column

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor



What happens if Social Security runs out of money to pay benefits?

Dear Rusty:

What happens to seniors if the country runs out of funds to pay out monthly Social Security to beneficiaries?

I am 78 yrs old and Social Security is my only income.

Signed: Worried Senior

Dear Worried Senior:

Please put your mind at ease, the government will never run out of money to pay Social Security benefits.

That's because if people are working and contributing to the program (e.g., always), Social Security will always have at least some money to pay benefits. What you are hearing about are recent media reports about Social Security having financial issues, expected to come to a head in just a few (six) years.

The primary risk for you (and everyone else) is this: if the reserves in the Social Security Trust Fund (currently about $2.5 trillion) run dry, it would result in a reduction to everyone's monthly benefits.

Right now, the Social Security Trustees are projecting a cut of about 22% starting in the fall of 2032. But that will only happen if Congress fails to act and reform the SS program before the SS reserves are fully depleted.

And that is, in our opinion, not likely to happen unless Congress is completely and totally derelict in its obligations to American seniors and their dependents. Not a pleasant scenario, but neither is it one likely to occur.

Here at the AMAC Foundation, we are working vigorously to prevent the depletion of the Social Security Trust Fund and our expectation is that Congress will, indeed, eventually take action to prevent any cuts to monthly benefits.

It would be political suicide for Congress (and any President) to allow those Social Security benefit cuts to occur. That would greatly increase the poverty level in America. As we have often reported publicly, we have already proposed a commonsense plan to restore Social Security to long term solvency and are working in Congress and with the Social Security Administration to promote the needed reform.

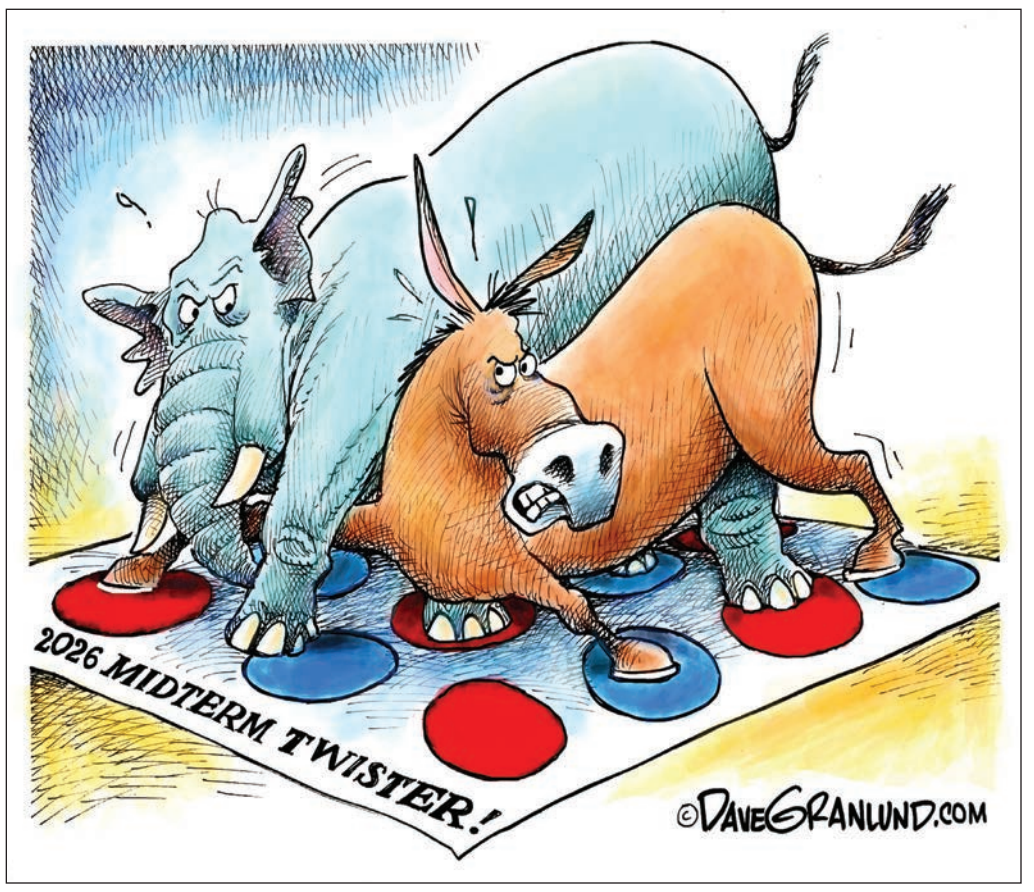
You can see more details of AMAC's plan here: https://amac.us/social-security-guarantee

So, while we fully understand your personal anxiety, we feel confident in assuring you that you are very unlikely to experience any cuts to your monthly Social Security income.

We are firmly committed to preventing that from happening and will continue to vigorously lobby Congress to make the SS changes needed before the SS Trust Fund is fully depleted.

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





Guest Column

Take notice of the subtle oak

In the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



Sometimes subtle beauty is just as eye catching as full-blown fireworks.

This fact was reinforced this past week, when oak trees took center stage as leaves worthy of peeping. No, they do not possess the pumpkin orange, lemon yellow or cherry red tones that maples do, but nonetheless they quietly beg the passerby to take notice.

Ahh, burnt umber, raw sienna and burnt sienna, mahogany and magentas. Gosh, I love them all.

It's like taking a peek inside a very good oil painting kit and seeing all your favorites.

Why don't we take a closer look at the genus called Quercus, to which our beloved oak belongs. The oak is a member of the beech or Fagaceae family.

One unique feature that the oak has and other members of the family do not is that its nut is carried in a cap. The nut and cap together are called an acorn.

Acorns are a valuable food source for wildlife. Wild turkey, deer, larger songbirds and squirrels among others depend on the nut for surviving the winter.

One way to tell the difference between species of oak tree is by their acorns. Examine how they wear their "cap."

The cap of the white oak is about one-quarter the size of the oblong shaped nut. The red oak, on the other hand, has a squatty, saucer-like cap covering a more globose shaped nut.

The pin oak has an obtuse nut and a more diminutive cap- a big belly so to speak!

There are some 500 species of oak throughout the world. Some of them are evergreen, holding onto their leaves throughout the winter months.

These oaks are located in the more southern, warmer regions of our country. Even though our oaks are deciduous, it takes a long time for them to completely defoliate.

Sometimes it is the next season's emerging leaves that finally push the old ones off! This is often problematic for the homeowner who likes to keep his lawn leaf-free.

At work I once saw a young groundskeeper attempt to shake the leaves off of a young pin oak tree – just to be done with his weekly task!

Most oaks tolerate transplanting the best when they are young and small in size. The pin oak is one exception; its shallow, fibrous root system allows it to be transplanted as a larger specimen.

For this reason, the pin oak is widely used for home landscaping. It is also highly sought after because of its unique, pyramidal shape: the lowest branches are pendulous, the middle are horizontal and the top are upright.

Did you know that cork is harvested from the bark of a species of oak tree? Yes, the cork oak grows in Spain, Portugal and parts of Northern Africa.

Another interesting fact: oaks get struck by lightning more than any other tree. This is likely due to their height, some topping over 80 feet at maturity.

The oak tree can grow to be very old. Reportedly, the oldest oak tree in the United States is in Temula, California.

This Coast Live Oak (Quercus agrifolia) named the Pechanga Great Oak, is estimated at 2000 years old!

In nearby Maryland, the Wye Oak lived to be about 460 years old before its demise in 2002. It topped off at 95 feet tall, 165 feet wide and 8 feet in diameter.

In 2006, a clone of the tree was planted in the remains of the trunk in a special ceremony.

All the trivia aside, I hope that you take notice of the subtle colors that line our hills and vales now that the fireworks have subsided. If you are forced to look at them "up close and personal" by way of a rake, don't forget they make great mulch – just chop them up with the lawnmower first. Your plants will benefit from your labor.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 34 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

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Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

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

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

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

The Holyoke Sun welcomes election letters to the editor

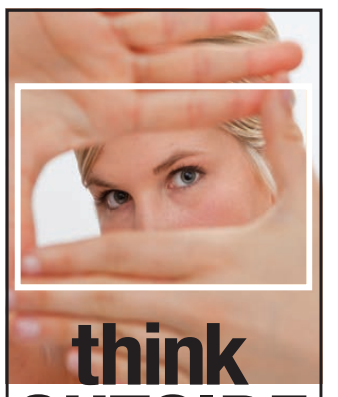
The Holyoke Sun welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to *The Holyoke Sun,* care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to thesun@turley.com. Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered for that Friday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election.

For more information, call 413-283-8393.

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper 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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VETS, *from page 1*

mitment to the initiative and showing a personal connection to the project.

"My father was a proud Vietnam veteran... His heart and his passion have always been, not just with his family, not just with Agawam, but with veterans, and he showed that every day up until the end." Russo then followed his thoughts by revealing that through his father's efforts, the Agawam Veterans Council was established while he battled health complications from Agent Orange exposure, before pivoting to the fortitude that spouses possess and instill to help give service members a sense of motivation to keep fighting and return home, something he saw displayed up close firsthand from his mom.

"When they come back, and they go through things like my father, illnesses, mental illnesses, those spouses—they're the ones that take care of them. They're the ones that stand beside them," Russo said. "I saw it personally in my household, with my mother, Gail, who's here in the front row. She kept my father alive. With all his illnesses, she kept them alive." Lastly, he recalled the moment his mother Gail, told him after his father's funeral—"That's the funeral your father deserved"—which was a perfect bullseye of the project is about honoring every service member with dignity.

"So today is the start to make sure every veteran gets the funeral they deserved," Russo said. "Because this ground is where our country's greatest heroes are buried, and they are where they rightfully belong, and that includes spouses as well for the reasons I just mentioned."



Elected officials standing with a variety of Veterans to celebrate the occasion, before Gov. Healey arrived.

Turley Photos by Brendan Rooney



Gov. Maura Healey delivers the landmark announcement.



State Sen. John Velis (D–Westfield) at the podium.



Agawam City Council President Anthony Russo delivers remarks on why this matters, citing a personal touch.

Historic and Sacred Ground

Agawam Mayor Chris Johnson then connected the past to the present as he recalled how local resident Edward Squazza stepped forward to donate his South Street property after learning the state was seeking a location for a veterans cemetery during the 1990's.

Before praising former State Senate Majority Leader Linda J. Melconian (D–Springfield), crediting her legislative influence with sealing the deal over a competing site in Westover and drawing a direct line between her historic push and Healey's present-day initiative.

"So, by the way of a very chance meeting, I ran across the owner of this parcel. I was out one day looking at properties, and my assessor said we have to send a letter to whoever owns this house because it looks magnificent," Johnson stated. "We sent the letter out; within a week, he showed up in my office and in hand was a copy of an article that was appearing in the newspaper that the Commonwealth was looking to site a veterans cemetery in Western Mass. And at that point it had pretty much almost been decided that it was going to Westover."

Johnson recalled that Squazza shared his desire to help, explaining that one of the biggest regrets of his life was that he didn't serve in World War II because of a farming exemption and family service circumstances. "He said, 'I would love to be able to donate it to be used as the veterans cemetery,'" Johnson said. Days later, once the property was secured, Johnson called Melconian to tour the property, recalling how she initially told him, "Chris, it's just about set to go at Westover," to which he replied, "Linda, just come out and take a walk."

Johnson shared that once Melconian walked up the hill and entered the property, her immediate reaction was, 'What a beautiful place to put a veterans cemetery'—and the rest was history. Melconian then advocated for and procured the location switch from Westover to the current Agawam site, which has served as a final resting place for Western Massachusetts service members for the last 25 years.

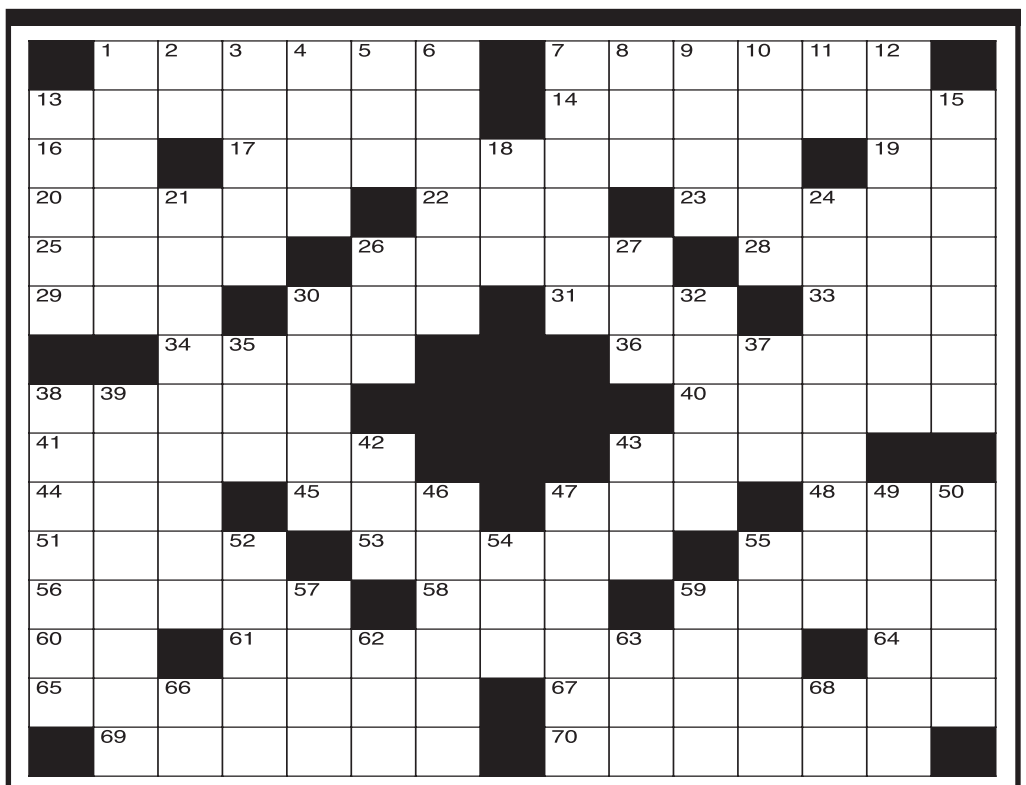
Looking Ahead

In addition, Russo outlined some key aspirations for the project going forward, while noting that it is still too early to pinpoint specific parcels; he shared that he would ideally like to see the cemetery acquire 20 to 40 acres of new land, which could help create a "back entrance" closer to the cemetery's maintenance yard, so that delivery trucks don't have to use the main entrance during funerals, as the maintenance yard is in a corner of the property about 200 feet from South Street. Russo then revealed that when he looked into the expansion concept back in 2023, he was informed that the estimated volume of space across the cemetery in terms of burial was 20% left to accommodate burials; 30% for cremation, as he cited the growing number of aging Vietnam War veterans and those from subsequent eras who will eventually need a final resting place, a point Velis made prior.

It should be noted that while state officials framed the land pursuit with urgency, cemetery workers on site noted that existing burial space is nowhere near running out, despite already housing over 13,000 interments, giving the Commonwealth a comfortable window of time to plan and execute long-term expansion efforts. At the moment, the site occupies a 61-acre parcel, part of which is wetlands, and is bordered along South Street by several 5-to 24-acre lots.

The Agawam Cemetery is one of three government-run veterans cemeteries in Massachusetts. The others are the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Winchendon and the Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne, which Healey described as "sacred places where we honor the brave men and women who served our country."

An official timeline for completing the land acquisition has not been announced or revealed, but officials remain optimistic.



CLUES ACROSS
1. Spiritual leaders
7. Containing salt
13. Fortified wine
14. Edible mollusk
16. Blood type
17. Make a comparison
19. Government lawyer
20. "Game of Thrones" actor Ciaran
22. 8th month of the year (abbr.)
23. Very willing
25. __ ex machina
26. Satisfies
28. New Zealand mountain
29. A doctrine
30. Popular Dodge truck model
31. Dekagram
33. Naturally occurring solid material
34. Company higher-up
36. Villains
38. Cricket frog genus
40. Influential early psychologist
41. Endured
43. Servant
44. You can get stuck in one
45. __ and feather
47. Passive optical network
48. French ballet dynasty
51. Employee stock ownership plan
53. Forming a bottom layer
55. Sound
56. Yankees slugger Judge
58. Dickens character
59. Beloved late sportscaster Craig
60. "The Mount Rushmore State"
61. Sarcastic and critical
64. Atomic #79
65. Longtime Atlanta Braves pitcher
67. Humor
69. Shawl
70. Preliminary assessment of patients

CLUES DOWN
1. Animal disease
2. Commercial
3. Craft supplies
4. Containers
5. A way to save for your golden years
6. Common Arabic greeting
7. Bulged downward
8. Acquired brain injury
9. Lay about
10. Intestinal
11. Not yes
12. In a way, pleased
13. Messianic figure in Islam
15. Resulting from intense conviction
18. Not in
21. Number above the line in a fraction
24. Lawn pest
26. Pouch
27. Ancient language (abbr.)
30. Start anew
32. Wild flower
35. Fourteen
37. Graphical user interface
38. Facing the same way
39. Campaigns
42. Touch lightly
43. "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
46. Violent seizure of property
47. One who supports the Pope
49. Malaise
50. Body fluid
52. Inauthentic person
54. Title of respect
55. Moth genus
57. Central Japan city
59. Silk garment
62. Draw from
63. Automobile
66. A male
68. Powerful government lawyer

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page9

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NEAL, *from page 1*

allowing the congressman a moment of reflection as he embraced his grandchildren. Fitzpatrick revealed this marked Neal's 26th career election victory, tracing his political success from his beginnings on the Springfield City Council and as Mayor of Springfield to now earning his 20th congressional term at age 77.

"Dad, I have witnessed your dedication, commitment and passion for this job since I was a little girl, and it's truly special to see how in awe your grandkids are of you, and tonight we just can't thank everyone for the fight shown during this past election season," Fitzpatrick said.

Neal then took the podium to address his supporters late Tuesday night.

"I want to say thank you to people of the 1st Congressional District of Western and Central Massachusetts, for helping secure our big victory tonight. These are the people who have put their faith in me to represent them in Congress for a long period of time, and it's because of all of you who have been front and center for some of the most consequential moments of our time," Neal said.

He also noted that he earned approximately 75% of the vote in his hometown of Springfield.

"Those are the people who know me best," Neal said.

Now having won reelection, amid the substantial 'Blue Wave' which swept across the nation that same night and resulted in the Democrats officially winning back the House and Senate, Neal looks to regain the gavel and prestigious title as chair of the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, giving him significant influence over tax policy, tariffs and the future of Social Security, all elements he campaigned on from the start.

"Across this country, people have sent a message. They've rejected many of the policies of what we've witnessed over the last few years," Neal said. "They've rejected an agenda that has made life more expensive for working families, threatened access to healthcare, and threatened programs that millions of Americans have come to rely upon."

Reflecting on the political shift, Neal emphasized the practical advantages of holding power.

"I've been part of big minorities, and I've been part of small minorities, and I must tell you, a big majority is to be preferred," Neal told the crowd, expressing confidence in his party's long-term momentum. "That gives us a chance to build a durable governing majority, not just for a presidential election cycle but for decades to come. This shows we can build a governing coalition."

Neal then reflected on the achievements he has brought to his district since being in office.

"When you consider what we've accomplished, the results speak for themselves," Neal said. "I've spent my life working for this district, and there's not a family in Western or Central Massachusetts who has not been impacted positively by the work that I have done, including bringing back billions of dollars to the state of Massachusetts; I helped reopen a hospital in North Adams that lay dormant for the past decade, and I can't forget working to secure over $264 million of federal money to help open the new Holyoke Veterans Home, which was achieved under a PLA-Project Labor Agreement- and it came in under budget and on time."

The congressman then concluded his thoughts by sharing this.

"We're going to fight to restore those ACA credits. We're going to fight to restore funding for Medicaid," Neal said. "And remember, our hospitals are our biggest employers, and we need to push back on what has been done with that big bill that actually gives tax cuts to the wealthiest amongst us while cutting healthcare services for people who really need them. So, we're going to fight to restore SNAP. We're going to rein in this reckless war in Iran. We're going to hold ICE accountable. And I want to give you a bedrock guarantee: We're going to make sure that Social Security is there for all of you as you're entitled to."



A group photo of all U.S. Rep Richard Neal's interns, celebrating the victory.

Turley Photo by Brendan Rooney



Richard Neal



Nadia Milleron

He then shared what he wishes his opponent, Milleron.

"I wish her all the best, and good luck in the future," Neal said, and congratulated her on a hard-fought campaign.

The victory came two weeks after Neal and Milleron faced off in their only debate of the campaign, a 30-minute exchange in which the longtime incumbent in Western Mass discussed his track record, and Milleron tried her best to deliver a final pitch to voters.

Milleron, a native of the Berkshires, was surrounded by friends, family and supporters at her campaign headquarters, just two minutes down Island Pond Road.

Milleron reflected on the rematch and her campaign, which resulted in a second consecutive defeat to Neal.

"I felt we reached out to a lot of people; we had a good ground game, we had a good phone banking, and overall I thought it was organized. But the thing that was different about this time than two years ago, even though we had a much better organization, and a much bigger team, was that Richard Neal lied about me and spent millions of dollars doing it," Milleron said.

She offered claims that through Neal's efforts, voters were led to believe she was pro-MAGA, which Milleron clarified wasn't the case.

"Neal distorted the election because he created a persona for the voters that wasn't real. I'm not MAGA. I'm not a Trump supporter, but it's clear people are justly afraid of Trump, and what he is doing to their quality of life. And so, by falsely associating me with Trump, the voters didn't have a real choice, because they didn't have a real picture of who I was, and so that's how millions of dollars distorts an election, and it destroys our democracy," Milleron said.

When asked where she goes from here, Milleron advocated, "We still need a tax break and we can still get it; we don't have to be elected to get it."

"The people can move on Congress and demand what is really ours: 'our tax money,' and it's being used for our own destruction," Milleron said.

She then added that she's going to press Neal as she continues to find a path forward, decrying "Medicare for All"(MFA), a main component she ran.

"We're going to make sure he supports Medicare for All because he hasn't supported it so far. And that isn't what the people in the district want," Milleron said.

Additionally, she said she's currently planning a rally outside Baystate Medical on Nov. 10, set to begin at 6 p.m., to help bolster her efforts for the MFA cause.

Lastly, Milleron confessed she was grateful for all of her supporters, voters, and constituents who helped keep the congressional bid alive, but admitted she didn't have the financial value to reach the heights Neal did in terms of television marketing, which she alleged resulted in additional "propaganda programming."

Looking ahead, Neal struck an eager tone, telling Turley Publications he was ready to hit the ground running at 10 a.m. Wednesday with a full agenda.

"Well, my first meeting's at 10:00 tomorrow morning, and we're going to do a press availability to reflect upon what has actually happened across the country tonight," Neal said. "So, I intend to keep a full schedule, and I think it's going to be a pretty energetic agenda, as I outlined it here at the microphone just a few minutes ago."

The next U.S. Congress class will be sworn in January 2027.

Even though the victory over Milleron, Neal had a closer-than-expected path to November, as newcomer Jeromie Whalen came within striking distance, garnering 46.3% of the vote during the Sept. 1 Democratic primary compared to Neal's slim margin of 53.7%.

PLAYS, *from page 1*

creation, sound and lighting design, costumes, marketing and more! The HHS Theater Company puts students at the heart of the production.

Admission is by suggested donation: Students: $5, HHS Staff: $10, General Admission: $15. Tickets can be purchased online until November 17. On the day of the performances, tickets will be available for cash only at the door. Online ticket sales and donations are sponsored by MIFA Victory Theatre.

The Holyoke High School Theater Company is a student-centered after-school theater club dedicated to fostering creativity, collaboration, and excellence in the performing arts. Under the leadership of Theater Teacher and Producing Artistic Director Bevan Brunelle, students engage in all aspects of theatrical production—from writing and acting to design and direction—building skills that prepare them for success on and off the stage.

Community support helps the HHS Theater Company continue providing students with opportunities to perform, create, collaborate, and bring live theater to Holyoke. Interested community sponsors can email Ms. Brunelle.

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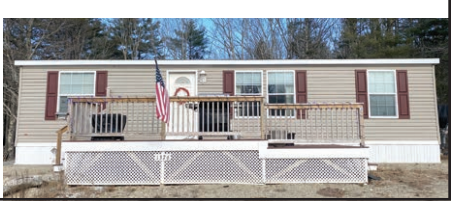
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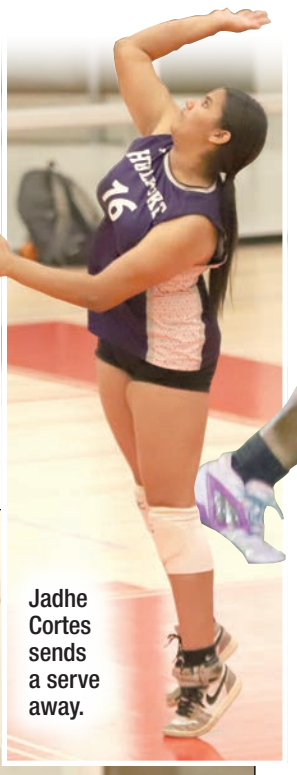
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Spartans sweep Knights in tourney

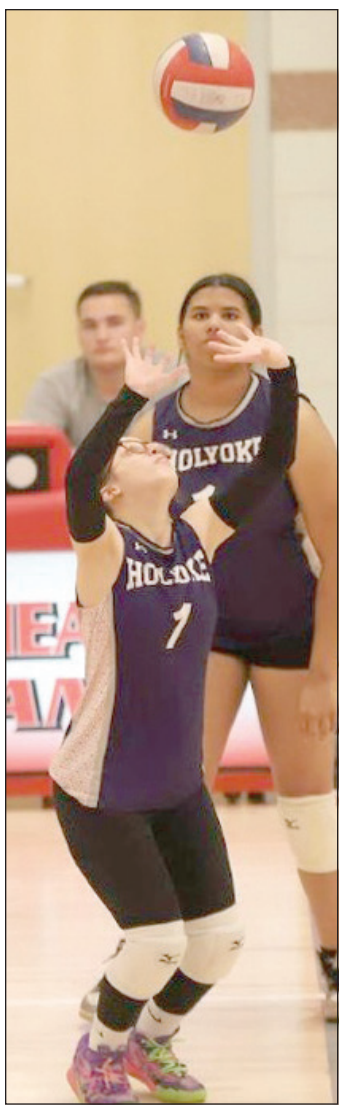
EAST LONGMEADOW – Despite a sub-.500 record, the Holyoke High School girls volleyball team qualified for the Western Massachusetts Class B Tournament.

The Knights had a road matchup against East Longmeadow last Tuesday evening, and they were swept 3-0.

Holyoke lost 25-11, 25-15, and 25-14. Kelcy Brunelle had seven kills and three blocks for Holyoke.



Jadhe Cortes sends a serve away.



Tatiana Gonzalez sets the ball straight up.



Isabella Lachat spikes the ball over the net.



Addison Rodriguez lunges to make a bump.



Kelcy Brunelle spikes the ball for Holyoke.



Jennysis Collado goes low for a hit.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Knights win conference finale

HOLYOKE – Last Thursday evening, the Holyoke High School football team defeated Hoosac Valley 27-8. Georlee Aponte, Darel Sierra-Feliciano, and Jayden Velez all scored touchdowns in the matchup. With Holyoke only at 3-4, the Knights enter non-playoff action on Friday, Nov. 6 against East Longmeadow at 7 p.m.



Georlee Aponte heads into traffic.



Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

The Holyoke defense rushes the quarterback.



Jayden Velez tries to make a run to the right side of the field.



Darel Sierra-Feliciano goes on a rush.



Darek Nunez makes a block.



Parker Brunelle attempts a point-after.

Holyoke Community College Cougars girls soccer team falls in New England Championship game

TAUNTON – Women's soccer saw their season come to an end in the New England championship game on Sunday, heartbreakingly falling to top-seeded Bristol CC. The Lady Cougars put forth one of the women's soccer program's gutsiest performances of all time in the final. Holyoke lost their two regular season matchups against this formidable opponent by scores of 8-0 and 5-0. In Sunday's final, the Cougars battled with grit and determination, keeping the score deadlocked at 0-0 until the 70th minute. Eight minutes after falling behind, Holyoke tied the score 1-1. They conceded a crushing late goal with just two minutes left in regulation, leading to a close 2-1 loss.

Sophomore Emma Allyn (Holyoke, MA / Hampshire Regional HS) scored the Cougars' equalizer and lone tally, calmly burying a penalty kick after being taken down in the box. Allyn made a truly spectacular run with the ball, starting at the midfield line and slashing through defenders all the way to the 18-yard box before being fouled and earning the penalty kick. Freshman Scarlett Mendes (Holyoke, MA / Holyoke HS) was outstanding for Holyoke in the contest, battling tenaciously in the center midfield. Sophomores Samantha Lowe (Ware, MA / Pathfinder Regional HS), Ivelise Aponte Gonzalez (Chicopee, MA / Chicopee HS) and Yanelis Lacen (Chicopee, MA / Chicopee HS) all had strong showings in the matchup.

Women's soccer finishes the season with a 7-3-0 regional record (9-3-0 with forfeits) and a 10-6-0 overall record (12-6-0 with forfeits). The program has played in 21 of the past 22 New England championship games, winning the title on 12 occasions. Four players played their final game for Holyoke and 13 can return to play a second year.

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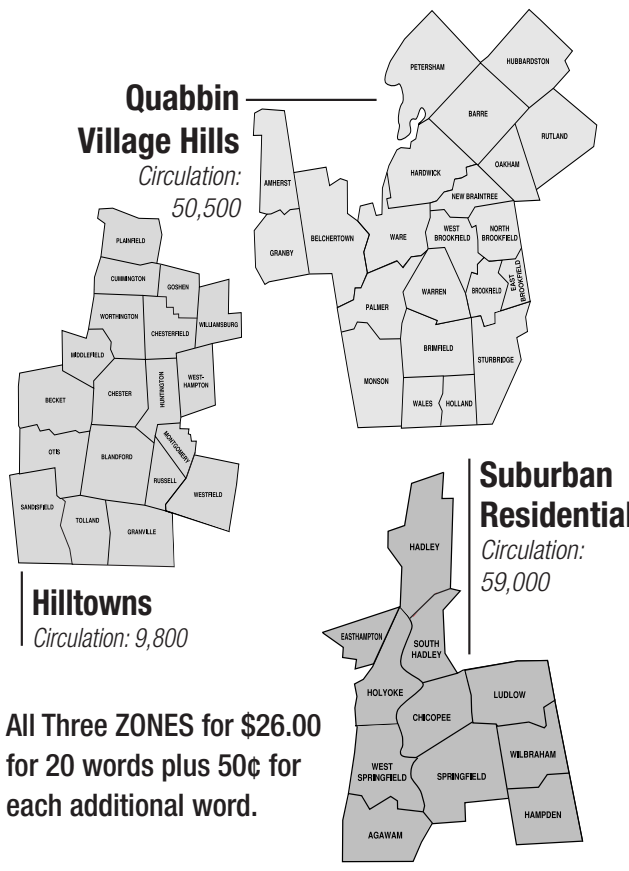
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Free line-cook training classes at HCC begin

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College will be running a free, six-week line-cook training program at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute beginning Nov. 2.

Classes start Monday, Nov. 2, and continue through Friday, Dec. 11. They meet Mondays and Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The program is designed for those already in the restaurant industry who want to upgrade their skills as well as unemployed or underemployed individuals interested in starting new careers.

"We usually have a mix of young people entering the job market for the first time and people who are re-entering the job market, looking for a second career," said Paul Sheehan, assistant project coordinator for culinary arts programs. "The course is perfect for anybody who's looking for a job and has a passion for food and the dining industry."

All classes meet in person at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute at 164 Race St.

Participants will learn all the essential competencies they need to become successful line cooks: knife skills; how to prepare stocks, soups, sauces, desserts, poultry, fish and meat; culinary math and measurements; moist and dry heat cooking methods; as well as workplace soft skills, such as building a resume and searching for jobs.

Offered as part of HCC's Business & Workforce Development division, the line cook course is free to qualifying applicants.



Singing group set to perform

NORTHAMPTON – Pioneer Valley Cappella, led by music director Scott Halligan performs its fall 2026 program, "Pathfinding" at 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 20 at Wesley Methodist Church, Hadley and on Nov. 21 at the Unitarian Society of Northampton and Florence, Northampton. The program is a meditation on the paths we follow, the paths we regret, and the paths we discover on life's journey. The program includes a North American premier: "Crude (oil)," by English composer Bernard Hughes, text by Andrew George. The program closes with "Untraveled Worlds" by Paul Halley, which sets text from "Ulysses" by Alfred Lord Tennyson. "The music drives us forward and urges us to continue seeking, exploring, pathfinding."



trailer Trash to perform Nov. 6. *Submitted photo*

Trailer Trash performs benefit concert for Harmony House

CHICOPEE – The popular local band Trailer Trash is performing a concert to benefit Harmony House of Western Massachusetts, a nonprofit home providing compassionate end-of-life care and companionship to hospice patients in need. The concert will be on Friday, Nov. 6 at the Portuguese American Club located at 149 Exchange Street in Chicopee. Tickets can be purchased in advance online for $20 or at the door for $25. Doors open at 6:15 p.m., with the concert commencing at 7 p.m. Known for their high-energy performances, Trailer Trash will bring their modern country sound to the stage for an evening of music and dancing while raising funds to sustain the work of Harmony House. The event will also include raffles, food for purchase from Pizza Lino with a portion of proceeds being donated to Harmony House, and a cash bar.

The event is supported by local sponsors, including headlining sponsor Yankee Home. Additional sponsorship opportunities are available at www.HarmonyHouseWMA.org/trailertrashconcert or by emailing development@HarmonyHouseWMA.org.

Community members can also get involved with Harmony House by volunteering. If you might be interested in providing care and companionship to our residents, organizing special projects to engage our residents, or supporting our fundraising efforts, please email admin@HarmonyHouseWMA.org. To learn more, please visit www.HarmonyHouseWMA.org.

Public Notices

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
413-748-7758
Docket No. HD26A0041AD
In the matter of:
Dallas Colton McCullough
CITATION
G.L. c.210, Section 6

To: Sierra Dawn McCullough

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 **Tawnee Renee Gonzalez and Harry Enrique Santiago Jr. of Chicopee, MA** requesting for leave to adopt said child and that the name of the child be changed to

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 if you are indigent. Contact an Assistant Judicial Case Manager or Adoption Clerk of the court on or before the date listed below to obtain the necessary forms.

IF YOU DESIRE TO OBJECT THERETO, YOU OR YOUR ATTORNEY MUST FILE A WRITTEN APPEARANCE IN SAID COURT AT: **SPRINGFIELD** ON OR BEFORE TEN O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING (10:00 AM) ON: **11/24/2026**

WITNESS, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court

Date: October 13, 2026
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
10/30, 11/06, 11/13/2026

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Volunteer tax preparers sought

The AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Program provides free tax preparation assistance to taxpayers, with a special focus on seniors. Our program is seeking new volunteers to prepare returns for the upcoming tax season. We need to grow our volunteer pool to continue to complete more returns in 2026. Our need is greatest in Chicopee, Holyoke, Belchertown, and Springfield but anywhere in Hampden, Hampshire or Franklin Counties volunteers are needed. We prepare taxes at 20 Senior Center sites in the three county area.

You don't need to be a tax expert to volunteer. If you have basic tax knowledge, maybe you have prepared your own tax returns we provide extensive training for volunteers. AARP provides training, IRS Certification and ongoing support for you to be successful.

Interested or have questions please visit www.aarp.org/taxaidevolunteer for more information and to register. You can also contact Daniel Welch, Tax-Aide District Coordinator at dnl.welch@comcast.net

Make a difference and help your neighbors get the free tax assistance they need.

Vendors needed for fundraising event

AGAWAM – Agawam Junior High School is currently seeking vendors & crafters for an upcoming fundraising event.

AJHS Washington DC 2027 - Club will be hosting a Community Craft and Vendor Fair. This fundraising event is to help defer the cost of travel for students travelling to Washington DC in June of 2027. The fair will be Thursday, Nov. 12 from 5 to 8 p.m. in our cafeteria.

If you are a crafter or vendor please consider joining us. Please see Agawam Junior High School webpage for details and registration form.

If you are a shopper - please save the date to kick off your holiday shopping and supporting local businesses.

This event is open to the community so please share with friends and family.

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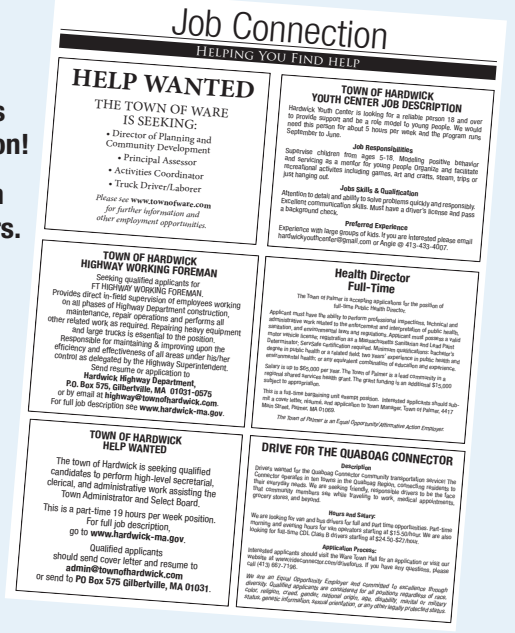
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The Holyoke Sun
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One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

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.

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HOME, from page 1

veterans receive the dignity and respect they deserve."

The modern facility offers a comprehensive array of on-site services within an eight-story, 234-bed footprint. Powered by geothermal and solar energy and outfitted with occupancy sensors, the home balances advanced sustainability with comfort, featuring fireplaces in every residential living room alongside a full suite of modern amenities—including a specialized memory care unit and a 40-person adult day health program designed to support both residents and community veterans.

Officials also shared that full site construction is scheduled for completion in summer 2028. Initial residents will be welcomed on Nov. 10 following final VA inspections, with the phased move-in process allowing staff and residents to acclimate to the modernized living quarters while final landscaping and exterior work continue toward full campus completion.

A Sacred Promise Forged in Heartbreak

Yet beneath the celebration ran a quiet, somber current, as speaker after speaker echoed a sacred promise forged in heartbreak: *"We need to do better."* The confession bridged a painful past six years ago during the COVID-19 pandemic—which stole the lives of 76 veterans, sparking intense investigations, widespread accountability, and a complete system overhaul—to a present anchored in hope.

First to take the podium was Holyoke Mayor Joshua Garcia.

"After the heartbreaking failures of the past, our community needed a facility worthy of that sacrifice," Garcia stated. "Our veterans deserve better, and government had a responsibility to deliver, and I can say with confidence that today, they delivered."

Garcia highlighted that the high-quality facility was constructed ahead of schedule and under budget using union labor under a Project Labor Agreement.

"This is the kind of outcome that taxpayers should expect for major public investments," Garcia added.

Governor Healey then took the podium and looked out across a room filled with family members, caregivers, local and state officials, union representatives, and citizens, as many held a collective breath, waiting for a sigh of relief.

"This undertaking was born out of a terrible tragedy," Healey told the crowd. "As I look out at family members who have lost loved ones here, I know this is a very bittersweet occasion. I want you to know that the commonwealth holds your loved ones dear, and always will. They are forever part of this reimagined home... Their presence, their spirit, their being permeates through all the hallways and rooms of this building, and they are not forgotten."

Healey then revealed that to honor the memories of those lost, an outside memorial garden will officially be added to the entrance in summer 2028 when full site construction wraps up.

"They are forever part of this reimagined home, both through the beautiful memorial garden and through so much more," Healey said, noting she hopes families take comfort in knowing their loved ones inspired the project. "The building's greatest asset is the people inside it, and I can think of no greater responsibility of government than to do right by them."

U.S. Senator Ed Markey (D-Mass.) noted that the opening answered a call to action that rallied the community and government following the outbreak. Directing attention to the $263.5 million federal investment that he, U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, and U.S. Rep. Richard Neal helped deliver for the climate-resilient structure.

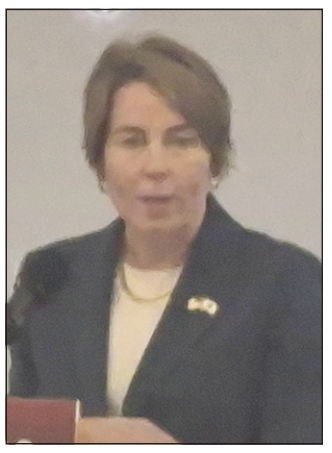
Markey highlighted the necessity of turning legislative intention into reality.

"A vision without funding is a hallucination," Markey said, quoting Neal. "Today feels like the dawn of a new era, and this building is going to carry the veterans of our state for the entirety of the 21st century. This is one of those moments that should give us all hope."



A group photo of elected officials, Gary Rome, and a proud veteran celebrating the occasion.

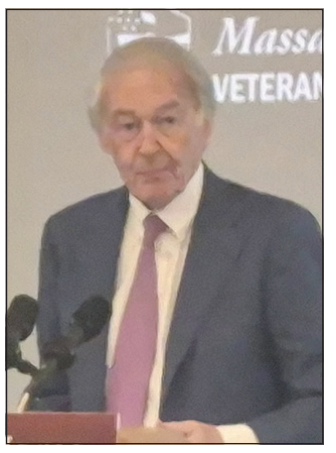
Turley Photos by Brendan Rooney



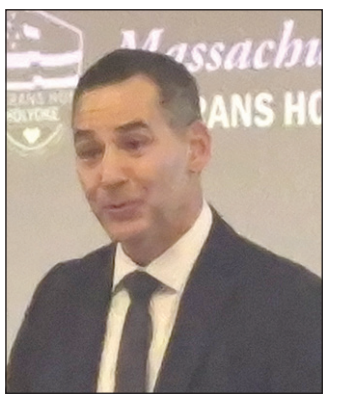
Gov. Maura Healey at the podium delivering remarks.



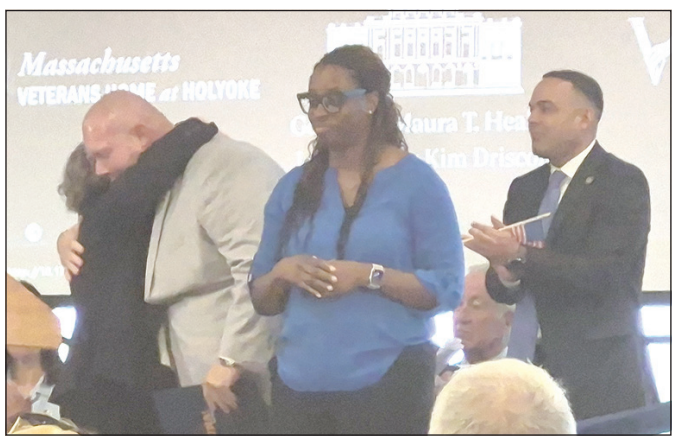
State Sen. John Velis (D-Westfield) also spoke.



U.S. Sen. Ed Markey (D) was also a keynote speaker.



Veterans Services Secretary Eric Goralnick discusses the importance of the newly established building.



Colton Andrews, president of the Western Massachusetts Building Trades Unions, embracing State Rep. Pat Duffy before taking the podium to reflect on the achievement.

Neal acknowledged the grief still carried by families affected by the pandemic, noting that while the losses can never be erased, they will always be remembered and honored.

"We can never adequately address the issues that happened here, what occurred in those very difficult months," Neal said. "But we can also point out to the future, and the goal was to restore the Veterans Home to the place of honor it deserves, not only in our minds but also in our hearts, and I feel we've done that."

Shift in Mission and Care

Governor Healey also highlighted that the commitment to excellence is already yielding results, revealing that the facility earned a perfect rating from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) during its annual audit, making it one of the best in the nation.

Building on that achievement, Veterans Services Secretary Eric Goralnick emphasized that transitioning from the title of a "soldiers' home" to a "veterans' home" marks a deliberate effort to embrace the inclusive nature of modern military service. The facility is designed to care for "soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines,

guardians, coast guardsmen. All are welcome … your family members, and it's a new chapter for us," Goralnick said. Highlighting the comprehensive team of nurse practitioners, certified nursing assistants, physical and occupational therapists, dietary professionals, social workers, maintenance staff, administrators, and mental health professionals, Goralnick brought his perspective as a medical professional to the podium.

"As an emergency medicine physician, I recognize that there's the building, but there's the people, and it's the people that make this engine run," Goralnick stated.

Transitioning from clinical leadership to legislative oversight, State Sen. John Velis (D-Westfield)—a veteran and co-chair of the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs—emphasized that the home represents a solemn pledge to care for those who served.

"This building, what this says to me, is part of that in saying, 'Now we got your back,'" Velis said. "It is a testament to our moral fabric—how we treat our veterans, how we treat our service members—and today is a testament to that."

Built by the Community

Colton Andrews, president of the Western Massachusetts Building Trades Unions, emphasized that the project offered union workers a deeply meaningful opportunity to honor veterans through their craft, as he directed attention to the contingent of skilled tradesworkers who spent years constructing the campus.

"This is about much more than opening a new building," Andrews said. "It is about keeping a promise to the men and women who wore our nation's uniform that their service and sacrifice will always be remembered."

Echoing that pride from a local and regional perspective was State Rep. Pat Duffy (D-Holyoke), who underscored that while the physical landmark rests in Holyoke, its reach will extend across the entire Commonwealth.

"There's a large delegation here because this home—this is a regional asset. It's a statewide asset," Duffy stated. "I have watched this building rise literally from my backyard, and it's just an incredible testament to what we owe the veterans and the staff here."

A New Chapter Begins

The moment then arrived that all were waiting for as Healey joined a line of elected officials around a bold silk ribbon. With a single, sharp cut by Healey, the doors were formally christened—symbolizing not just a grand opening, but the start of a new chapter in state care for veterans. In the case of the original building, which was built in 1949 and opened in 1952, officials revealed it is set to be demolished following the resident transition to make way for expanded parking and campus green space.

For Holyoke and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Thursday stands as proof of a promise kept: that the men and women who served will forever receive the dignity, comfort, and reverence they earned, while never forgetting a tragedy that should have never transpired.

EARLY DEADLINES
FOR ADS, CLASSIFIEDS & LEGAL NOTICES

Thanksgiving will bring early deadlines for all legal notices to run in TURLEY PUBLICATIONS the week of November 23-27, 2026.

Thursday, Nov. 19 at 2 PM for November 26 issue
• CLASSIFIEDS FOR ALL PAPERS •
• Country Journal • The Register • Wilbraham-Hampden Times

Friday, November 20 at 2 PM for November 26 Issue
• Agawam Advertiser News • Sentinel • Quaboag Current

Monday, November 23 at 2 PM for *November 26 Issue*
• The Journal Register • Ware River News • Barre Gazette

Tuesday, November 24 at 2 PM for *November 27 Issue*
• Town Reminder • The Holyoke Sun • Chicopee Register

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PAWZAAR ANNUAL CRAFT FAIR

PAWZAAR CRAFT FAIR
Saturday, November 14th
10AM - 3 PM

Bring a pet food donation and receive a raffle ticket!

St. Catherine's Church – 1023 Parker St., Springfield

This community favorite event features over 40 vendors from around the Pioneer Valley, loads of fabulous raffles, pet merchandise, a bake sale, and an exciting special raffle. This event is FREE to the public, so come on out and enjoy the festive atmosphere, shop for unique gifts, and support a great cause.

Proceeds benefit the animals in need at Thomas J. O'Connor Animal Control & Adoption Center.

Foundation for TJO Animals