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Board reviews Walmart proposal

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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HOLYOKE – Last Tuesday evening, the Holyoke Planning Board started the site review process for the proposed Walmart Supercenter that would be located on Northampton St. where K-Mart formally was located.

Holyoke's K-Mart was one of the last in the franchise to close down and the site has been vacant now for a few years.

Cypress Equities, which is planning to develop the site, is proposing to demolish the K-Mart building, which is more than 200,000 square feet. It would be replaced with a 184,900 square foot Walmart Supercenter.

Supercenter usually includes both a retail and a grocery store, and that is a part of the proposal. Cypress is proposing that the new Walmart would have all the main features, retail, grocery, a garden center, as well as vehicle-side pickup for online orders. There would also be a drive-thru pharmacy for customer convenience.

For parking, there would be about 700 parking spaces with 27 handicapped accessible spaces, 10 EV charging stations, and up to 60 spaces dedicated to online order pickup.

The public hearing was opened last week on the site plan and the meeting was also held by Zoom. The Planning Board adjourned last Tuesday's meeting without a vote.

A few concerns were raised at the public hearing, including by residents in the nearby Elmwood neighborhood who are concerned that the new store would increase traffic significantly, especially on the weekend.

Helen Norris, a former city councilor, spoke during

See BOARD, page 8



Submitted photos

Above, Jacki Reardon, recently named the 2027 O'Connell award winner, poses with past recipients of the award. Right, Reardon stands with Parade President Stephanie Joyce.

Reardon to receive O'Connell award



HOLYOKE – On Tuesday night, the St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke announced its latest award winner.

The committee named Jacqueline "Jacki" Reardon of South Hadley as the recipient of the 2027 George E. O'Connell Award. The award is presented annually to a longstanding member of the Committee who has made significant contributions to the fundraising efforts of the Parade and/or the Association.

Reardon is no stranger to work on the committee.

A member of the St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke since 2000, Reardon has devoted more than 25 years to supporting the organization and the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade. Through her leadership, enthusiasm and tireless volunteerism, she has become an integral part of the Committee and its many traditions. Her dedication to fundraising, in particular, has played a vital role in helping ensure the continued success of Parade Weekend.

The success of the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade relies heavily on the generosity of sponsors, donors and the countless volunteers who dedicate their time and talents to the Committee's fundraising efforts. Reardon has been a steadfast presence at fundraising events throughout the years, consistently giving her time, energy and support. As co-chair of the Past Presidents' Raffle, she plays an important role in one of the Committee's longstanding fundraising traditions. Her commitment to this effort, along with her willingness to volunteer and support fundraisers throughout the year, helps provide the financial resources necessary to bring Parade Weekend to life. Her contributions reflect the dedication and collaborative spirit essential to sustaining one of the region's most celebrated traditions.

> *"Jacki exemplifies the dedication, generosity and commitment that make the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade possible."*
>
> **– Stephanie Joyce, President of the St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke**

Reardon's contributions to the Committee span numerous leadership roles and initiatives. She received the Gallivan Award in 2010 and served as Committee President in 2015. She currently chairs the Sash Committee and serves as co-chair of the Past Presidents' Raffle and the Parade Reviewing Stand. She has also served as the South Hadley Liaison for more than 20 years, strengthening the connection between the community and the annual celebration.

A longtime South Hadley resident, Reardon is a graduate of South Hadley High School and the Henry W. Bishop III Memorial School of Nursing. A licensed registered nurse who also earned her CNOR certification, she enjoyed a distinguished 50-year nursing career, serving as an operating room nurse at several area hospitals, including Providence, Shriners, Holyoke and Wing Memorial. Following her hospital career, she continued her work in healthcare with Viability, supporting its Adult Family Care program.

Her dedication to service has extended well beyond her professional career. Reardon was affiliated with the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) for many years, holding several leadership positions within the organization. She also served the Town of South Hadley as a precinct warden and election worker for many years. In addition to her work with the Parade Committee, she is an active member of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians and the South Hadley Lions Club. She regularly lends her support to Committee masses, events and other volunteer initiatives.

"Jacki exemplifies the dedication, generosity and commitment that make the Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade possible," said Stephanie Joyce, President of the St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke. "Fundraising is the backbone of our Parade, and the contributions of our sponsors, donors and volunteers are absolutely critical to the success of Parade Weekend. Jacki has been there year after year, not only helping lead important fundraising initiatives like the Past Presidents' Raffle, but also volunteering her time

See AWARD, page 8

Veterans Home addresses modernization needs

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

HOLYOKE – Last month, 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 on Oct. 29.

The modern facility stands in sharp contrast to its ill-fated predecessor, which is slated to be demolished soon to make way for additional parking and greenspace.

The current project budget stands at $465 million, representing one of the largest public investments in Western Massachusetts history. It is 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.

Spanning eight stories, the 234-bed facility features 212 single rooms—each coming in at 150 square feet with private bathrooms and large windows overlooking the Paper City—along with 11 double-occupancy rooms. True to modern comforts, the rooms come equipped with built-in storage, desks, and 55-inch televisions. Designed around the VA's small-house model, the building organizes living spaces into smaller, home-like communities with shared dining, living, and gathering areas to promote independence, connection, and personalized care.

The facility also houses an array of upgraded clinical and rehabilitation spaces, including a dental suite, a salon, a hobby room, a chapel, a great room, and a central kitchen. For specialized care, a dedicated 30-bed memory care unit provides expert support for veterans with cognitive impairments.

Outside, residents will have access to four therapeutic gardens and walking areas designed to support physical and emotional well-being. A poignant new Memorial Garden at the campus entrance will honor veterans who passed away at the Home, especially those lost during the COVID-19 pandemic.

It's rooted in local heritage and advanced sustainability, the foundation and outdoor retaining walls are constructed from authentic Goshen stone. Built to LEED Gold certification standards and net-zero energy ready, the building features a geothermal heating and cooling system, solar energy integration, occupancy sensors, high-efficiency windows, and natural ventilation.

Lastly, according to officials, veterans and staff are transitioning into the new building in phases to ensure continuity of care and minimize disruptions. The second phase will introduce a 40-person adult day health program to serve both residents and veterans living in the surrounding community, with full project completion anticipated in summer 2028.

As previously initial residents have been welcomed in as of 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.

Youth arrested in connection with school lockdown

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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HOLYOKE – Police Chief Brian Keenan confirmed last Friday a 14-year-old was arrested for allegedly causing a lockdown at Sullivan Middle School.

According to a press release from the Holyoke Public Schools, Sullivan School students and staff were placed in lockdown for 12 minutes this morning while Holyoke Police investigated a reported threat. Police determined that there was no threat to Sullivan School and lifted the lockdown at 11:20 a.m.

In general, lockdown procedures are initiated when there is a threat—or possible threat—to safety and well being on the school campus or in the nearby community. These procedures are intended to keep students, staff, and other school occupants away from possible threats until law enforcement and/or safety personnel have determined the school is safe. During a lockdown, no one is permitted to enter or leave the school other than law enforcement personnel.

"Please know that our school staff followed our crisis protocols to assure that school safety was maintained throughout," said Sullivan Principal

See YOUTH, page 8

Velis delivers letters to veterans home residents

HOLYOKE – On Nov. 10, Senator John C. Velis delivered letters written by students from across the Hampden and Hampshire District to residents of the Veterans' Home at Holyoke in recognition of Veterans Day. In the weeks leading up to the holiday, Senator Velis and his team collected more than 2,000 letters from local students to be shared with Veterans' Home residents and deployed service members around the world.

Now in its seventh year, this annual tradition continues to connect young people with those who have served our country. This year's effort included participation from 24 different schools in Southampton, Chicopee, Agawam, Holyoke, Westfield, & West Springfield.

"It is incredibly meaningful to see our community come together each year to honor Veterans Day and help teach the next generation about the service, sacrifice, and commitment of our military veterans," said Velis. "These letters serve as a powerful reminder that our veterans and service members are appreciated and remembered. Whether they are residing at the Veterans' Home or serving overseas, these messages of gratitude help strengthen the connection between our community and those who have served our nation."

Velis shared that students of all ages, from preschool through high school, contributed letters, handmade cards, and artwork expressing appreciation for veterans and active-duty service members. The annual effort has now resulted in thousands of messages of gratitude reaching veterans and military personnel over the past seven years.



Submitted photo

State Sen. John Velis continued his tradition of bringing letters to the Holyoke Veterans Home on Veterans Day.

This year, Senator Velis's office received so many letters that they also shared them with other organizations as well, including residents at Beaven Kelly Rest Home in Holyoke who are Veterans, and with Jillian Battles' Bags of Bravery project. Which is a yearly effort to assemble and deliver care packages filled with toiletries, books, small food items, and essentials for local veterans and active-duty service members.

UCCH to sell handmade pies

HOLYOKE – Thanksgiving is right around the corner, and Thanksgiving is not the same without at least one pie for dessert. They're so delicious but can be so cumbersome to make. If you're looking for tasty desserts on a time crunch, the United Congregational Church of Holyoke has got the solution for you: treat your table and your heart with a homemade pie that gives back during the Thanksgiving Pie Fundraiser.

Now through Friday, Nov, 20, you can order handmade pies for $15 each by calling the church office at 413-532-1483 or emailing office.uccholyoke@gmail.com. Choose between Double Crust Apple or Pumpkin. Pies can be picked up between Monday, Nov. 23 and Wednesday, Nov. 25 between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the United Congregational Church of Holyoke, 300 Appleton Street, Holyoke, MA.

All proceeds will go to the PB&J Lunch Bag Program at Kate's Kitchen, helping feed neighbors in need right here in our community.

Let's share the love, one slice at a time. And no, we don't mind if you claim you baked it yourself.

The United Congregational Church of Holyoke is an Open and Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ. We welcome all individuals, regardless of where they are on their journey. If you'd like to learn more about UCCH, please visit our website at www.uccholyoke.org, find us on Facebook or Instagram, or call our office at 413-532-1483 Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

'Christmas on High Street' returns

HOLYOKE – The third annual edition of "Christmas on High Street" will be held Sunday, Dec. 6, from 12 to 5 p.m.

Located at 414 High Street, "Christmas on High Street" features free gifts for children, food, hot chocolate, raffles, and holiday entertainment.

Event founder Jazmin Acevedo said, "Christmas on High Street is more than a toy giveaway. It is a celebration of kindness, unity, and the incredible things we can accomplish when our community comes together."

A toy drive that began in October has collected gifts for giveaway. Last year, with the support of businesses, organizations, and individuals, organizers distributed more than 600 toys. The event is collecting unwrapped toys through December 5. They can be dropped off at City Hall, outside the Mayor's Office; Deja-vu Nightspot, 414 High Street; El Paraiso Colombiano, 351 High Street; Key Bank, 378 High Street; City Pizza, 420 High Street; Cuba Supermarket, 439 High Street, and Dunn & Phillips Law Office, 185 Belmont Avenue, Springfield.

Those who prefer to make a monetary donation through a nonprofit organization can contributed to Springfield Together, Inc. (EIN: 83-2443347).

"Christmas on High Street" is a collaboration of Springfield Together, Inc., Wheels for Hope, Awaken the Love Holyoke, and community partners.

'Frog Bank' display debuts at museum

HOLYOKE – Hop over to Wistariahurst to celebrate the unveiling of a historic display. Burlingham Schurr, the naturalist who created Wistariahurst's famous Frog Circus, also created another intricate taxidermy display: the Frog Bank. The Frog Bank has been housed in Wistariahurst's archive for many years, but this December it moves to a display case in the museum's Great Hall! The Frog Bank unveiling event celebrates this new addition to the museum with frog themed activities and treats. Mayor Joshua Garcia will also be there to unveil the display.

This event is perfect for children and families, and those who enjoy a little whimsy. Don't miss this froggy morning of fun on Friday, Dec. 11 at 10:30 a.m. This event is free and open to the public.

Wistariahurst extends a special thank you to Mark and Pamela Rustico for constructing the Frog Bank's display case, our volunteers for adding legs to the case and staining it, and to Fred Zinn for creating two whimsical frog art pieces for the Frog Bank and Frog Circus.

Local author Karen M. Blanchard to present interactive book talk at library Dec. 1

HOLYOKE – Local author Karen M. Blanchard will present an interactive book talk featuring her book, "Life at the Table: Everyday Family Stories from Mealtime to Memories," on Tuesday, Dec. 1 at 11 a.m. at the Holyoke Public Library, 250 Chestnut St.

The free event will feature selected readings from Blanchard's short-story collection, which explores the laughter, family traditions, celebrations, difficult conversations, and everyday experiences that unfold around the family table.

Breaking from traditional readings, the program invites audience members to reflect on their family memories. Through guided questions and conversation, participants will be encouraged to recall the people who gathered around the dinner table, the traditions they shared, and the moments that became lasting memories.

"When I wrote this book, I wanted to capture the ordinary moments that happen around our family tables," Blanchard said. "What I've discovered is that when people hear one of my stories, they often begin remembering their own. That's what makes these conversations so meaningful."



Blanchard will pose questions like: What did the table you grew up around look like? Who gathered there? What family traditions do you remember? What conversations have stayed with you throughout your life?

Blanchard believes that sharing memories helps preserve family histories and encourages connections between generations.

"So many of our family stories are never written down or shared," Blanchard said. "Sometimes all it takes is a familiar memory or a simple question to bring those stories back. I hope people leave thinking about a story of their own that they want to share with someone."

Blanchard is a longtime nonprofit professional with more than 35 years of experience in human services and community leadership. She is also the founder of KB Consulting & Creative Works, where she provides nonprofit consulting and develops programs centered on communication, storytelling, and connection.

The event is free and open to the public. Copies of "Life at the Table" will be available for purchase and signing.

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USDA INSP. FROZEN TURKEY BREAST 4-8 LB. $2.39 lb
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Tax preparers volunteers 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. 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.

HCC graduate Nov. 30

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College will honor its fall semester graduates with a special recognition event on Monday, Nov. 30.

The college's fourth annual Fall Graduate Reception runs from 5:30-7:30 p.m. on the HCC main campus, 303 Homestead Ave., beginning in the Leslie Phillips Theater for the official ceremony and continuing with a reception in the Campus Center.

HCC initiated the fall ceremony in 2023 to more deeply engage graduates who complete their degrees and certificates in December by the end of the fall semester.

According to the HCC Registrar's Office, about 250 students will be fall 2026 semester graduates. Many of them will transfer to four-year schools for the spring 2027 semester.

The goal of the family-friendly event is to recognize HCC's newest graduates and strengthen their connection to HCC. Fall 2026 semester graduates are also invited to participate in the college's 80th Commencement ceremony on June 5 as members of the Class of 2027.

During the first part of the event in the Leslie Phillips Theater, Registrar Allison Wrobel and President George Timmons will offer introductory remarks, followed by student speakers. HCC alum Trudy Monson '97, president of the HCC Alumni Council, will welcome the fall graduates as new members of HCC's Alumni Association.

About 6:15 p.m., students and their families will be directed to the Campus Center for appetizers, activities, and photo opportunities.

HMC earns an 'A' hospital safety grade

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Medical Center earned an "A" Hospital Safety Grade for the third consecutive grading round by The Leapfrog Group, an independent national nonprofit watchdog focused on patient safety. Leapfrog assigns an "A", "B", "C", "D" or "F" grade to general hospitals across the country using evidence-based measures of patient safety focused exclusively on errors, accidents, injuries and infections.

"We are very proud of our team for maintaining this excellence in quality for three consistent grading rounds," said SpirosHatiras, President and CEO of Holyoke Medical Center. "This achievement proves that the physicians and staff at Holyoke Medical Center are fully committed to ACE-ing it, providing Awesome Care Every time to our patients."

"Earning an 'A' Hospital Safety Grade reflects Holyoke Medical Center's commitment to putting patient safety first," said Leah Binder, president and CEO of The Leapfrog Group. "This recognition is a testament to the dedication of your hospital leadership, clinicians and staff who work every day to prevent medical errors and protect patients from harm."

The Leapfrog Hospital Safety Grade stands as the only hospital ratings program focused solely on preventable medical errors, infections and injuries that kill more than 500 patients a day in the United States. This program is peer-reviewed, fully transparent and free to the public. Grades are updated twice annually, in the fall and spring.

To explore Holyoke Medical Center's full grade details and to find valuable tips for staying safe in the hospital, visit HospitalSafetyGrade.org.

HCC college magazine picks up two awards

HOLYOKE – The Connection, the college magazine of Holyoke Community College, received two awards at the most recent regional conference of the National Council of Marketing and Public Relations.

HCC won silver Medallion awards for submissions in two categories: Print Wild Card and Long-Form Writing. A stand-alone reprint of the cover article from the Fall 2025 issue of the magazine, "More Than Money: 50 Ways to Give, Give Back And Reconnect To HCC," won silver in the category of Print Wild Card. The cover story in the Spring 2026 issue of the magazine, "For the Love of Dogs," a profile of HCC alum Elizabeth Staples, won silver for Long-Form Writing (stories longer than 800 words).

"For the Love of Dogs" was written by freelance writer Megan Tady of Easthampton and edited by Connection Editor-in-Chief Chris Yurko, who also developed and edited the "More Than Money" piece. The magazine is designed by graphic designer John Devanski.

"Every issue of the magazine is an intense collaboration," said Yurko, HCC media relations manager. "Nobody can do it alone. Megan is an outstanding writer who did a great job capturing the life and work of Elizabeth Staples, founder of The Good Dog Spot daycare and grooming facilities in Chicopee and Northampton. The entire staff of the HCC marketing and development departments worked together to come up with 50 ways alumni can get involved with the college that do not include writing a check, and John Devanski put them all together in an inviting display."

The Connection also won two NCMPR Medallion awards in 2025, a gold for Best Magazine Large-Scale (more than 16 pages) and a silver award for Long-Form Writing.

NCMPR represents marketing and public relations professionals at community and technical colleges in the United States and beyond. The NCMPR Medallion Awards recognize outstanding achievement in design and communication in each of NCMPR's seven districts. This year's District 1 conference was held Oct. 14-16 in Buffalo, New York.

HCC resides in District 1, the largest, which includes Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Quebec, and the United Kingdom.



Submitted photo

HCC's college magazine recently won a pair of awards.

Eversource warns community of threatening calls, emails, scams to customers

From phony calls threatening to shut off power to bogus emails and even imposters at your door pretending to be employees, scammers are more sophisticated every day. Electric, gas and water customers around the country are regularly targeted by utility scams. While their deceitful tactics may vary, the goal is always the same – to steal money and personal information from unsuspecting people. In recognition of Utilities United Against Scams (UUAS) Day on Nov. 18, Eversource is joining utilities across the country to remind customers to be vigilant and recognize the signs of suspicious behavior, especially with the busy holiday season approaching. The biggest red flag to be aware of is being asked to pay with a gift card, prepaid debit card or Bitcoin – Eversource will never contact a customer with these types of requests.

"These schemers have perfected their tactics, and they can be incredibly convincing – applying enough pressure to rush the customer into paying before they have time to check if the person is legitimate," said Founder of Utilities United Against Scams and Eversource Senior Vice President for Customer Operations and Digital Strategy Jared Lawrence. "We remind customers, if something doesn't feel right or sound right, and you suspect someone is trying to scam you – don't be afraid to hang up or shut the door on the person and then call us immediately at 800-286-2000 to verify the status of your account. If anyone asks you to buy gift cards and send them pictures or read them the numbers on the cards, you're almost certainly being scammed."

With the holiday season right around the corner – a time when scam activity typically intensifies – UUAS recommends the "Slow Down, Verify, Stop the Scam" framework:

• **Slow Down:** If a request for payment is unexpected or creates panic, end the conversation. Taking a moment to pause is the best way to avoid a scam.

• **Verify:** Contact Eversource directly using the verified phone number on a recent bill or the energy company website to check the true status of the customer's account. Never use a phone number provided by the suspected scammer.

• **Stop the Scam:** If a customer suspects a scam, they should not engage. Hang up, shut the door, or delete the message. Report the incident immediately to Eversource, law enforcement, and the FTC at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

Customers are also reminded:

• Never immediately pay unless you are already certain that you have a shut-off pending, regardless of what the caller knows about the account or offers as an incentive.

• Eversource representatives never require customers to go to a department or grocery store to make a payment.

• Verify the caller is legitimate by asking for basic information. Eversource representatives will always be able to provide the name on the account, the account address and the exact past due balance.

• Eversource does not solicit door-to-door or on the phone on behalf of third-party energy suppliers.

• All Eversource employees carry photo identification; field workers wear clothing with the company logo and drive company vehicles.

• Customers should never provide personal, financial, or account information to any unsolicited person on the phone, at the door, or online, even if they seem legitimate.

• Customers who are scheduled for disconnection due to nonpayment receive several written notices, including an alert on their bill with information on how to maintain their service.

• Customers should not search for Eversource's phone number or website through a search engine. The company's contact information, including the website, is on all Eversource bills.

• Do not click on links or call numbers that appear in unexpected emails or texts. Clicking on a link can make a computer infected with malware, including viruses that can steal information and compromise the computer.

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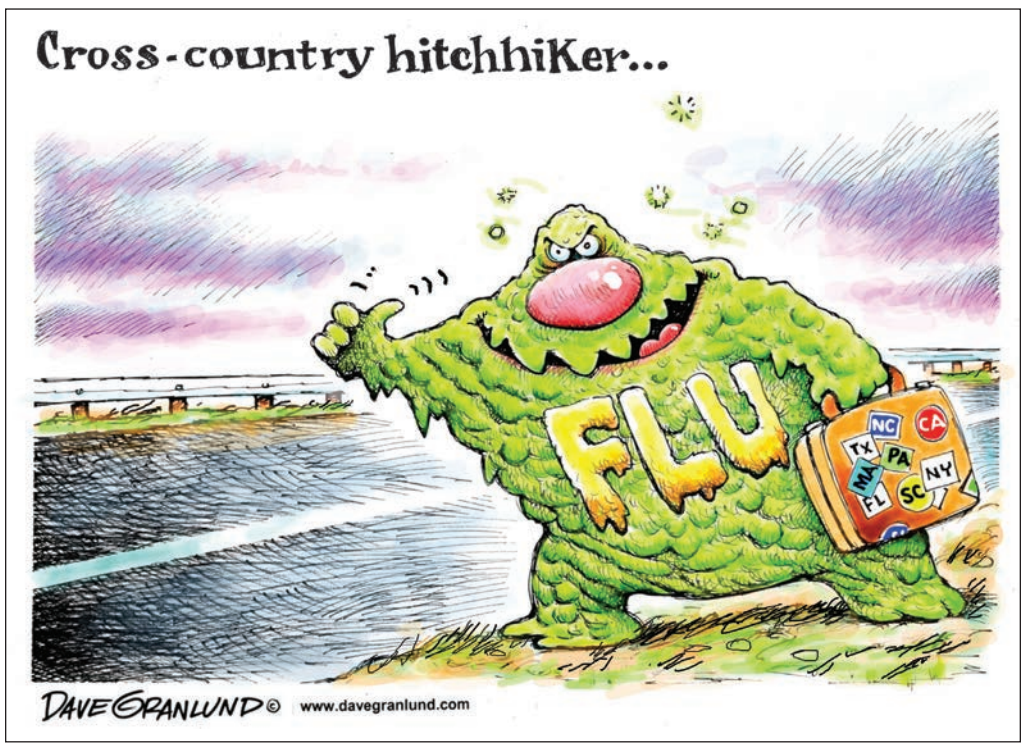
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Guest Column

Decorating for the holiday stuck in the middle

In the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



This is a funny time of year when holidays start to meld together.

It shouldn't be this way, but it is. Any given street might have left-over Halloween decorations at one house while its neighbor is already decked out for Christmas, missing Thanksgiving altogether.

So why don't we get creative for this holiday stuck in the middle. Read on for some decorating ideas straight from the archives.

The cornucopia, a horn-shaped receptacle filled to the brim with fruit and grain, has long been a symbol of abundance, and for decades now it has been associated with the Thanksgiving holiday.

Try filling your own cornucopia with whatever natural materials suit you. Wicker cornucopias are easily found at craft stores this time of year.

You can go for "easy" by simply using fruit as your filler. Set the cornucopia in place on a pretty tray in the middle of the table and let the fruit spill out.

You can also mix fruit and grains for a more authentic look – some Indian corn and wheat sheaves will do the trick. Other types of dried plant material look great in a cornucopia as well.

If muted tones are your fancy, let the kids scour the yard for pinecones, dried grasses, seed pods and the like. Or, you could always purchase a fall bouquet of everlastings and use what you need to make a more colorful arrangement.

Here too, dry floral foam will come in handy as a base for your stems. You need not discard the cornucopia after Thanksgiving is over – dress it up with some red berries and pine boughs for an instant Christmas decoration.

I saw this idea online and had to pass it along. Take small, "Jack be Little" pumpkins and carefully carve out the area around the stem so that you can place a votive candle on top. Use a hurricane glass to cover the votive, securing it with floral "U" pins.

Often times you can find sconce globes of varying sizes and ornamentation at thrift stores; these would work just as well and be unique for sure. Sugar pumpkins and gourds would also make great candle holders.

For several years now I have wanted to create a wreath comprised completely of small ears of ornamental corn. This year might just be the year I do it!

According to the experts, the trick is a good base. Most designers recommend using a straw wreath form, the kind available at craft stores.

You could also wrap moss around a wire wreath form and use that as your base.

You will end up gluing the individual ears of corn to the base, lining up the tips of the corn as you go. Vary by length and by color to make a visually appealing decoration. Unless you grow your own corn, it will be a small investment to create the wreath, so be sure to protect it from rodents during the offseason. I store edibles like this in a covered container on a shelf in my bedroom closet, but any location that is mouse-proof would work.

I am excited as the next person to celebrate Christmas, but I try to instill in my kids that it is important to "be in the season you are in." Find joy where you are without looking ahead (or behind).

Happy Thanksgiving one and all!

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.



Guest Column

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor



I got an overpayment notice from Social Security; What should I do?

Dear Rusty:

I received a letter from Social Security saying they overpaid me $12,703 in SS benefits.

The letter said "We reduce Social Security benefits if you receive a government pension. We reduce benefits by two-thirds of the amount of your pension. Your benefit is less than two-thirds of the pension. For this reason, we cannot pay you."

FYI, I do receive a pension based on work not covered by Social Security taxes. My problem is that I don't fully understand this. This could be correct, but it doesn't seem right to come back wanting money I didn't ask for.

I appreciate your time in getting back and letting me know if there is anything else I could be doing, or if they are entitled to go ahead and get the SS payments back.

Signed: Confused about Owing Social Security

Dear Confused:

From what you have shared, it appears that Social Security has determined that you were subject to a rule called the "Government Pension Offset" (GPO). FYI, the GPO was a provision which reduced Social Security spousal and/or survivor benefits for anyone who had a "non-covered" government pension (that is, a pension earned without contributing to Social Security).

It's likely that SS paid you full benefits, but that the GPO should have reduced (or eliminated) the benefits they paid, had they known about your "uncovered" government pension. And that is likely the source of the $12,300 overpayment notice you received.

However, the GPO rule was repealed in January 2025 and no longer applies. In other words, those who have a "non-covered" government pension (a pension earned without contributing to SS) are now no longer subjected to reduced benefits under the GPO.

The repeal legislation also provided for retroactivity back to January 2024, so the notice you received from Social Security was probably referring to SS benefits you received prior to 2024. If that is the case, then the notice you received is likely accurate and would need to be repaid. However, if the notice is referring to spousal or survivor benefits you received after December 2023, then it would be in error.

The best way to find out would be for you to file an appeal to Social Security, e.g., a "Request for Reconsideration" (form SSA-561), which will cause an independent review within Social Security to see if you are, indeed, required to repay those SS benefits, or whether you should pay something less (or nothing at all).

Just remember that when you actually received the SS benefits in question is the key factor – if you had a non-covered government pension while receiving SS spouse or survivor benefits before 2024, then the overpayment notice you received is likely valid. If not, an appeal as I described above should resolve the issue for you.

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.

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.



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Great travel health products for seniors

By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column

Oh, for the days of carefree travel in those younger years. Throw a clean T-shirt and toothbrush in your backpack and you were good to go.

Seniors may not be able to travel that simply nowadays, but they can still drive, fly and cruise with much less hassle. The travel goods industry has responded to the graying of the travel population by developing lightweight, easy-to-use products that take into consideration physical strength, security and medical needs.

I've asked Ron Levine of www.UnitedLuggageDealers.com to select some products that seniors or those with other health issues will find helpful. Here are seven of the best:

Flex Gel Memory Foam Seat Cushion

Airline seats aren't getting any more comfortable. But seat cushions are often a pain to travel with and keep track of. Just ask anyone who's left their cushion in the gate area or the airport lounge.

The Flex Gel Memory Foam Seat Cushion folds up into a convenient size when you're ready to get up and go. You can even snap the handle onto your suitcase. About $35.

Sockwell Compression Socks

Sitting for a long time, besides being uncomfortable, can be hazardous to your health. Many doctors recommend compression socks to minimize swelling, reduce leg fatigue and lower the chances of blood clots.

That doesn't mean they have to be ugly. Sockwell Compression Socks for men and women come in a variety of styles and colors. They also feature a cushioned sole, arch support and seamless toe, so your feet will like them, too. About $30/pair

Victorinox Lightweight Hardside Carry-On

At only 6.4 pounds, this right-sized suitcase easily fits inside overhead storage and is easier to lift than other suitcase models. It provides effortless maneuverability, no matter the load inside, and comes equipped with an expansion system to stretch your packing space.

It also includes a zippered anti-scratch pocket to safely store your electronic devices and a built-in lock. About $425.

FRIO Case Large Pen Insulin/GLP-1 Wallet

More medications are coming as injectables these days. Keep them safe in this insulated wallet that cools without any need for an ice pack. The cooling properties come from the evaporation of water and keep its low temperatures for over two days, even in challenging environments.

It protects up to five medication pens or six 10ml vials of insulin and syringes. About $37.

5. Baggallini Anti-Theft Bag

This gender-neutral crossbody bag keeps your necessities organized and safe. It features slash resistant panels, a double-cable cut-resistant strap, locking zippers and RFID-protection.

It also has a pocket for your passport and a grommet so you can plug in or charge your phone without opening it. And all of this comes in a convenient 5.25 inches by x 7.5 inches. $70-$110.

Secrid RFID Wallet

Its slim profile makes this wallet perfectly into every pocket. The open exterior is cut extra wide to hold cards, banknotes and receipts. The card protector mechanism allows you to slide out cards with one simple motion, while the aluminum casing protects your cards from bending, breaking and unwanted wireless communication. About $110

Talus Smooth Trip SafeGuard Medication Organizer

Organizing medications for travel can be a challenge. This lockable, slash-resistant Talus organizer secures your medications while keeping

See HEALTH, page 5



HCC exhibit explores intersection of printmaking and civic engagement

HOLYOKE — A new exhibition at Holyoke Community College's Taber Art Gallery explores the connection between printmaking and civic engagement from the 1960s to the present.

"Collectively Pressed," open now through Dec. 17, presents works by Emory Douglas, a graphic artist and member of the Black Panther Party in the 1960s; the Guerrilla Girls, a group of anonymous women artists dedicated to fighting sexism and racism; the See Red Women's Workshop, a feminist silkscreen collective from England; Tré Seals, founder of Vocal Type, a foundry that creates fonts inspired by minority cultures and protest movements.

"The artists in this exhibition are icons in the world of art and culture for their dedication to use art to shed light on injustice and openly criticize power structures built and designed to exploit people," said Rachel Rushing, director of the Taber Art Gallery. "When I feel despondent, and I'm tempted to think my work doesn't matter in the face of overwhelming suffering and fear, these are the artists I look up to."

Ths show also features the work of current HCC printmaking students.

"At its core, the printed image is about democratic communication, making this show a fitting nod to the recent U.S. semiquincentennial – the signing of the Declaration of Independence," said Rushing.

The Taber Art Gallery, located off the lobby of the HCC Library on the second floor of the HCC Donahue Building, is free and open to the public Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during regular school sessions.

Applications 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 long-standing 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."

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

- **Dec. 27:** Deadline to submit application to enter the Grand Colleen Pageant
- **Dec. 27:** Colleen Orientation 2 p.m.
- **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.

Santa headed for Holyoke Mall

HOLYOKE – Santa Claus is set to make his return from the North Pole to Holyoke Mall on Friday, Nov. 20, with a special arrival event Saturday, Nov. 21. Children, families, and pets are invited to whisper their Christmas wishes to Santa from opening day through Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24 at his temporary holiday home in Café Square.

A Full Calendar of Holiday Magic and Special Events:

- **Santa's Grand Arrival:** The magic begins at 10:45 a.m. on Saturday November 21 at the Red Entrance near Round 1. Guests are encouraged to arrive before 11:00am to gather for Santa's arrival to make sure they don't miss his grand entrance featuring Marcotte Ford, the Holyoke Police and Fire Departments, and the Hampden County Sheriff's Office motorcycle and mounted patrol units. Then, kick off the holiday season with festive fun at Santa's Village in Café Square from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Activities include free balloon art by Brie's Balloons, a special performance by Colby Academy of Dance, and of course photos and visits with Saint Nick himself.
- **Daily Visitation Hours:** Santa's schedule begins on Friday, Nov. 20 from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Hours expand as the holiday inches closer and full details are available here. Reservations are strongly encouraged and can be made by visiting whereissanta.com. Visitations to see Santa are free, but cellphone photos are prohibited.



Submitted photo

Santa is expected to arrive at Holyoke Mall next week

- **Pet Photo Nights:** Mondays and Tuesdays from Nov. 23 through Dec. 14, between 4 and 7 p.m. Proud pet parents can unleash holiday cheer by bringing their furry or feathered friends to meet Santa Claus. Reservations are required online under the "Pet Night" designation.
- **Santa Cares Sensory Visitation Event:** Sunday, Dec. 6, from 9 to 10:30 a.m. This private experience is held during mall off-hours to provide a calm, sensory-friendly environment. The set will feature dimmed lighting and no background music, allowing children of all abilities to interact with Santa comfortably. Online reservations are required under "Sensory Santa".

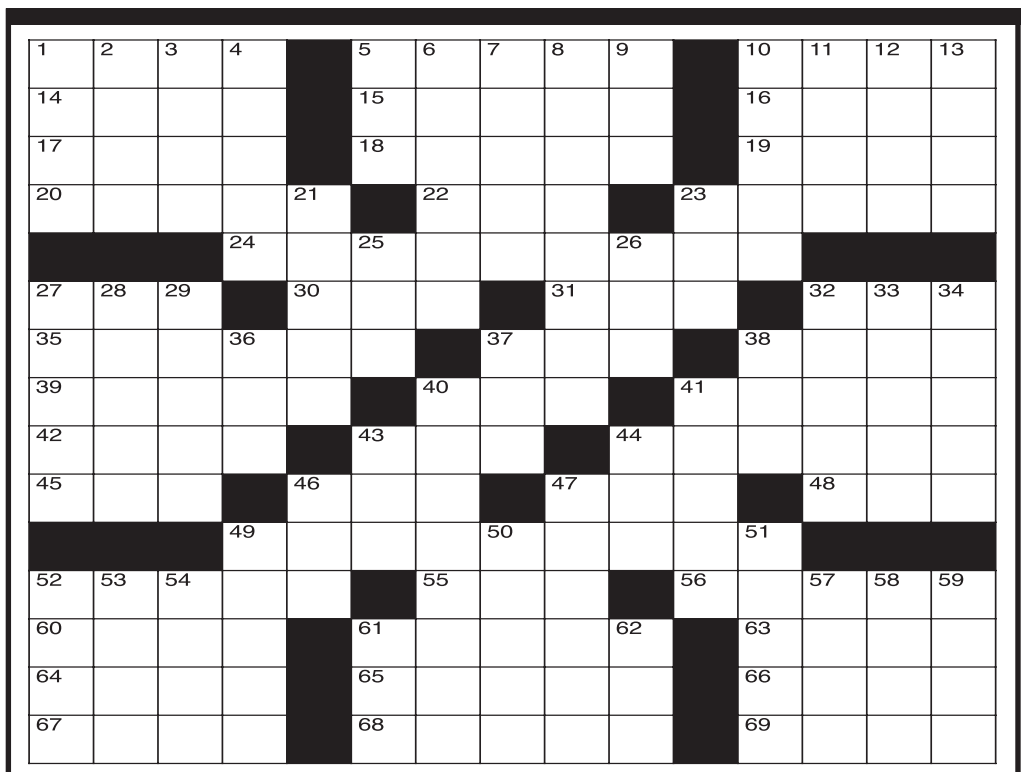
HEALTH, *from page 4*

them accessible in your carry-on or travel bag.

Its eight elastic straps hold bottles and tubes. There are zippered mesh compartments and eight BPA-free pill pockets. About $25

You can find these items and more locally at Leather World, www.ShopLeatherWorld.com. They are also available at independent travel goods retailers online. These stores are becoming rarer, so it is important we support them. The fall and holiday travel seasons are upon us. Upgrade your travel experience with smart accessories designed with you and your health in mind.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, a Monson resident, is a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate. She is the author of several books on advocacy and founder of Nurse Advocate Entrepreneur, which equips medical professionals with the knowledge and skills to start their own advocacy businesses. Contact her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com.



CLUES ACROSS

1. Perceive a sound
5. Pretends to be
10. Type of guitar
14. Actor Idris
15. A citizen of Iran
16. Creative
17. Keep under control
18. Weight unit for precious stones
19. You better call him
20. Fanatical
22. Male cat
23. Jewish spiritual leader
24. One who takes risks
27. A way to nail
30. Cool!
31. Progressive policy supporter
32. "Losing My Religion" rockers
35. Step-shaped recess
37. Round globular seed
38. Somewhat
39. Butterhead lettuces
40. Color at the end of the spectrum
41. Lines where fabrics are sewn together
42. Dodgers great Hershiser
43. Floor covering
44. Traveled aimlessly
45. Rocker Stewart
46. Body art
47. Congressman (abbr.)
48. No seats available
49. Categorizes
52. Iraq-Syria border town
55. Ballplayer's tool
56. Type of sword
60. Baseball team
61. Upper bracts of grass
63. Italian seaport
64. Ancient city in Syria
65. Shoelace tube
66. U. of Miami mascot is one
67. South American nation
68. "Nebraska" director Alexander
69. Upper body part

CLUES DOWN

1. German courtesy title
2. Ancient Greek City
3. Skin care manufacturer
4. A long-legged frog
5. Photo
6. Delivered a speech
7. Lute in northern Indian music
8. Decorated
9. Take a seat
10. Bottom layer
11. Type of horse
12. Ticket part
13. Defunct currency of Guinea
21. Challenges
23. Popular BBQ food
25. Subway rodent
26. By way of
27. Shady garden alcove
28. City in Egypt
29. __ and flowed
32. Large quantities of paper
33. Eurasian wheat
34. Act incorrectly
36. Layer of water right above sediment (abbr.)
37. Al Bundy's wife
38. Ocean
40. Large, round root
41. Sound units
43. Knock
44. Soak in water
46. Hot drink
47. A cotton fabric with a satiny finish
49. Rumanian city
50. Come back from being down
51. Vaccine developer
52. Canadian law enforcers
53. Wings
54. "Perry Mason" actor Raymond
57. Small fry
58. __ Clapton, musician
59. Gamble
61. Semi-liquid food
62. Consumed food

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 8

CHURCH DIRECTORY



Blessed Sacrament Parish
Rev. Duy Le
frduyle@blessedsacramentholyoke.org
1945 Northampton St., Holyoke
PARISH RECTORY: 413-532-0713
OFFICE HOURS:
Monday - Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
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
Monday Evening: 6 p.m.
www.blessedsacramentholyoke.org
FaceBook: @bspholyokema

First Baptist Church
Pastor Theresa Temple
1976 Northampton St., Holyoke
(413) 533-7728
firstbaptistchurchholyoke@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.

Our Lady of the Cross Parish
Very Rev. Michael Pierz
Email: pastor@ourladyofthecross.com
Holy Cross Ave., Holyoke
WEEKEND MASS:
Saturday: 4 p.m.
Sunday: 7:30 a.m., 9 a.m. (Polish), and 10:30 a.m.
DAILY MASS:
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(9 a.m. on legal holidays)
Reconciliation
Monday-Saturday: 8 a.m.
Saturday: 3:15 p.m.
Anytime by Appointment
DEVOTIONS:
Monday - Saturday
Divine Mercy Chaplet: 7:50 a.m.
Rosary: 8:05 a.m.
Parish Offices are located at:
15 Maple St., Holyoke
Monday - Friday: 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
(413) 532-5661
parish@ourladyofthecross.com

St. Peter's Lutheran Church
Rev. Debora Stein
34 Jarvis Ave., Holyoke
Office: (413) 536-3369
Office: stpetersholyoke@gmail.com
Pastor: revdebma@gmail.com
Website: www.stpetersholyoke.org
Social media:
facebook.com/stpetersholyoke
OFFICE HOURS:
Monday and Thursday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Friday, 12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
WORSHIP:
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Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. -
on Facebook Live.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
The Rev. Canon Joel Martinez
485 Appleton St., Holyoke
413-532-5060
Office@StPaulsholyoke.org
StPaulsHolyoke.org
Instagram:
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)

First Lutheran Church
1810 Northampton St.
Holyoke, MA 01040
Every Sunday at 9 a.m.

Your Community Church

HCC opens registration for winter, spring 2027 classes

HOLYOKE – Registration is now open for Wintersession and Spring 2027 semester classes at Holyoke Community College.

HCC's 10-day Wintersession term begins Monday, Jan. 4, and ends Friday, January 15. The Spring 2027 semester begins Tuesday, Jan. 19.

Students can earn up to four transferable credits by taking Wintersession classes in anthropology, communications, criminal justice, conflict resolution and mediation, economics, environmental science, geography, management, mathematics, nutrition, psychology, and sociology.

Most Wintersession classes are offered entirely online.

Full 15-week spring semester classes begin Jan. 19. HCC will also run three accelerated spring flex start sessions: Flex Start I classes begin Jan. 19 and run for seven weeks; Flex Start II classes begin Monday, Feb. 1, and run for 12 weeks; Flex Start III classes begin Monday, March 22, and run for seven weeks.

A community college education is now free for most Massachusetts residents who have yet to earn a bachelor's degree.

"The state's Free College program provides an exciting opportunity for eligible students to attend college without the concern or weight of how to pay for it," said Mark Hudgik, HCC dean of recruitment, admissions, and financial aid. "There has never been a better time to enroll."

Eligible students who want to earn a certificate or degree need only to complete the standard HCC application, complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) for the 2026-2027 school year, and register for at least six credits (typically two classes).

Students who were admitted for the fall 2026 semester but unable to begin classes for any reason do not need to reapply for spring. They can make an appointment with the HCC Advising Center to register for classes by going to hcc.edu/act.

"Our admissions counselors, academic advisers, and financial aid staff are available to make sure prospective students get all the assistance they need," said Hudgik.

Class schedules for both Wintersession and Spring 2027 semester classes can be found on the HCC website: hcc.edu.

To enroll, please go to hcc.edu/admission

Wistariahurst Museum 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 storytime, 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.

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, Nov. 26, except for Planet Fitness, which will be open from midnight to 2 p.m., and Round 1, which will be open from 10 a.m. - 2 a.m. The center will reopen from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Black Friday, Nov. 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 Nov. 20 for visits and photos in Café Square, with his Grand Arrival Event taking place on Nov. 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.

Bethany celebrates Singing Christmas Tree

AGAWAM – Bethany Assembly of God invites the regional community to add Christmas cheer to their holiday season by attending the 50th Annual Singing Christmas Tree, taking place Dec. 4 to 6 and Dec. 11 to 13.

These special Golden Anniversary performances are free to the public and will be hosted in Bethany's auditorium at 580 Main Street in Agawam.

Under the direction of Dr. Randal Quackenbush — who previously produced and directed the award-winning Singing Christmas Tree in Sacramento, California — this landmark production combines powerful music with dynamic theater.

Performers: Features an 80-voice choir, full orchestra, and a live children's choir.

Production Values: Includes dramatic presentations accompanied by theatrical lighting and special effects.

Milestone: Celebrating 50 years of community tradition in Western Massachusetts.

Performance Schedule

Fridays (Dec. 4 and Dec. 11): 7 p.m.

Saturdays (Dec. 5 and Dec. 12): 6 p.m.

Sundays (Dec. 6 and Dec. 13): 3 p.m. and 6 p.m.

Admission is free. For additional details or inquiries, call (413) 789-2930.

Florence Bank awards $30,000 multi-year grant to Habitat for Humanity

FLORENCE– Florence Bank is pleased to announce it has awarded a $30,000 multi-year gift to Franklin Hampshire Habitat for Humanity to assist with the construction of multiple home projects. In addition, the Bank has provided $120,000 in financing for the construction of two homes in Pelham, Massachusetts.

The multi-year gift and construction financing underscore Florence Bank's longstanding commitment to Franklin Hampshire Habitat for Humanity, formerly known as Pioneer Valley Habitat for Humanity.

"Providing first-time homeowners with affordable housing options is important to us," said Matt Garrity, president and CEO of Florence Bank. "We're proud to team up with Franklin Hampshire Habitat for Humanity to provide brand-new, energy-efficient homes."

A ceremonial wall-raising was held for the two Pelham houses on October 5, welcoming the new homeowners and celebrating the construction project. Florence Bank Vice President and Small Business Lender Callie Flanagan helped secure the construction financing and volunteered at the Pelham project.

"It was very gratifying to help build a project that the Bank also helped fund. A very full-circle and feel-good moment," said Flanagan.

Bank team members also volunteer on construction sites around the county, doing everything from swinging hammers and running table saws, to painting and installation. This year, the Bank had teams that helped at the now completed home in Florence, and the two new homes in Pelham.

"Over the course of our 22-year partnership, Florence Bank has provided over $140,000 in financial support, supported the growth and retention of our volunteer force, and created a matching fundraising challenge among other initiatives," said Amy Landry, Director of Resource Development for Franklin Hampshire Habitat. "We are so very fortunate for Florence Bank's high level of responsiveness to the critical need for affordable homeownership."

Habitat for Humanity International is global nonprofit with a mission to build affordable housing for families who may not qualify for traditional bank mortgages. Franklin Hampshire Habitat operates with five staff members, and Landry says the organization is largely volunteer driven.

BABY'S FIRST CHRISTMAS

Turley Publications, Inc.



Kelsie Smith
January 11, 2026
Parents: John & Carolyn Smith, Palmer
Grandparents: Theodore & Susan Smith, Ware
Joseph & Audrey Jones, South Hadley

Turley Publications would like to help you show off the newest member of your family this Christmas...

FOR FREE!

Mail to:
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Palmer, MA 01069
Attn: Jamie Joslyn
Include a self addressed/ stamped envelope if you would like the picture returned or email photo to:
jamie@turley.com
with subject line:
BABY'S FIRST.
This offer is available to all babies born in 2026.
Pictures will be published the week of December 23-25, 2026.

Baby's Name: _____
Birthdate: _____
Parents' Names: _____
_____
Parents' Town of Residence: _____
Grandparents' Names & Town of Residence: _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
Telephone #: (not to be printed - for office use only) _____

Please check the newspaper you would like your announcement to appear.

- ❑ Agawam Advertiser News
- ❑ Barre Gazzette
- ❑ Chicopee Register
- ❑ Country Journal
- ❑ The Holyoke Sun
- ❑ Journal Register
- ❑ Quaboag Current
- ❑ The Register
- ❑ Sentinel
- ❑ Town Reminder
- ❑ Ware River News
- ❑ The Wilbraham-Hampden Times

Deadline for photos and forms is Thursday, December 4, 2026

Send Us Your Community Winter Events

Turley Publications will print your Autumn event FREE OF CHARGE in our Winter Fest Supplement which will be published January 2027. Total circulation of 85,000 which reaches over 200,000 readers in the Pioneer Valley.
Event Should Be Non-Profit & Open to the Public.

FREE Calendar Listings Reaching over 200,000 Readers in the Pioneer Valley

Event Name _____
Date/Time _____
Location _____
_____
Description _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
Cost _____
Contact name & phone number for more information _____
_____

Deadline for Calendar submissions Dec. 31

MAIL YOUR LISTING INFORMATION TO:
Turley Publications, Attn: Jamie Joslyn, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069
or email* them to: jamie@turley.com
***Be sure to indicate "Winter Event" in the subject line of your email.**

sports@turley.com @turleysports acebook.com/turleysports

SPORTS

A **TURLEY** PUBLICATION ▌ www.turley.com S[illegible]US YO[illegible]ONS www.sports.turley.com

Tigers to host Knights on Thanksgiving Day

HOLYOKE – Last year on Thanksgiving morning, South Hadley High School continued it strong showing on the holiday with another win against Holyoke High School. South Hadley has just one loss against the Knights since the two teams started playing each other on Thanksgiving. This time, the Tigers scored big with a shutout 33-0. Griffin Soderbaum had 129 yards passing with three touchdowns. Noah Hambley ran for 161 yards for the Tigers in the win.

This year, the two teams will gather at South Hadley High School for another Battle of the Bridge holiday matchup. The Tigers enter the game with a big advantage, winning eight games this year, including a 56-0 shutout of Holyoke during conference play on Oct. 15.

Holyoke went 3-6 this season, including three regular season wins. But injuries have hurt later in the season and Holyoke has had a hard time scoring during the past few weeks, including two nonplayoff losses to East Longmeadow and Longmeadow where the Knights were shut out.

South Hadley fell in the first round of the Division 7 State Tournament to Rockland, but rebounded to beat SICS in Week 10.

Kickoff between the two teams is at 10 a.m.



Jose Feliciano attempts to make a catch.

Previous Scores

HOLYOKE VS. SOUTH HADLEY
South Hadley leads series 7-1
2025: South Hadley 33-0
2024: South Hadley 16-14
2023: South Hadley 20-6
2022: South Hadley 60-36
2021: Holyoke 36-30
2020: No game - COVID
2019: South Hadley 50-26
2018: South Hadley 28-20
2017: South Hadley 34-21

2026 Schedule

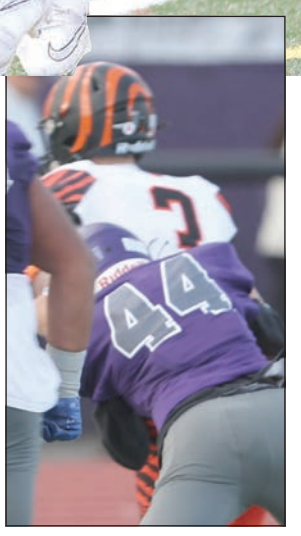
HOLYOKE FOOTBALL (3-6)
Saturday, Sept. 12 – Holyoke 6, Chicopee Comp 0
Friday, Sept. 18 – Northampton 20, Holyoke 7
Thursday, Sept. 24 – Holyoke 14, Agawam 6
Friday, Oct. 2 – Lee 50, Holyoke 6
Friday, Oct. 9 – Easthampton 51, Holyoke 14
Thursday, Oct. 15 – South Hadley 56, Holyoke 0
Thursday, Oct. 29 – Holyoke 27, Hoosac Valley 8
Friday, Nov. 6 – East Longmeadow 46, Holyoke 0
Friday, Nov. 13 – Longmeadow 33, Holyoke 0
Thanksgiving Game
Thursday, Nov. 26 – at South Hadley 10 a.m.

SOUTH HADLEY FOOTBALL (8-2)
Friday, Sept. 11 – South Hadley 47, Northampton 0
Friday, Sept. 18 – South Hadley 35, Agawam 0
Friday, Sept. 25 – South Hadley 38, Chicopee Comp 0
Saturday, Oct. 3 – South Hadley 49, Hoosac Valley 14
Thursday, Oct. 8 – South Hadley 34, Pathfinder 0
Thursday Oct. 15 – South Hadley 56, Holyoke 0
Friday, Oct. 23 – Lee 52, South Hadley 6
Friday, Oct. 30 – South Hadley 8, Easthampton 6
Thursday, Nov. 5 – Division 7 First Round –
=Rockland 41, South Hadley 0
Thursday, Nov. 12 – South Hadley 22, SICS 0
Thanksgiving Game
Thursday, Nov. 26 – vs. Holyoke 10 a.m.



Devin Velez attempts to make a tackle.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



Gabriel Centeno-Feliciano takes down a ball carrier.



Jesus Morales goes for the tackle.



Thomas Daisy makes a block on the line.



Lyshad Wilson looks to block a pass attempt.





File photos

Kelcy Brunelle from Holyoke High School was one of the players named to the Volleyball Hall of Fame's High School All-Star Game, which was held earlier this week at Holyoke Community College.

Volleyball all-stars announced by Hall of Fame

HOLYOKE – The International Volleyball Hall of Fame (IVHF) will honor 78 of Western Massachusetts' top high school girls volleyball players at the 14th IVHF Girls All-Star Showcase in a game that took place on Tuesday, Nov. 17. The evening features two three-set matches and an awards presentation at Holyoke Community College's Bartley Center, 303 Homestead Avenue, Holyoke.

Girls high school volleyball coaches from across Western Massachusetts nominated and voted for the players. The selections represent 30 schools, with 25 players earning First Team honors, 25 earning Second Team honors and 28 receiving Honorable Mention.

Longmeadow leads all schools with six selections, including a showcase-high four on the First Team. East Longmeadow, Ludlow, Pioneer Valley Christian Academy and Springfield Central each have five honorees. Belchertown, Minnechaug and Mount Greylock follow with four apiece.

"There's something special about earning the respect of the coaches who spent the season figuring out how to play against you," said George Mulry, Executive Director of the International Volleyball Hall of Fame. "One of my favorite parts of the showcase is seeing players who competed on opposite sides of the net get to be teammates for a night.

The Second Team All-Star Match opened with three sets. Then, the Hall of Fame presented IVHF All-Star Awards to all First Team, Second Team and Honorable Mention selections. The evening concluded with the three-set First Team All-Star Match.

All-Stars from the region included: Belchertown's Cassidy MacLean, Kaiya Cavanaugh, and Olivia Skora, Chicopee Comp's Brielle Bennett, Holyoke's Kelcy Brunelle, Ludlow's Caitlyn Peczka, Ella Lariviere, Madelyn Goncalves-Korny, and Hayden Morin, Minnechaug's Nehir Elcin and Haley Powers, and South Hadley's Grace Matyszewski.

Dakin offering discounted adoption fees

SPRINGFIELD – Dakin Humane Society has announced that it will be reducing all adoption fees for available animals by 50% for the remainder of the month of November, according to Adoption Center Manager Alanna Regan.

Dakin had previously planned the reduced fee promotion for Nov. 10-14, but the shelter saw a large intake of pets in need of new homes during the first days of the promotion, so the adoption fee discounts will be continued through the end of November.

People interested in adopting a Dakin pet can visit https://www.dakinhumane.org/adopt-a-pet to see up-to-the-minute listings of which pets are available under the categories of "Cats," "Dogs," and "Small Animals." Dakin will be charging one-half of the adoption fee listed on each pet's page during this promotion.

"Typically, Dakin sees the most animals in our shelter during the warm weather months stretching from late spring into autumn," noted Regan. "However, we have had many animals brought to us recently, and our space is getting tight both in the shelter and in foster homes, so we run these promotions in hopes that it will drive people who are thinking of adopting a pet to come in and see if we have a new family member for them."



The Adoption Center at Dakin Humane Society is open to the public Tuesdays through Saturdays from 12:30-3 p.m.

Adoption fees for cats and dogs at Dakin include a variety of services and treatments, including a veterinary exam, spay/neuter surgery, age-appropriate vaccinations, microchip and registration, a rabies vaccine (if the pet is over 12 weeks of age), a free post-adoption veterinary exam at participating clinics, and a food starter pack.

About Dakin Humane Society

Dakin Humane Society, located in Springfield, is a 501 (c) (3) organization that delivers effective, innovative services that improve the lives of animals in need and the people who care about them.

Since its inception in 1969, Dakin has become one of the most recognized nonprofit organizations in western Massachusetts, and a national leader in animal welfare. In a typical year, the organization shelters, treats, and fosters more than 20,000 animals and has performed over 144,000 spay/neuter surgeries since 2009, making it one of New England's largest spay/neuter providers.

Dakin's Pet Health Center, a non-emergency veterinary resource for pet dogs and cats, has conducted more than 41,000 patient visits since it opened in 2022. Dakin is a local non-profit organization that relies solely on contributions from individuals and businesses that care about animals to bring its services to the community.

For more information, visit www.dakinhumane.org.

A holiday concert of family favorites to be held Dec. 5

AMHERST – Tis the season to enjoy holiday music. The Amherst Community Band will be presenting a concert Dec. 5 at 6:30 p.m. It will be held in town at Saint Bridget's Parish Hall in Amherst. Richard Cuoco will be the conductor.

.It is heartwarming to listen to the familiar music of the season. These are the songs that are appealing to everyone. Finding enjoyable family experiences can be challenging, but not when it comes to appreciating favorite holiday songs. Every song the band will play is a classic tune, recognizable to everyone.

The performance will end with an audience singalong, but most people will probably be singing along to all of the other selections as well. Classics such as White Christmas, Rudolph, A Charlie Brown Christmas, Let it Snow, Silver Bells, Have Yourself a Merry Christmas will be some of the selections. An anthology of Hanukkah songs to include Rock of Ages and Oh Hanukkah will be included too.

Rumor has it that Santa Claus has been studying conducting over the summer months. He'll be making a surprise visit and hopes to conduct one of the numbers. Afterwards, everyone can enjoy taking photos with Santa for a keepsake memento.

Bring the whole family as well as your neighbors. Be prepared to sing and enjoy the music of the season.

If you would like to play in this concert, information about how to join can be found on the website: amherstband.org where you will find the sign-up form.

The Amherst Community Band will bring the community together through its music once again.

For further information, contact Ira Brezinsky 413-219-5577 or email ibrezinsky@gmail.com.

BOARD, *from page 1*

the public hearing, saying she believed new business, while creating jobs, would create a traffic nightmare.

"Although the job losses were painful, K-Mart's closing was a blessing inasmuch as we got a modicum of relief from the traffic and related air pollution," Norris said. "Neighbors were able to get out of their side streets onto Northampton Street with less hassle and delay than before.

"The October 2026 traffic study submitted by the Walmart developer is deficient because it did not assess the traffic impacts to Elmwood. It merely looked at ingress and egress to the K Mart Plaza. There was no analysis of the impacts north of the intersection of Northampton St and Whiting Farms Road. This is not a minor omission.

"That study estimates that 50% of the traffic to the new Walmart will come from Northampton Street north of the project area. That means 50% of the traffic coming to the Walmart goes through the streets of Elmwood."

She expressed real concern that the Walmart would have a negative effect on the neighborhood.

"Just plunk a Walmart Superstore in our backyard and say, "geez, too bad", but the zoning already permits this use," Norris said. "Will the neighborhood that we call home be allowed to degrade, while city leaders celebrate the tax revenues? I am no longer the city councilor representing Elmwood. But having spent 16 years on the council and a decade before that time grappling with this issue, what is in front of you is not feasible if you care about the people who live in Elmwood."

The meeting is continued to Dec. 1 where a vote could take place. The city council has already authorized the demolition of the old building.

AWARD, *from page 1*

and supporting the many efforts that sustain our organization. Her commitment goes far beyond a single event; she is someone we can always count on. Her decades of service to the Committee and her community are truly remarkable, and we are incredibly proud to recognize her with the 2027 O'Connell Award."

Reardon is the proud mother of Geraldine Bresnahan and grandmother of Marin Bresnahan. Throughout her life, whether caring for patients, serving her hometown or supporting the traditions of the Holyoke St. Patrick's Committee, Reardon has consistently demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to giving back. Her generosity, leadership and dedication to others embody the spirit of the George E. O'Connell Award.

Reardon will be formally honored at the Coronation Ball & Awards Dinner on Saturday, Feb. 20, 2027, at The Log Cabin. Additional details and ticket information will be announced.

For additional information about the St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke and the 2027 Parade festivities, visit www.holyokestpatricksparade.com.

YOUTH, *from page 1*

Rue Ratray. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the school office at 413-534-2060.

The juvenile was arrested on Maple St. Because of the age of the youth, no further information is available.

Read
The Holyoke Sun
online at
sun.turley.com

Public Notices

CITY OF HOLYOKE
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Holyoke Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, December 15, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.** via **Hybrid** at City Hall Rm 6 at 536 Dwight Street and by Zoom.com; ID: 828 5434 1337; CALL IN 1 646 558 8656 to hear, pursuant to the Holyoke Zoning Ordinance, a Special Permit for a Parking Reduction (Sec 6.1.7) submitted by Chris Elliot (2026-16) located at 53 Elm Street (006-04-003).

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

APPLICANT: Chris Elliot
PLANNING BOARD:
Lauren Niles, Chairperson
11/20, 11/27/2026

City of Holyoke
Notice of Public Hearing

The DGR Committee of the Holyoke City Council will hold a public hearing to hear a Special permit application of Dario Jara Ramones at 131-133 Westfield Road (122-00-071) to change the use from a two-dwelling to a three-dwelling use per 7.4.1. Hearing will take place on **Monday, December 3, 2026 at 6:30 pm** at Holyoke City Hall 536 Dwight St and can be accessed remotely via www.zoom.us Meeting ID 826 2872 5330 Meeting Passcode 978842 or by call in at 1-646-558-8656 with same Meeting ID and Passcode. For a copy of the application or to provide comments, please contact City Council Admin Asst Jeffery Anderson-Burgos at Anderson-BurgosJ@holyoke.org or by phone 413-322-5525.

DGR Chair, Richard Purcell
11/13, 11/20/2026

City of Holyoke
Notice of Public Hearing

The DGR Committee of the Holyoke City Council will hold a public hearing to hear a Special permit application of Salmar Realty Inc c/o Peter Martins for a drive-thru facility within a commercial development at 500 Easthampton Road Lot A (213-00-003) per 7.1.6. Hearing will take place on **Monday, December 3, 2026 at 6:30 pm** at Holyoke City Hall 536 Dwight St and can be accessed remotely via www.zoom.us Meeting ID 826 2872 5330 Meeting Passcode 978842 or by call in at 1-646-558-8656 with same Meeting ID and Passcode. For a copy of the application or to provide comments, please contact City Council Admin Asst Jeffery Anderson-Burgos at Anderson-BurgosJ@holyoke.org or by phone 413-322-5525.

DGR Chair, Richard Purcelll
11/13, 11/20/2026

NOTICE OF SALE
NOTICE OF
MORTGAGEE'S
SALE OF REAL ESTATE

Premises: 267-269 Sargeant Street, Holyoke, MA 01040

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain mortgage given by Coterie Investment Group, LLC to TVC Funding, III, LLC, dated November 30, 2022, and recorded with the Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 25161, Page 521, of which mortgage the undersigned is the present holder by assignment of mortgage from TVC Funding III, LLC to Wilmington Savings Fund Society, FSB, not in its individual capacity but solely as Owner Trustee of OBX 2023-NQM10 Trust, dated July 21, 2026, and recorded with said Registry in Book 26431, Page 195,, for breach of the conditions of said mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing the same will be sold by **Public Auction** at 1:00 o'clock P.M. on the 08th day of December 2026 at the mortgaged premises located at 267-269 Sargeant Street, Holyoke, Hampden County, Massachusetts, all and singular the premises described in said mortgage,

To wit: Beginning at a point in the Northerly side of Sargeant Street, Two Hundred (200) feet Westerly from the Westerly Side of Saint Jerome Avenue;

thence running NORTHERLY at right angles to said Sargeant Street, One Hundred (100) feet Westerly from the Westerly side of Saint Jerome Cemetery;

thence WESTERLY along the Southerly Line of said Cemetery, Fifty (50) feet;

thence SOUTERLY at right angles to the last mentioned line, One Hundred (100) fee to said Sargeant Street;

thence EASTERLY along said Sargeant Street, Fifty (50) feet to the place of beginning.

Being the same premises conveyed to the mortgagor by deed recorded in the Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 24808, Page 25.

Premises to be sold and conveyed subject to and with the benefit of all rights, rights of way, restrictions, easements, covenants, liens or claims in the nature of liens, improvements, public assessments, any and all unpaid taxes, tax titles, tax liens, water and sewer liens and any other municipal assessments or liens or existing encumbrances of record which are in force and are applicable, having priority over said mortgage, whether or not reference to such restrictions, easements, improvements, liens or encumbrances is made in the deed.

TERMS OF SALE: A deposit of Ten Thousand Dollars ($10,000.00) by certified or bank check will be required to be paid by the purchaser at the time and place of sale. High bidder to sign written memorandum of sale upon acceptance of the high bid. The balance of the purchase price is to be paid by certified or bank check at Friedman Vartolo LLP, 1325 Franklin Avenue, Suite 160, Garden City, NY 11530, within thirty (30) days from the date of the sale. Deed will be provided to purchaser for recording upon receipt in full of the purchase price. In the event of an error in this publication, the description of the premises contained in said mortgage shall control.

Other terms, if any, to be announced at the sale.

Wilmington Savings Fund Society, FSB,
not in its individual capacity
but solely as Owner Trustee of
OBX 2023-NQM10 Trust
Present holder of said mortgage
By its Attorneys,
Friedman Vartolo LLP
1325 Franklin Avenue,
Suite 160
Garden City, NY 11530
11/13, 11/20, 11/27/2026

CITY OF HOLYOKE
GAS & ELECTRIC
DEPARTMENT
HYDRAULIC
STRUCTURES'
MAINTENANCE &
REPAIRS
ANNUAL CONTRACT

Sealed bids for the above will be received by Holyoke Gas & Electric Dept. until **2:00 p.m., December 10, 2026**, at the Office of the Manager, 99 Suffolk St., Holyoke, MA 01040, at which time bids will be publicly opened and read.

Bid Deposit:

A Bid Deposit in the amount of $17,500 must accompany all bids and may be in the form of a certified, treasurer's, or cashier's check payable to HG&E from a responsible bank or trust company; cash; or a bid bond from a licensed surety payable to HG&E.

Prevailing Wage Rates:

Rates, which are to apply to the work, are set by the Mass. Dept. of Labor & Industries.

Additional information may be obtained from:

Chi Wong
Holyoke Gas & Electric Dept.
99 Suffolk St.
Holyoke, MA 01040
(413) 536-9308
cwong@hged.com

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

Please mark sealed envelopes "**Bid for Hydraulic Structures' Maintenance & Repairs Annual Contract**" and address them to.

James M. Lavelle, Manager
Holyoke Gas & Electric Dept.
99 Suffolk St.
Holyoke, MA 01040
11/20/2026

The Holyoke Sun
Obituary Policy

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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

The other is a **Paid Obituary,** costing $275, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

H	E	A	R	■	P	O	S	E	S	■	B	A	S	S
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PUBLIC NOTICES
ARE NOW ONLINE

1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com

2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.

3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts' public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Mondays at noon, Fridays noon for Monday holidays.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com

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12 WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS ❙ SERVING 50 LOCAL COMMUNITIES

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(413)477-0083

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Senior discounts.
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We are a small local company that has been in business for 23 years. We are growing & seeking a skilled and experienced HVAC and / or Oil Burner Technician to join our team. The ideal candidate will have a strong background in Residential HVAC / Oil Burner installation, maintenance, and repair. Remote work is possible. Great pay & benefits. EPA Certification / MA Oil Burner Technician Certificate required. Please contact us at: **PioneerIncOffice@gmail.com**, or **413-623-5911**, Pioneer Plumbing Inc.

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FOR RENT

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ALL REAL ESTATE advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination." We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

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

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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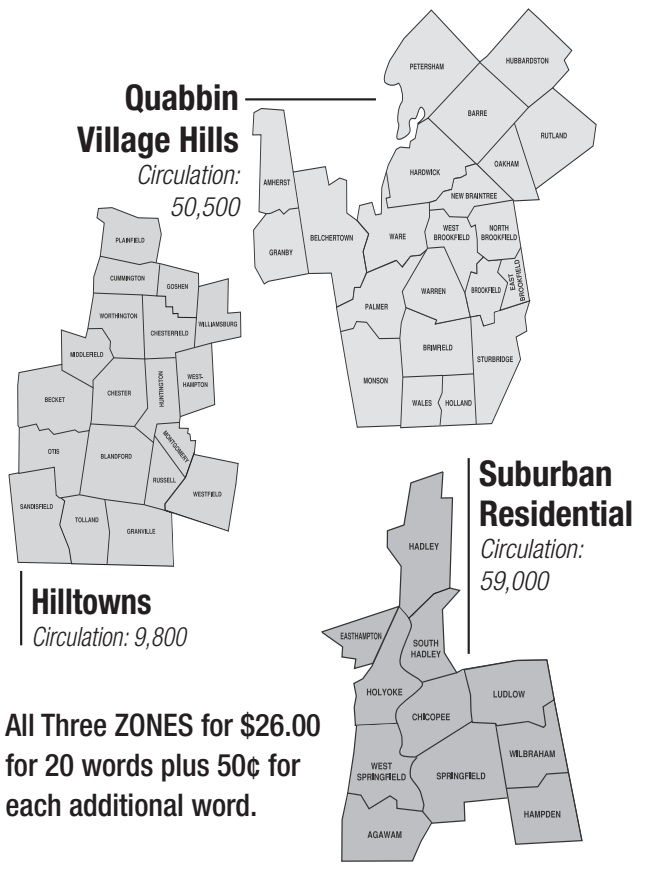
FILL OUT AND MAIL THIS MONEY MAKER

MAIL TO: Classifieds, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069
or call: 413-283-8393

DEADLINES: ***FRIDAY AT NOON***

CATEGORY:

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20 Base Price $26.00
21 Base Price $26.50	22 Base Price $27.00	23 Base Price $27.50	24 Base Price $28.00
25 Base Price $28.50	26 Base Price $29.00	27 Base Price $29.50	28 Base Price $30.00
29 Base Price $30.50	30 Base Price $31.00	31 Base Price $31.50	32 Base Price $32.00
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OUR CLASSIFIEDS REACH 50 COMMUNITIES EVERY WEEK!

STCC offers free IT training program with pathway to technology careers

SPRINGFIELD – Adults looking to enter the technology workforce can gain practical, job-ready skills through a free Information Technology training program at Springfield Technical Community College that begins Jan. 11.

Offered through Workforce Development at STCC, the program combines hands-on technical instruction, industry-recognized certification preparation, and support for earning a high school equivalency credential.

The Information Technology MassSTEP program is designed to help adult learners build the skills and confidence needed to pursue entry-level opportunities in the growing technology field. A central focus of the program is developing practical computer and IT skills, with students preparing to earn the CompTIA Tech+ certification, an entry-level credential recognized by employers.

Through hands-on instruction and lab exercises, students learn about computer hardware and systems, networking, internet connectivity, cybersecurity fundamentals, data protection, and troubleshooting. They also develop problem-solving skills and learn how to identify and resolve common hardware and software issues.

"Our goal is to help adults see a future for themselves in the technology field by giving them the practical skills and confidence to take that first step," said Gladys Franco, assistant vice president of Workforce Development at STCC.

The program offers an opportunity for adults who may not yet have a high school diploma or equivalency credential to begin developing technical skills while working toward that academic milestone. Reading, writing, math, science, and social studies instruction is integrated into the IT curriculum, allowing students to apply foundational academic skills to real-world technology concepts while preparing for the HiSET or GED exams.

For students interested in pursuing additional education, the program also can serve as an entry point to further training at STCC, including the college's cybersecurity program. Participants can begin building a foundation in technology before completing their high school equivalency requirements, helping them take an important first step toward a career in cybersecurity and other IT fields.

In addition to technical training, students receive college and career readiness instruction. Education and Career Advisors provide assistance with résumé and cover letter development, interview preparation, workplace communication, and exploring local employment opportunities in technology.

Professional skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and workplace etiquette are incorporated throughout the program to help participants prepare for the expectations of today's workforce.

The next MassSTEP IT program begins Jan. 11 and runs through April 15. Classes meet Monday through Thursday, from 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., on the STCC campus.

The program is free to all participants. Eligibility requirements include being at least 16 years old, a Massachusetts resident, and having reliable transportation to campus. Students should have basic computer skills, including keyboarding, using a web browser, and email. Those who need to develop these skills before enrolling can take STCC's free Basic Computer Skills course.

Adults interested in gaining technology skills, preparing for an entry-level IT career, or working toward a high school equivalency credential while receiving hands-on technical training are encouraged to learn more.

For more information, or to inquire about enrollment, contact the STCC Workforce Development Center, Building 27, second floor, at 413-755-4300 or workforcerecruit@stcc.edu

Better Business Bureau warns community of money recovery scams

When you've lost money to a scam, an offer to recover it can feel like a lifeline.

The recent $6.3 billion cryptocurrency theft at Binance also compromised data belonging to thousands of customers. Stolen information can help scammers identify potential targets and make fake recovery offers sound legitimate.

The Better Business Bureau warns people to be cautious of unsolicited callers or messages promising to recover funds.

An unsolicited caller or message poses as a lawyer, government official, or fraud department representative. They promise to recover your money – but first, you must pay a fee, cover a supposed "tax," or share account information.

Using information from data breaches or other fraudsters, they may already know your name, account details, or how much you lost. Knowing your details doesn't make them trustworthy.

Don't pay to get paid. An unsolicited recovery offer that requires an upfront fee is a red flag. Government agencies don't charge you to investigate fraud.

Verify independently. If an unsolicited caller claims to represent an organization, end the call and contact the organization through its official app, the number on your monthly statement, or a website you know is genuine.

Keep account access private. Never share passwords, verification codes, or your crypto wallet's recovery phrase (the secret words used to restore access). Don't move funds to a "safe" wallet at an unsolicited caller's request.

Act quickly if you sent money. Contact your bank, payment provider, or crypto exchange immediately to ask about your options. Recovery isn't guaranteed.

Report incidents directly to the Better Business Bureau at BBB.org.

DDS
Department of Developmental Services

MASSACHUSETTS DDS

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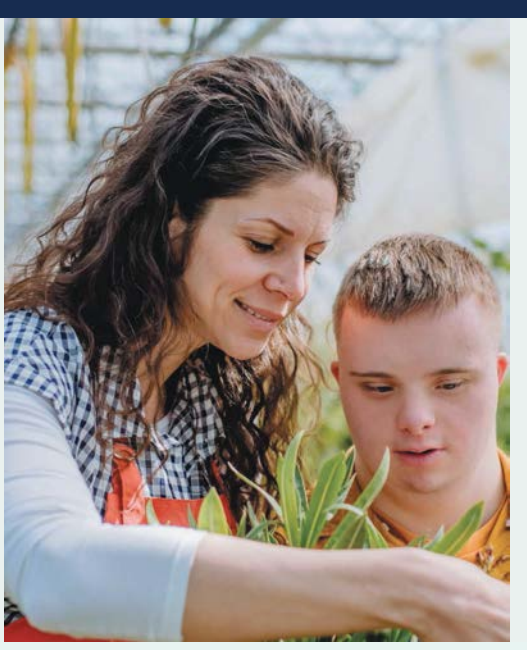
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Winter Craft Fair to be held Dec. 2

SOUTH HADLEY – The South Hadley Council on Aging Winter Craft Fair will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 2 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 45 Dayton St. in South Hadley.

Stop in for a festive day of handmade crafts, unique gifts, and local creativity.

There will be handmade crafts & unique finds. Great for holiday shopping.

Craft spaces are just $5 per person. Pre-registraion is Required.

Come shop, browse, and support local crafters.

Veterans Cemetery seeks wreath sponsors

AGAWAM – The Friends of the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Agawam invites the community to honor and remember veterans by sponsoring remembrance wreaths for Wreaths Across America Day on Saturday, Dec. 19.

Each December, Wreaths Across America brings communities together around its mission to remember the fallen, honor those who serve and teach the next generation the value of freedom. Sponsored wreaths will be placed on veterans' graves at the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Agawam.

The Friends of the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Agawam is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that supports the cemetery and helps keep the memory of veterans alive. Its work encourages community involvement in honoring those who served and recognizing the sacrifices of military families.

Individuals, families, businesses and community groups are encouraged to sponsor wreaths. Each wreath is a meaningful expression of gratitude and remembrance, and community support helps extend this tribute to more veterans.

To sponsor a wreath through the Friends' Wreaths Across America fundraising page, visit www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/MA0110P. Donations to support the Friends of the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Agawam may also be made through Venmo at @WREATHSFRIENDS.

To learn more about the Friends organization, visit www.agawamfriends.org or write to Agawam Friends, P.O. Box 03, Feeding Hills, MA 01030.