

# the HOLYOKE Sun

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December 5, 2025 ■ FREE

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## State to release aid payments

Limited progress made by city

By Gregory A. Scibelli  
gscibelli@turley.com

HOLYOKE – On Tuesday evening, Mayor Joshua Garcia shared a progress update with the financial issues the city has been dealing with. Unfortunately, the conclusion is the city has not made significant progress. But the city will be receiving its share of aid from the state despite the lack of progress.

The city is on orders from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue to get its audited financials in order or the state will not provide much-needed aid to the city. Garcia recently hired a firm to assist the city with that task, which he says goes back several years. Specifically, however, the state is looking at the FY2023 through present cash reconciliation process.

During a recent meeting with the DOR, Garcia and his team provided an update. DOR responded with a letter to the city on Nov. 17. That letter was shared with the city council.

Among the highlights of the update:

- The city treasurer indicated that per discussion with CBIZ the FY2023 audited financials should be ready for issue in the first two weeks of December, pending their review of the City's submissions.

See AID, page 6

## HHS hosting VARIETY SHOW

By Gregory A. Scibelli  
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HOLYOKE – On Thursday evening, Dec. 11, the Holyoke High School Theater Company—proudly collaborating with the Holyoke High School Music and Art Departments—is excited to invite the community to “The Little Town of Christmas Holiday Variety Show and Fundraising Festival.” Along with live performances from the Holyoke High School Madrigal Choir and Choir, Bell Choir, Intro to Band, Concert Band and String Orchestra, this joyful theatrical event features a full production of “The Little Town of Christmas,” written by Pat Cook and presented under agreement with Eldridge Plays and Musicals.

This spirited holiday comedy brings together 12 laugh-filled Christmas sketches, each offering



### fundraising festival



Submitted photo

Above, A holiday-themed variety show will take place on Thursday, Dec. 11. Left, the high school theater program is hoping to build off the success of the recent mystery dinner theater.

its own festive charm. Audiences will spend an evening in the delightfully quirky “Little Town of Christmas,” meeting unforgettable characters such as Skeezix and Sylvester—the pint-sized elf comedy team with giant personalities—Dancer the reindeer with an offbeat sense of humor,

See SHOW, page 6

## Pair of fires displace more than 70 families



A fire breaks out at an apartment building on Tuesday morning.

Submitted photo

By Gregory A. Scibelli  
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HOLYOKE – On Tuesday, a pair of fires, one at an apartment complex at 733 High St. started on the second floor and continued spreading to the roof. It took more than 50 firefighters and mutual aid from Chicopee, Westfield, and the Westover Air Reserve Base Fire Department.

The night before, at 131 Clemente St., an apartment building caught fire, displacing 26 families after a fire broke out on the second floor and then spread throughout the building.

According to the Holyoke Fire Department, no one was injured during either of the fires, including all of the firefighters who had a part in combatting the blazes.

“We’re relieved that no one was injured in this week’s fires, but this has been a terribly challenging week for the community,” said Fire Chief John Kadlewicz. “Our hearts go out to all the families who lost their homes and belongings. We ask anyone who wants to help to make donations to Enlace de Familias. This will ensure that your support goes directly to the people who need it most.”

Enlace de Familias is located at 299 Main St., Holyoke. They are open Monday to Friday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. or contact 532-9300 or visit enlacedeholyoke.org.

See FIRE, page 6

## HELPING HAND



Wyckoff Country Club helped out the firefighters who assisted in fighting the fires in Holyoke Monday night and Tuesday. The country club hosted a dinner for all the firefighters who fought the two fires.

Submitted photo



## Kwanzaa observance to take place Dec. 26

HOLYOKE – The first day of Kwanzaa, the annual, six-day celebration of African-American culture, will be observed at Holyoke City Hall on Friday, Dec. 26, at 10 a.m. The public is invited.

Each of the six days celebrates one of the Nguzo Saba, the Seven Principles of Kwanzaa. The First Principle, which will be observed on Dec. 26, is Umoja — Unity.

Theresa Cooper-Gordon, a member of the organizing committee, said

the embrace of unity was particularly appropriate in the face of divisions on the local and national levels. Umoja urges all to strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation, and the world African community.

On Jan. 1, Kwanzaa culminates in a communal feast called Karamu. The other days and themes are Kujichagulia (Self-determination): To define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves, and speak for ourselves instead

of being defined, named, created for, and spoken for by others; Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility): To build and maintain our community together and to make our sisters' and brothers' problems our problems and to solve them together.

UJAMAA (Cooperative Economics): To build and maintain our own stores, shops, and other businesses, and to profit from them together.

NIA (Purpose): To make our collective vocation the building and devel-

opment of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness.

KUUMBA (Creativity): To do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than it was when we inherited it.

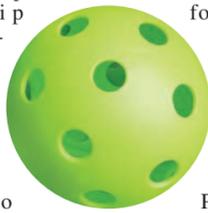
IMANI (Faith): To believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders, and the righteousness and victory of our struggle for a new and better world.

## Pickleball Kingdom has arrived at Holyoke Mall

HOLYOKE – Pickleball Kingdom, a premier indoor pickleball facility, is excited to announce its Grand Opening event at the Holyoke Mall at Ingleside, 50 Holyoke St, on Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 13 and 14. The festivities will kick off with an official ribbon-cutting ceremony on Saturday, Dec. 13, at 12:30 p.m. Immediately following the ceremony, attendees are invited to stay for free Open Play. Participants can reserve their open play spots by signing up on the Pickleball Kingdom app, making it easy for everyone to join in the fun and experience this new facility.

The grand opening will showcase the full

suite of offerings available at Pickleball Kingdom Holyoke. Attendees can participate in Pickleball 101 sessions—ideal for those new to the sport—experience open play, and explore membership options including access to specialty clubs and exclusive news updates. Guests will also have the opportunity to book private events, reserve a court, sign up for professional coaching, and inquire about tournaments and franchise opportunities. The facility's user-friendly system makes it easy to



become a member, book an event, or reserve a court, ensuring everyone can find their place—whether a newcomer or seasoned player.

This new venue meets the increasing local demand for indoor pickleball courts, offering a professional, climate-controlled environment for players of all ages and skill levels. The addition of Pickleball Kingdom to the Holyoke Mall repurposes retail space to create a dynamic community and recreational hub, enhancing the region's health and wellness offerings and fostering social connections year-round.

Pickleball Kingdom's commitment to growth and inclusion extends internationally, with initiatives such as PK India and a growing network of franchise locations. The Holyoke site exemplifies the brand's mission to welcome, teach, and engage every member of the community.

The ceremony invites guests to tour the state-of-the-art facility, interact with staff, and experience firsthand the diverse programs—such as Pickleball 101, open play, personalized coaching, clubs, and event bookings—that make Pickleball Kingdom a standout destination for fun, activity, and connection.

## Providence Place to host free concert

HOLYOKE – The last concert of the Fall 2025 series is here. Holyoke High School Madrigal Choir and 3 Octave Bell Choir will be performing Sunday, Dec. 14 at 2 p.m. in Our Mother of Sorrows Chapel at Providence Place. Providence Place is located at 5 Gamelin St. in Holyoke, right behind the Holyoke Mall. The Holyoke High School musicians are directed by Mark Todd and

will be performing a variety of musical numbers for our delightful holiday concert.

This event is free and open to the public with ample parking available, no RSVP is necessary. For more information on the concert or if you are interested in learning more about our retirement community, please contact Katelyn Bacon at 413-534-9700 or email kbacon@providencelace.org.

## Santa Sprint to support Holyoke Pride set for Dec. 13

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Pride will launch the city's first-ever Santa Sprint on Saturday, Dec. 13. Registration opens at 10 a.m. at De La Luz Soundstage, located at 114 Race Street, and the spirited dash will follow the scenic Canalwalk on Race Street. Racers—ages 18 and older—will run, walk, or strut in Santa gear from Euphorium Dispensary to The Cubit building, raising support for Holyoke Pride's growing series of June events culminating in the 2026 PrideFest on June 27.

Participants can register online now at holyokepride.org for a Starting Line Pass,

available on a sliding scale donation beginning at \$20, granting entry into the race and helping to fund Holyoke Pride programming. Those who want to support without running can choose a Cheer Squad Pass, which allows spectators or remote supporters to donate any amount to benefit Holyoke Pride. The Santa Sprint is free to attend, and community members are encouraged to line the route and cheer.

"This event brings together everything that makes Holyoke special—community, joy, and the commitment to show up for one another," said Holyoke

City Councilor, and Pride Committee member, Juan Anderson-Burgos. "The Santa Sprint is a fun way to welcome the holiday season while supporting Pride and the work it takes to create meaningful, inclusive celebrations for everyone."

Holyoke Pride and the Santa Sprint is sponsored by Holyoke Art, a nonprofit strengthening Holyoke's creative and cultural ecosystem. Through its fiscal sponsorship program, Holyoke Art provides administrative and financial support to grassroots initiatives like Holyoke Pride, helping community-led events thrive.

To help make this first-ever Santa Sprint unforgettable, both runners and spectators are encouraged to dress in their most festive Santa outfits—beards, hats, bells, and bright red everything—to fill the Canalwalk with holiday spirit and community pride. For race details, registration, or donations, visit holyokepride.org.

## Giving Tree now active

HOLYOKE – This year the Holyoke Public Library is partnering with Margaret's Pantry and the Sisters of Providence Ministries to collect holiday gifts for children who may not be lucky enough to get everything on their list.

To participate:  
• Stop by the lobby of the Holyoke Public Library.  
• Select one (or more) ornament(s) from the tree.  
• Take one of the instruction fliers from the giving tree table.

• Purchase only the item listed.

• Return the unwrapped present with the attached ornament with the child's information to the Circulation desk at the Holyoke Library no later than Friday, Dec. 12 at 3 p.m.

• Gifts returned after this date and time will have to be held as extra items for next year.

Thank you for participating in this season of giving.

## High St. family-friendly event on Sunday

HOLYOKE – "Christmas on High Street," a free, family-friendly event, will be celebrated on Sunday, Dec. 7, from 12 noon to 5 p.m. outside of 414 High Street.

This year's party's will feature food, music, free

toys and entertainment.

Donations of toys are invited. The drop-off locations for "Christmas on High Street" are Deja-vu Nightspot, 414 High St., Holyoke; City Pizza, 420 High St., Holyoke; Cuba Supermarket 439 High St.,

Holyoke; Holyoke Health Center 230 Maple St., Holyoke; Holyoke Nutrition 331 High St., Holyoke; Holyoke City Hall, 536 Dwight St., Holyoke; and Dunn & Phillips, 185 and 198 Belmont Ave., Springfield.

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September 22, 2024  
Parents: Daniel & Lisa Distler, Brimfield  
Grandparents: Christopher & Michele Mues, Warren Carole & the late Bruce Distler, Long Island, NY

Baby's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' Town of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Grandparents' Names & Town of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

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<input type="checkbox"/> The Holyoke Sun	<input type="checkbox"/> Ware River News
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**Deadline for photos and forms is Friday, December 12, 2025**

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This offer is available to all babies born in 2025. Pictures will be published the week of December 23-26, 2025.

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## EARLY DEADLINES FOR ADS & LEGAL NOTICES

*Christmas will bring early deadlines for all ads & legal notices to run in TURLEY PUBLICATIONS the week of December 22-26, 2025:*

**Wednesday, December 17 at 2 PM for December 25 issue**  
• Country Journal • The Register • Wilbraham-Hampden Times

**Thursday, December 18 at 2 PM for December 25 Issue**  
• Agawam Advertiser News  
• Sentinel • Quaboag Current • The Journal Register

**Friday, December 19 at 2 PM for December 25 Issue**  
• Ware River News • Barre Gazette

**Monday, December 22 at 2 PM for December 26 Issue**  
• Town Reminder • The Holyoke Sun • Chicopee Register

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# College students help feed hungry

HOLYOKE – Culinary arts students at Holyoke Community College prepared 123 roast turkeys and 300 pounds of glazed sweet potatoes to help feed hungry people this Thanksgiving as part of The Compassion Project.

Yesterday afternoon, the last few birds were carved up by a few student volunteers who had stayed long after their classes had ended for the day at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute.

“It’s for a good cause, and I watched my classmates and my teachers work so hard on the turkeys yesterday and today,” said student Sanai Hale.

This is the 23rd year for The Compassion Project, which was founded by community organizer Areliz Barbosa to deliver meals to hungry people on Thanksgiving.



Stacy Graves, HCC assistant director of operations, hands a platter of glazed sweet potatoes to volunteer Melvin Coleman. Submitted photo

Last year, the HCC culinary arts crew prepared 90 turkeys to help The Compassion Project give out 1,000 hot meals for

Thanksgiving. This year, Chef Tracy Carter, chair of the HCC culinary arts program, integrated the cooking of turkeys and Thanksgiving

sides into the culinary arts curriculum to help meet The Compassion Project’s 2025 goal of delivering 2,000 hot meals.



Culinary arts students Sanai Hale and Anthony Maldonado Gonzalez, finish carving up turkeys prepared for The Compassion Project’s free Thanksgiving meal distributions.

# Habitat for Humanity to dedicate newest home project

HOLYOKE – At 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 10, Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) will host a dedication celebrating the completion of its newest home and the collaboration that made it all possible.

GSHFH partnered with Holyoke Housing Authority (HHA) and the University of Massachusetts (UMass) DesignBuild program to make one local couple’s dream come true. HHA donated a plot of land on Chestnut Street. Greater Springfield Habitat prepared the site and built the foundation. UMass

DesignBuild professors and students designed and constructed the modular home, and oversaw delivery to the Holyoke site. GSHFH will soon sell the new home to Pedro and his wife Damaris, longtime Holyoke residents.

“This is a great collaboration to give the students practical, hands-on experience, and for Habitat to provide a home to a family that might not have qualified for one of our traditionally built homes,” said Aimee Giroux, GSHFH executive director. “Family size is one of many factors taken into consideration when

building our homes and partnering with the future buyer. There is a need for affordable housing to benefit a variety of family sizes; not everyone needs three or four bedrooms. This project helps us to be able to make that happen.”

The design of the 575-square-foot modular home emphasizes energy efficiency via highly-insulated and air-sealed exterior assemblies, triple-glazed windows, all-electric appliances/utilities, and low-embodied carbon building materials, such as wood fiber, hemp, and straw, said Ben Leinfelder, construc-

tion manager of this year’s DesignBuild project and an alumnus of the program.

The UMass DesignBuild team conceived the home in spring. Construction commenced in the summer and the house was delivered in November.

Pedro, who is retired, attended every info HHA session, and submitted the necessary forms two days after the application cycle opened. He and his wife currently live in a one-bedroom apartment and have complained about their unfriendly neighbors who they say makes their

everyday life unenjoyable. Pedro and Damaris don’t have children together, but have a large blended family. Pedro has two daughters from a previous relationship and seven grandchildren. Damaris has three children and five grandchildren.

GSHFH is a housing ministry dedicated to strengthening communities by empowering low-income families to change their lives and the lives of future generations through homeownership and home repair opportunities. This is accomplished by working in partnership

with diverse people, from all walks of life, to build and repair simple, decent, affordable housing. Habitat’s mission to provide homeownership opportunities to low-income families is unique as it requires partner families to work alongside the community that is reaching out to help them. GSHFH has helped roughly 100 local families realize their dream of homeownership over the last 38 years.

Following the ceremony will be a tour of the house and a reception. Street parking is available.

## Toy store favorite returns

HOLYOKE – Just in time for the holidays, Toys“R”Us has opened a seasonal holiday shop at Holyoke Mall, bringing joy and play to kids and families in the Western Massachusetts community. The new 7,600 square-foot shop, operated by Go! Retail Group, will feature a curated assortment of popular toys and brands, including LEGO, Barbie, Hot Wheels, NERF, Paw Patrol, and more. The store will be located on the upper level next to and is now open.

“Holiday Shops bring the excitement of Toys“R”Us to more families this season, creating an easy and fun shopping destination,” said Alex Winkleman, EVP Business

Development of Go! Retail Group. “From the hottest toys of the year to a convenient, family-friendly shopping experience, our Holiday Shops are designed to spread joy and make gift-giving simple.”

For more than 70 years, Toys“R”Us has been synonymous with the magic of childhood, inspiring generations through the joy of play. The new seasonal holiday shop at Holyoke Mall will showcase a curated selection of family favorites—from arts & crafts, action figures, and puzzles to electronics, books, and games—designed to spark fun for kids of all ages, making it a one-stop destination for every holiday wish list.

## HMC welcomes new primary care physicians

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Medical Center has expanded primary care services with the addition of eight physicians and three advanced practitioners across six Adult Primary Care and Family Medicine locations. Holyoke Medical Center is accepting new PCP patients with wait times as low as two weeks.

“Having a primary care physician or provider is essential to protecting your health. That is why Holyoke Medical Center has focused on growing our team and offering more access to patients throughout the region,” said Spiros Hatiras, President and CEO

of Holyoke Medical Center and Valley Health Systems.

Holyoke Medical Center is proud to welcome Kimberly Bucknor, MD; Abdallah El Alayli, MD; Carlos Herrera, MD; Marian Isaak, MD; Christina Idowu, MD; Jumana Jaloudi, DO; Sanjana Pai, MD; Adam Qazi, MD; Ashley Landry, PA-C; Carly Muniz, PA-C; and Lucille Passer, PA-C.

A PCP can give you peace of mind because it means that you have a provider who is available to you and who knows your medical history, including injuries, past procedures and surgeries, illnesses,

allergies, and family history. Knowing your personal preferences and lifestyle factors also can help PCPs when providing and coordinating care. “Patients who receive primary care from HMC providers will benefit from the integrated physician network that includes various specialists,” says Kimberly Bucknor, MD, a board-certified internist who joined HMC in October. Dr. Bucknor advises patients not to wait until they are sick or injured to select a PCP.

“While young adults or individuals without known medical conditions may feel that having a PCP is

unnecessary, it is advisable to establish a relationship with a primary provider in advance,” she adds. “In addition to ensuring that routine preventive screenings are performed to maintain overall health, having a PCP ensures timely access to care should significant medical issues arise.”

Adult Primary Care and Family Medicine locations are available at Holyoke Medical Center in Holyoke, South Hadley, Chicopee, Springfield, and Westfield.

Patients looking to secure a new patient appointment should call 413.535.4800.

## Dinner and a movie hosted by UCCH

HOLYOKE – A lasagna dinner will be served at the United Congregational Church of Holyoke’s December Community Meal on Friday, Dec. 12, followed by a family movie at 6 p.m.

The Community Meal is hosted on the second Friday evening of each month at

the church at 300 Appleton Street. All are welcome to attend, and the meal is completely free of charge. The menu changes monthly. Parents must accompany their children.

The United Congregational Church of Holyoke is an Open and

Affirming congregation of the United Church of Christ.

To learn more about UCCH, please visit our website at www.ucchoolyoke.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.

**NOTICE**  
 ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.

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<b>Fri., Dec. 5th</b> The Healys	<b>Fri., Dec. 12th</b> Dee Reilly
<b>Sat., Dec. 6th</b> Kilashandra	<b>Sat., Dec. 13th</b> Jim McArdle & Jerry Murphy

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Pitch Night  
\$5 per person

**Wednesday Night 5-7pm**  
Smoked BBQ Dinner  
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**Friday Night starts at 7:30 pm**  
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**Saturday Night 5-7 pm**  
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USDA INSP. WUNDERBAR BOLOGNA ..... <b>\$3.88</b> lb	USDA INSP. GROUND FRESH DAILY 80% LEAN GROUND BEEF 7 LB BAG ..... <b>\$3.99</b> lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN AT SEA TUNA STEAKS ..... <b>\$6.99</b> lb
USDA INSP. MUENSTER CHEESE ..... <b>\$4.99</b> lb	USDA INSP. STORE MADE ITALIAN MARINATED 1/2 CHICKEN ..... <b>\$2.49</b> lb	USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN COOKED SHRIMP 21/25 COUNT 2 LB BAG ..... <b>\$16.99</b> ea
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Guest Column



## Is Social Security really a “good deal?”

Dear Rusty:

You've said in the past that most people recoup their SS contributions within five years of starting benefits, thus Social Security “is an exceptionally good deal.”

Your calculation is correct but misleading; if it were not, SS would have been insolvent long ago. I will, in fact, get “my” contributions back in about five years, but my employer's contributions will take another five years and that is money that my employer could have been paying me, so they are really “my” contributions. But even that ignores the time value of money.

I did a calculation as if my contributions, along with those of my employer, were invested in an account earning 5% per year. That would provide me the equivalent of SS income for 24 years, approximately what my life expectancy was when I retired. So, it's not a bad deal, but it is hardly exceptional. It is roughly the equivalent of me investing that money throughout my career and using the total to buy an annuity.

Of course, Social Security does have the advantage of certainty, at least until it goes broke. My portfolio would not earn a steady 5% every year, though that is at the low end of what financial managers would expect over a long period. And it does force people to save, many of whom would otherwise make no provision for retirement.

Signed: Realistic Senior

Dear Realistic:

Thanks very much for your feedback on my previous article. I think it's important to draw a distinction for SS contributions made by an employer, because that is not money the individual personally pays, but rather an obligation for employers to help fund the Social Security program.

Without that federal obligation, it is doubtful that employers would, instead, provide employees with equivalent additional compensation, so the thought that these are really your contributions is not a fair assessment. Indeed, they are contributions which happen to be tied to your earnings level (to a cap), for which employers receive relief on their cor-

porate income tax and likely would not make if not required by law.

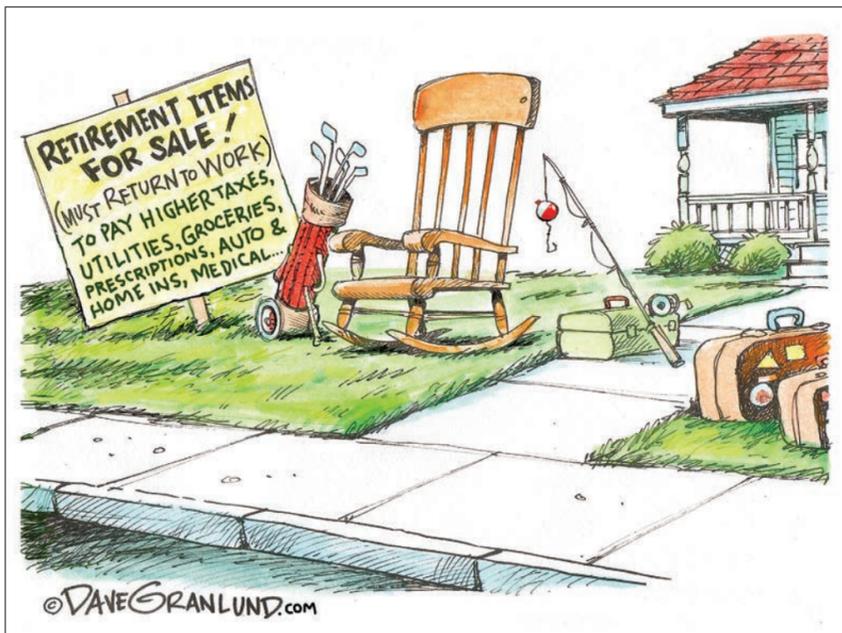
As you have noted, Social Security has the advantage of certainty, something which is lacking when it comes to investing the equivalent amounts in the financial markets. And, as you have hinted, there exists a substantial failure by future American retirees to save adequately for their retirement, a problem well known in most financial circles. Thus, the certainty of Social Security makes it a crucial part of everyone's retirement planning and it will be there.

Despite all the angst attributed to the current financial issues facing the program, there is little doubt that Social Security is here to stay. The question is what reform is needed to make the program fully solvent for generations of future Americans? The Association of Mature American Citizens has developed a proposal to sensibly reform Social Security and avoid the currently projected 2033 date that the SS Trust Funds are expected to be depleted, which will necessitate an across-the-board cut for everyone.

We have little doubt that the reform needed will happen; it would be political suicide for Congress if it did not and hopefully soon. You can read about AMAC's proposed solution at this link by visiting [www.amac.us/social-security-guarantee](http://www.amac.us/social-security-guarantee).

The Association of 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 only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website ([amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory)) or email us at [ssadviser@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadviser@amacfoundation.org).



Guest Column



Golden-crowned kinglet adult males flash their orange crown when excited; otherwise it is usually concealed.

## in my BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer

A Brimfield resident sent an email to report seeing a golden-crowned kinglet on Nov. 17 in a dwarf Alberta spruce tree in front of his house.

He said, “[It was] very active, but I got to see the bright yellow crown patch.”

Golden-crowned kinglets are a small bird, not much larger than a hummingbird. The male is boldly marked with a black eyebrow stripe and flashy lemon-yellow crest.

They spend much of their time high up in dense spruce or fir foliage and that is the place to find them.

Their high, thin call notes and song is often heard before catching sight of them.

The Brimfield resident called them “very active.” They can survive 40 degrees below Fahrenheit nights. Sometimes huddling together

See BIRDS, page 10

## Wreaths and swags for one and all

For the last two weeks we've been busy decorating Old Sturbridge Village for their Christmas by Candlelight program.

The garland, wreaths, bows and swags are all up, and the planters have been filled with greens. It was fast-paced fun, and oh so rewarding. The museum looks absolutely magical.

I filled planters side by side with a coworker who, in her 30 plus years, has never done this part of the job with me. As we stuck greens and stood back to assess our work, it occurred to me that I've grown up making all of these decorations, like my parents before me!

I had assumed everyone else had too, but here we had Nina, who in her 60s, was at it for the first time. If you find yourself ready to make your own decorations, here are a few pointers from the archives.

My Dad was the wreath-maker in the family, and usually a post

alongside, not on top of each other. It's important, however, to have the wire catch a little bit of the stem of the prior bunch – that way the wreath will be good and tight.

You can make a wreath of just extra boughs from your Christmas tree, but mixing in other types of greens will make it more interesting. I like to use prunings from my home landscape: mountain laurel, boxwood, juniper, and white pine among others will look great together because they vary in color and texture.

You can dress up a green wreath with pinecones, winterberries and artificial fruit, not to mention a big bow. Most types of Christmas tree boughs are conducive to wreath making, but wear thick gloves if you are using Colorado blue spruce as your base – it sure is picky!

When my Dad gave up making his famous wreaths, Mom took a simpler yet more elaborate approach to decorating our house. She would make a swag for each

See GARDEN, page 10



by Roberta McQuaid

Thanksgiving walk in the woods would yield his raw materials. The wreaths he made would be taken back to decorate a college dorm or whatever apartment my older siblings would return to after Thanksgiving break some 40 plus years ago.

One wreath would also make its way to the front door of our little red house, too. Decorated with a red ribbon and a few pine cones, it really was something so simple and so beautiful in the same right.

His approach is the same one I'll recommend today.

Start with a wire coat hanger bent into a circle and attach some pliable wire to it. Then, wrap little bunches of greens to the base one after another.

Be careful to lay them

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## The Holyoke Sun welcomes election letters to the editor

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

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

For more information, call 413-283-8393.

### Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspa-

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

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

the HOLYOKE Sun

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The Holyoke Sun is published every Friday by Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, Mass. 01069. Telephone (413) 283-8393, Fax (413) 289-1977.



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

Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

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

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

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



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# Not all mountains we climb are the same



By Julie Midura  
Guest Columnist

With wind chills in the negative single digits, it was a blustery and viewless day on Mt. Pierce in the White Mountains of New Hampshire last Saturday. But our hike wasn't about the views.

It was about rising to meet the mountain. Feeling our legs burn and our hearts race. Experiencing a rush of adrenaline as we fought the intense wind above tree line. Finding our way to the very top in a cloud so dense that the snowy ground and white sky seemed as one.

Last weekend was about allowing ourselves a distraction in the face of unimaginable pain. Accepting the peace and strength that the mountains impart. Granting ourselves permission to feel joy... and not feel guilty for doing so.

It was a weekend of letting go. Allowing the mountain peaks to captivate us. Inspire us. Humble us.

After Saturday's adrenaline-racing adventure on Mt. Pierce, I was excited to see snow in the forecast for our hike on Sunday. For someone who will never stop believing that snow is magical, I felt like an excited 6-year old.

Which is why I was disappointed when we awoke on Sunday morning, looked out the window of the motel room, and saw rain rather

than snow. "Maybe it will stop raining by the time we get to the trailhead," I said hopefully.

There was a heavy overcast when we arrived at the trailhead, but at least it had stopped raining. With no illusions that we'd get a view from the summit of Mt. Cube, upward we went. And as expected, the summit was encased in a cloud. No matter. At least it wasn't raining.

We had just started making our way down from the summit when Tom said, "Well it looks like you're getting your wish!"

I was so focused on foot placement as I carefully navigated the steep, ice-covered ledges, that I didn't notice it had started snowing! I stopped, looked up to the heavens, and felt the soft cold kisses of dozens of snowflakes landing on my upturned face. Intent on lingering, Tom and I found a relatively flat ledge and laid out our sit pad.

For half an hour, we sat with our legs stretched out on the wet granite, sipping steaming hot cider from our old green Stanley thermos. Staring at the snow and ice-covered trees against the backdrop of a ghostly sky. Watching the snow swirl and dance with each gust of wind. Feeling cold flakes lick our eyelashes. Hearing the faint whisper of flakes landing on snow-laden branches.

This moment was in stark contrast to the adrenaline rush we had experienced on Mt. Pierce the previous day... when the wind raged angrily in ragged gusts and the cold was so harsh it stung.

This was softer. Calmer. It was a reminder that, in life, we are handed both. The smooth and the rough. The quiet and the loud. The raging and the calm. And each one can hold sadness and joy at exactly the same time.

If I'm being honest, it feels wrong to find joy in these mountains when our 2-year-old granddaughter is in the fight of her life against the single deadliest form of pediatric brain cancer. But sometimes we need



time to exhale. To physically distance ourselves from the pain... while still holding it in our hearts.

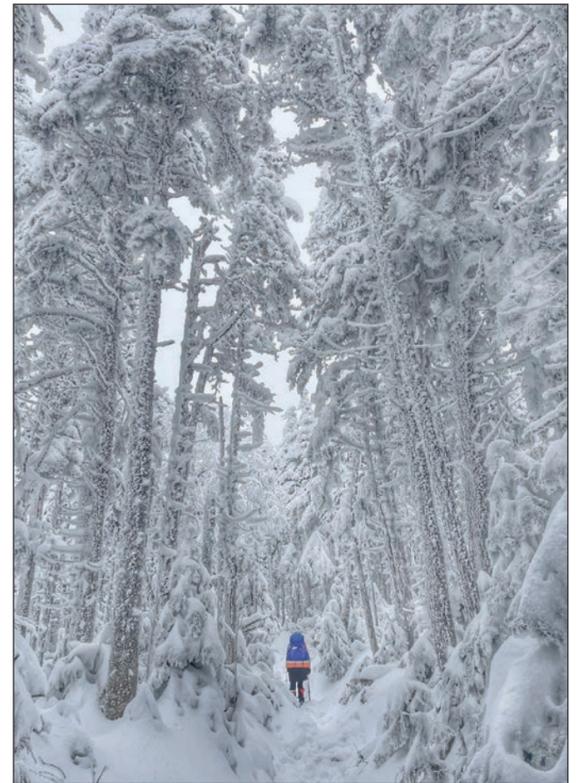
We're living in a season of extremes. Of conflicting emotions that are confusing to process. From the highest of highs to the lowest of lows. And it's hard to validate one, at what seems like the expense of the other.

But if this cancer journey is teaching me anything, it's that a heart can hold deep despair-and equally-deep joy at precisely the same moment.

I can be crippled by sadness one minute and smiling with joy the next. I can be consumed with fear one minute and filled with hope the next. And I'm learning that that's okay.

I'm learning to accept that peace CAN exist in the middle of chaos. We just need to open our eyes wide enough to find it.

For those who have asked about Charlotte, thank you. The monthly immunotherapy treatments are keeping her tumor stable. She is fighting like a warrior, and we are grateful for every precious moment that we get to be with her. Onward.



## Dementia patients may find peace in music



your health



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN  
Guest Column

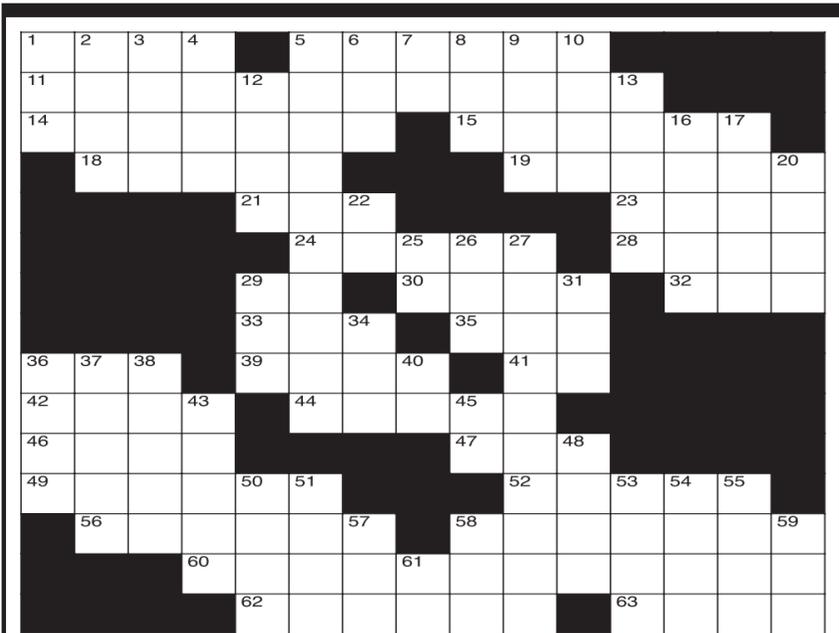
Elaine Lebar became a TikTok sensation at age 92 when her daughter Randi posted a video of her playing "Moonlight Sonata"

at her senior-living facility on the Massachusetts coast. At the time, Elaine had been living with dementia for nearly 10 years.

Randi Lebar said her mother had lost many parts of herself, but the music she began learning at age 3 was still there. "When she wasn't playing, she was lost and confused, but at the piano, she was happy and grounded," Randi said. Elaine passed away in September at age 97.

Randi, a retired orthopedic surgeon who lives in Sagamore, told us about her mom at the New England Patient Advocacy Conference, which I hosted at Ascension University in Worcester in October. And she got me to think-

See HEALTH, page 10



**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Dough made from corn flour
- 5. Rise
- 11. Gratitude
- 14. A low wall
- 15. Kidnap
- 18. A cup golfers want to win
- 19. Outgoing
- 21. "Partner" to flow
- 23. Former Michigan coach Brady
- 24. Proverb
- 28. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
- 29. Helps a body recover
- 30. Baseball Cy Young winner
- 32. Very fast airplane
- 33. Offensive baseball stat
- 35. Body of water

- 36. Record of one's heartbeat
- 39. Signs a contract
- 41. Atomic #24
- 42. Bind securely
- 44. French Jesuit theologian
- 46. Fragrant brown balsam
- 47. Post office box
- 49. Sells tickets at inflated prices
- 52. Places to hang coats
- 56. Jewish salutation
- 58. Yellow fruits
- 60. Poorly educated
- 62. Microorganism
- 63. Talk show host Barrymore

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. A way to plan
- 2. Three-banded

- armadillo
- 3. Mobile
- 4. Romanian city
- 5. Making sour
- 6. Take a seat
- 7. "The Golden State"
- 8. When you hope to arrive
- 9. Pointed ends of pens
- 10. Extinct flightless bird
- 12. Sharp-pointed dueling sword
- 13. Nape of neck
- 16. Problems (Spanish slang)
- 17. Narrow carpet
- 20. To avoid the risk of
- 22. Spiritual academic degree (abbr.)
- 25. Equally
- 26. Traditional cars still need it
- 27. Eligible voters
- 29. Greek alphabet letter

- 31. Body part
- 34. Referee-declared outcome
- 36. Means to moving money
- 37. Popular footwear brand
- 38. Cockatoo
- 40. NFL's big game
- 43. Botswana currencies
- 45. News-reporting organization
- 48. Batman villain
- 50. Urgent request
- 51. Not all
- 53. Hallmark's specialty
- 54. Knot in a tree
- 55. Satisfy
- 57. Notable space station
- 58. Baby's dining accessory
- 59. Stitch clothing
- 61. \_\_\_ and behold

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 8

### CHURCH DIRECTORY



Your Community Church

**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  
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www.blessedsacramentholyoke.org  
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**First Baptist Church**

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

**Our Lady of the Cross Catholic Parish**

Pastor: Fr. Albert Scherer, OFM Conv.  
Email: pastor@ourladyofthecross.com  
Holy Cross Ave., Holyoke  
Parish Offices are located at: 15 Maple Street, Holyoke (413) 532-5661  
parish@ourladyofthecross.com  
OFFICE HOURS:  
Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.  
Saturday 4 p.m.  
Sunday 7:30 a.m., 9 a.m. (Polish), and 10:30 a.m.  
DAILY MASS:  
Monday - Saturday 8:30 a.m.  
Legal Holidays Mass 9 a.m.  
Reconciliation (Confession)  
Monday - Saturday 8 a.m.  
Saturday 3:15pm  
Anytime by Appointment  
DEVOTIONS  
Monday - Saturday  
Divine Mercy Chaplet - 7:50 a.m.  
ROSARY 8:05 a.m.  
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**St. Peter's Lutheran Church**

Rev. Debora Stein  
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Office: (413) 536-3369  
Office: stpetersholyokeye@gmail.com  
Pastor: revdebma@gmail.com  
Website: www.stpetersholyokeye.org  
Social media:  
facebook.com/stpetersholyokeye  
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Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
Friday, 12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
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Sundays at 9:30 a.m. (also on Facebook Live) & Thursdays at 6:30 p.m.  
Other: Prayers with Pastor - Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. - on Facebook Live.

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church**

The Rev. Canon Joel Martinez  
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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)

## Holyoke Community College future-planning breakfast rescheduled for Dec. 9

HOLYOKE — Due to inclement weather, the future-planning community breakfast at Holyoke Community College has been rescheduled to Tuesday, Dec. 9.

Regional leaders from diverse sectors of the Pioneer Valley economy will now gather at HCC next week for a discussion that will help create the next chapter in the college's 80-year history.

The general public is also invited to attend this breakfast event, "Shaping the Future: A Community Conversation," from 7:30 to

10 a.m. in the PeoplesBank Conference Room (301/303) in the Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development, on the main HCC campus, 303 Homestead Ave.

"We appreciate your understanding and flexibility as we work to ensure meaningful community engagement while prioritizing everyone's safety," said HCC President George Timmons. "Your voice matters deeply in this process, and we look forward to the conversation."

The panelists include: Megan Burke, president of

the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts; Anne Kandilis, director of Springfield WORKS; Frank Martínez López, executive director of Enlace de Familias; Jason Pacheco, director of workforce planning and analytics at Baystate Health; Javier Reyes, chancellor of the University of Massachusetts Amherst; and Aaron Vega, director for the Office of Planning and Economic Development for the city of Holyoke, and incoming president and chief executive officer of the Western Mass Economic

Development Council.

Among the other attendees expected to attend are state Rep. Pat Duffy, John Reiff, director of civic learning and engagement with the Mass. Dept. of Higher Education, and representatives from MassHire Holyoke, Way Finders, Holyoke Health Center, Tech Foundry, Holyoke Public Schools, Dean Tech, Nuestras Raices, and the Public Health Institute of Western Mass.

President Timmons will kick off the event and set the stage for this community con-

versation. A question-and-answer session will follow the panel discussion.

"At Holyoke Community College, student success is a community effort," said President George Timmons. "When our students thrive — when they graduate, transfer, gain new skills, launch careers, and become leaders — our entire region benefits."

The event is part of "SP 3.0," the third iteration of the college's strategic planning process, which began with the start of the fall semester. The college drafted its first strategic plan in 2018, which

was refreshed in 2021.

So far, emerging priorities for Strategic Plan 3.0 include collaboration and partnerships, and workforce and post-graduation success.

"Together, we've achieved many of the ambitious goals of our previous strategic plans, creating pathways and opportunities that have transformed lives and strengthened our community," said President Timmons. "Strategic Plan 3.0 is the next chapter in that shared work, and we need to hear as many voices as possible to help us chart the course ahead."

## Wistariahurst to hold open house, holiday festive market

HOLYOKE — There's snow place like Wistariahurst during the holiday season! Wistariahurst's upcoming Holiday Open House and Festive market is perfect for those pine-ing for some holiday cheer, gifts from local businesses and artists, and family fun. The museum will be open Dec. 6 and 7 from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for this joyous event. The halls will be decked with the splendor of the holiday season, com-

plete with our massive Wisty Railroad train set running throughout Wistariahurst's gallery. Visitors will be able to explore the first floor 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, 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.

Guests can enjoy family friendly activities like a holiday storytime, family photos in our historic carriage, and get a holiday balloon animal.

Wistariahurst Museum's 5th 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. Don't forget to join us at this event on Dec. 6 and 7 from 11 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Wistariahurst Museum! It's the most wonderful time of the year.

This event is sponsored in part by the Adams Foundation of South Hadley, Bank ESB, Duryea Electric, and Holyoke Gas and Electric.

## Tree lighting this Saturday

HOLYOKE — Join Mayor Joshua Garcia and the Holyoke Parks and Recreation Department as the City hosts its Annual Christmas Tree Lighting and Parade of Lights celebration on Saturday, Dec. 6. From 3 to 5 p.m. at the Holyoke Merry Go Round, enjoy unlimited free rides, take pictures with holiday characters and visit with Dazzleday Balloon Artists. From 5 to 6 p.m. at City Hall, warm up with hot chocolate and

cookies while enjoying a performance by the Holyoke High School Bell Choir and Madrigal Choir. Watch the Parade of Lights depart from the Holyoke High School parking lot at 5:45 p.m., traveling to Hampshire Street over to High Street arriving at City Hall. Mayor Garcia will light the Christmas Tree at 6 p.m. For more information, please contact the Holyoke Parks and Recreation Department at 413-322-5620 or visit [www.holyoke.org](http://www.holyoke.org).



It took a long time in challenging conditions to get the fires out.

Submitted photos



Holyoke firefighters and neighboring departments battled two blazes between Monday and Tuesday.

### FIRE, from page 1

The fire department's Facebook page had multiple views of the fire, including shots of the water being sprayed into the blazing buildings. Firefighters were chal-

lenged due to the conditions at the time of the fires. Especially on Tuesday morning during a snowstorm, which transitioned into sleet and freezing rain.

"Holyoke firefighters did a tremendous job under extremely difficult conditions," Kadlewicz said. "They

faced heavy fire with zero visibility at times, with snow and ice making their work even harder. This fire could have spread even further and threatened even more homes, and I want to recognize their extraordinary performance in containing it. And all of us

want to thank our mutual aid partners, the Holyoke Police Department, and Holyoke Emergency Management for their strong support."

State Department of Fire Services Spokesperson Jake Wark is saying that early indications are that neither fire was

set intentionally. It appears one of the fires was due to faulty electrical wiring.

"Preliminary investigation by Holyoke Fire Department and the Massachusetts State Police fire investigators assigned to the State Fire Marshal's offices suggest acci-

dental causes in both cases," Wark said.

A total of 70 families have lost their homes and the city and its various charitable organizations throughout the city are working to raise money and collect food and other needed items.

### AID, from page 1

- The FY24 reconciliations are not complete and still show significant variances. Open Architects is working on this with the City.

- The FY2024 ledger is not closed.

- CBIZ will be completing the FY2024 Schedule A. We indicated to the City that we would not accept an incomplete/incorrect FY2024 Schedule A requiring amendment later, as requested.

- The city treasurer has partially completed the reconciliation of FY2025 treasurer's cash book to the bank statements. It was unclear what months had been completed.

- Due to the above, no reconciliations from the treasurer's cash book to the

general ledger have been completed for FY2025.

- The FY2025 general ledger has not yet been closed.

- No cash reconciliations have been completed for FY2026.

Director of Accounts Deborah Wagner, who sent the letter to Garcia, said it is clear from the meeting that issues surrounding cash reconciliation and the resulting inability to submit the Schedule A and submission for free cash certification are no closer to being resolved than they were when she issued a letter to the city Sept. 22. She did say she was encouraged the city had retained the services of a firm to help with the process of catching up the financials.

Free cash certification is process that takes places yearly with municipalities and DOR typically certifies

free cash before it becomes available by the city for use.

Wagner reminded Garcia that the pursuant to statute, the state has been withholding local aid payments, as well as future fiscal year payments. To date, Wagner said four payments have been withheld. The payments total \$28,787,372.

However, Wagner said in her letter that "the city's catastrophic multi-year cash reconciliation issues make indefinite application of the law unnecessarily punitive," Wagner states in her letter. "I am not of the belief that the best interests of the residents and employees of the City are served by continuing to hold the city's aid payments."

Wagner concluded held payments to the city will be released and the state will begin normal distribution going forward.

### SHOW, from page 1

Mrs. Claus who proves she's the real one in charge, and a street-corner Santa hilariously outwitted by one determined child.

Theater Company Director Bevan Brunelle said the program is working to expand what it offers, building off a huge mystery theater event held at De La Luz Soundstage last month.

"This year, we are trying a few new things to see what audiences respond to," Brunelle said. "The variety show was my idea. I wanted to see if we could fill the auditorium with families to spread some holiday cheer and bring the community together at Holyoke High School."

The event will take the place of the tradition winter concert to an entire theatri-

cal event.

"There are more than 100 students involved with the event as the various bands and choirs will be performing throughout the night," Brunelle said. "Older students have helped to direct the scenes of the variety show so all of the students are having a hands-on experience in bringing this show to the community."

The production also features playful twists on classic favorites like "Twas the Night Before Christmas" and "A Christmas Carol," along with lively carolers, a trio of kids trying their best to bring the Wise Men to life, and a wonderfully ridiculous lesson in Christmas etiquette.

Beyond the performance, the evening doubles as a holiday festival, showcasing student artwork, a bake sale, raffles and oppor-

tunities for the community to support multiple clubs and classes at Holyoke High School — all wrapped in festive spirit. We highly encourage the community to dress in your most festive holiday wear.

Join Holyoke High for an unforgettable night filled with comedy, creativity, and holiday cheer. Bring your family, your friends, and your seasonal spirit.

"This is one show you won't want to miss. This one-night event takes place Thursday, Dec. 11 starting at 6 p.m. with a pre-show performance by the HHS Madrigal Choir in the Holyoke High School cafeteria," Brunelle said. "And a 6:30 p.m. showtime in the John F. Sears Auditorium at Holyoke High School for the variety show."

Suggested donation is \$10 per family.

# SPORTS

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## Knights shut out on Thanksgiving

HOLYOKE – Last Thursday morning, South Hadley High School continued its 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. Holyoke's season finishes at 3-8 with South Hadley improving to 5-6 for the year.



Above, Lyshad Wilson looks to block a pass attempt. Left, Gabriel Centeno-Feliciano takes down a ball carrier.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Devin Velez attempts to make a tackle.



Thomas Daisy makes a block on the line.

Jesus Morales goes for the tackle.

Jose Feliciano attempts to make a catch.

## Holyoke Unified basketball season ends



Christopher Fernandez gets his shot.

HOLYOKE – On Nov. 19, Unified basketball season concluded with the season-ending jamboree event. Holyoke High School was one of the hosts of the event this year, which included multiple schools from the area. Here is more from that event, which featured multiple short scrimmages for the Knights.



Denise Figueiroa looks for the one-hand shot.



Emiliano Santiago takes a free throw.



Devin Feliciano shoots ahead of pressure.



Ciel Valazquez Roman shoots on the run.



Michael Valentin goes for the layup.

Turley photos by David Henry

## MIAA sets deadlines for finalized schedules

FRANKLIN – The 2025 Schedule Commitment Deadline and Process Reminder that the MIAA winter schedule commitment deadline is Friday, Dec. 19 for basketball and ice hockey. After that point, no changes can be made to your opponents or the number of games/matches that can be played.

After the Dec. 19 commitment deadline, all schedules will be considered final.

Three days before the Schedule Commitment deadline, MIAA staff will produce and publish schedules for each sport based on the available data for review and verification by member schools. Below is the breakdown for 2025-26 school year:

### WINTER 2025-2026

- First contest date: Thursday, Dec. 11
- Schedule data published for review: Tuesday, Dec. 16

- Schedule Commitment deadline: Friday, Dec. 19

### SPRING 2026

- First contest date: Thursday, Mar. 26 (Monday, March 23 for Spring Golf)
- Schedule data published for review: Tuesday, Mar. 31

- Schedule Commitment deadline: Friday, Apr. 3

# Westfield State Owls win tip-off tournament

WESTFIELD – Westfield State University senior guard Tavi Williams (Springfield, Mass./Minnechaug HS) scored 12 points and grabbed 18 rebounds in the championship game to lead the Owls to a 75-66 win over Albright (Pa.) College to win the 2025 Westfield Gas and Electric Tip Off Tournament at the Woodward Center on Saturday afternoon.

Williams was named as the tournament MVP.

The Owls improve to 4-1 on the season, while Albright

is now 1-4.

Williams was one of five Owls players to score in double-figures. Mya Silveira (N. Smithfield, RI) tied her for the team lead with 12 points, Morgan Berthiaume (Webster, Mass./Douglas) netted 11 points with eight steals, six assists and four rebounds, Grace Wigington (Lenox, Mass./IMG Academy) scored 10 points and Sophia Rockwood (Windsor, Vt.) also added 10.

Williams helped the Owls jump out to a lead that extended to as many as 16

points on a Williams 3-point-er with 5:02 left in the first half, with Westfield holding a 43-32 lead at halftime.

In the fourth quarter Albright ground away at the Owls lead, trimming it to as few as four, 68-64 on a Julia Zakovitch jumper in the paint with 4:03 left in the game. Westfield struggled to score late, but boosted the

lead back to six, 70-64 on a steal by Berthiaume and layup from Wigington with 1:44 left and the Lions were forced to foul down the stretch. Westfield canned five of six free throws in the final two minutes to seal the win.

Chrisdin Jones (Bowie, Md./Riverdale Baptist) led Albright with 20 points and



14 rebounds. 6-2 center Orianna Edmond (Lancaster, Pa./Hempfield) added 16 points and eight boards.

Westfield forced 38 turnovers from the Lions, and were plus-13 in the turnover game. The Owls connected on 10 of 38 three pointers, with more made three point field goals than in their previous two games combined.

Williams' 18 rebounds were a career high for the 5-4 guard. She grabbed 17 in a game against Coast Guard as a first-year player in the 2022-23 season. It was the

fourth game this season with double-figure rebounds for Williams, who is averaging 12.6 boards per game.

Westfield avenged an 89-74 loss at Albright from last season. The Pennsylvania school was a late addition to the Owls' schedule in 2024-25 when they lost several games from the schedule just before the season began. The Lions returned the favor of the long trip by coming to the Westfield Gas and Electric Tip Off Tournament this season.

## Public Notices

### City of Holyoke Office of Purchasing Request for Quotes

#### 2026-240CD Annex Cleaning

The city of Holyoke is seeking qualified cleaning vendors to perform a thorough cleaning of a previously unoccupied office space. The cleaning should ensure all surfaces and floors are restored to a clean, safe, and sanitary condition suitable for occupancy. Space may have had prior minor water-related issues; vendors should ensure cleaning addresses any residual effects while maintaining standard cleaning practices. Services to include **General Cleaning:** Dust, wipe, and sanitize all surfaces from floor to ceiling, including walls, ceilings, doors, windows, fixtures, exterior vents, bathrooms, & kitchenette. **Flooring:** Carpet: Deep cleaning (steam/hot water extraction), stain removal as needed. **Tile/Other:** Scrubbing, sanitizing and grout cleaning. **Hardwood:** Sweeping, mopping, and polishing without damaging finishes. **Surface Maintenance:** Inspect and clean surfaces for any minor residual effects of previous moisture exposure (e.g., odor) **Products & Safety:** Use environmentally safe products compliant with Massachusetts workplace regulations. **Waste Management:** Proper disposal of debris and cleaning materials. Selected contractor must have all equipment to perform services.

Documents will be available starting on December 3rd, 2025 electronically by requesting from [morrowj@holyoke.org](mailto:morrowj@holyoke.org)

A Non-Mandatory but HIGHLY recommended site visit will be held on December 9th, 2025 at 10AM on the 4th floor of the City Hall Annex Building, located at 20 Korean Veterans Plaza, Holyoke, MA 01040. This project is being funded using Federal Funds. Respondents will be verified for their eligibility to receive Federal Funds and must comply with all Federal requirements. **Submissions are due ELECTRONICALLY NO LATER THAN 2PM (EST) on Thursday December 18th, 2025.** The city reserves the right to reject any and all quotes if in the city's best interest. 12/05/2025

**THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION HIGHWAY DIVISION NOTICE OF A DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING**  
**Project Description:**  
 Chicopee – Bridge Replacement, C-13-038, I-391 over (ST116) Chicopee Street

### Project File No. 612187

A Design Public Hearing will be held to present the design for the proposed Bridge Replacement, C-13-038, I-391 over (ST116) Chicopee Street project in Chicopee, MA.

WHERE: Chicopee Public Library  
 449 Front Street  
 Chicopee, MA 01013

WHEN: Monday,  
 December 15, 2025 @ 6PM

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the Bridge Replacement, C-13-038, I-391 over (ST116) Chicopee Street proposed project. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

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

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisitions will be presented in the hearing.

Project inquiries, written statements and other exhibits regarding the proposed undertaking may be submitted to Carrie E. Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer, via e-mail to [massdotmajorprojects@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:massdotmajorprojects@dot.state.ma.us) or via US Mail to Suite 7210, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, At-

tention: Major Projects, Project File No. 612187. Statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the hearing transcript must be emailed or postmarked no later than ten (10) business days after the hearing is hosted.

This hearing is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (e.g. interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, live captioning, videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), TTD/TTY at (857) 266-0603, fax (857) 368-0602 or by email ([MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us](mailto:MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us)). Requests should be made as soon as possible and prior to the hearing, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten business days before the hearing.

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

JONATHAN GULLIVER  
 HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR  
 CARRIE E. LAVALLEE, P.E.  
 CHIEF ENGINEER  
 11/28, 12/05/2025

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758 Docket No. HD25C0357CA In the matter of: Alexandra Elizabeth Dibrindisi CITATION ON PETITION TO CHANGE NAME**  
 A Petition to Change Name of Adult has been filed by Alexandra Elizabeth Dibrindisi of Holyoke, MA requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to: Alexandra Elizabeth Goodwin

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**  
 Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: **Hampden Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 12/30/2025.**

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.

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

**M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.**

Date: November 25, 2025  
 Rosemary A Saccomani  
 Register of Probate  
 12/05/2025

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758 Docket No. HD25C0356CA In the matter of: Zachary William Goodwin-Boyd CITATION ON PETITION TO CHANGE NAME**  
 A Petition to Change Name of Adult has been filed by Zachary William Goodwin-Boyd of Holyoke, MA requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to: Zachary William Goodwin

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**  
 Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: **Hampden Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 12/30/2025.**

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.  
 Date: November 25, 2025  
 Rosemary A Saccomani  
 Register of Probate  
 12/05/2025

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758 Docket No. HD25P2460EA Estate of: Edison Lajara Hernandez Date of Death: 08/12/2025 CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION**

To all interested persons: A Petition for Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Angel Lajara of Chicopee, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: Angel Lajara of Chicopee, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve

Without Surety on the bond in unsupervised administration.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**  
 You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 12/29/2025. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

**UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)**

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

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

Date: November 25, 2025  
 Rosemary A Saccomani,  
 Register of Probate  
 12/05/2025

**City of Holyoke Office of Purchasing Invitation to Bid IFB 2026-20SD McMahon Elementary School Roof Replacement**

The City of Holyoke, 536 Dwight St, Holyoke, MA 01040, the Awarding Authority, invites sealed bids for IFB 2026-20SD the McMahon Elementary School Roof Replacement Project located at 75 Kane Rd, Holyoke, MA 01040. The work is estimated to cost \$4,200,000. Construction Schedule anticipated to start June 22, 2026, and substantially completed by September 1, 2026. Bids are subject to M.G.L. c.149 §44A-J & to minimum wage rates as required by M.G.L. c.149 §§26 to 27H inclusive.

Filed sub trades must be certified by DCAMM in the categories of MASONRY, MISC METALS, TILE, PLUMBING, HVAC and ELECTRIC. All Bidders must include a current

DCAMM Certificate of Eligibility and a signed DCAMM Update Statement. Filed Sub Bids will be received until January 6, 2026, at 2:00 PM and publicly opened, forthwith online. Prime Contractors must be certified by DCAMM in the category of Roofing and in General Building Construction. Bidders must include a current DCAM Certificate of Eligibility and a signed DCAM Update Statement.

A pre-bid walkthrough will be held on Wednesday, December 10, 2025, at 2pm for both General bidders and Filed Sub Trades. Bidders are able to meet at the main entrance of Holyoke High School, located at 500 Beech Street, Holyoke, MA 01040 to walk the roof first, then through the school.

General Bids will be received until January 13, 2026, at 2:00 PM and publicly opened, forthwith online. General bids shall be accompanied by a bid deposit that is not less than five (5%) of the greatest possible bid amount (considering all alternates), and made payable to the City of Holyoke. Bid Forms and Contract Documents are available electronically at [www.biddocs.com](http://www.biddocs.com) (BDO# B25-R5XY) or in person at Nashoba Blue, Inc. at 433 Main Street, Hudson, MA 01749 (978-568-1167) on Wednesday December 3, 2025 after 9:00 AM. Questions due by December 19, 2026, at 2:00 PM. The city reserves the right to reject any and all bids if in the city's best interest. 12/05/2025

### City of Holyoke Office of Purchasing Request for Proposals RFP 2026-23 Parking MGMT

The City of Holyoke is soliciting proposals from one or more firm(s) with which to contract for the following services: Provide Off-Street Parking services which will include the operation and management of 2 parking Garages, multiple surface lots totaling 1,384 off-street spaces(lots and garages 2,444 on-street spaces and 72 Handicap accessible spaces. As well as creating a unified parking system throughout the city. **Documents will be available starting on December 1, 2025 @10AM by requesting electronically from morrowj@holyoke.com**

**Proposals will be received until 2PM (EST) on January 13, 2026.** This procurement is being conducted following MGL Ch.30B and any other applicable public purchasing laws. The city reserves the right to reject any and all proposals if in the city's best interest. 12/05/2025

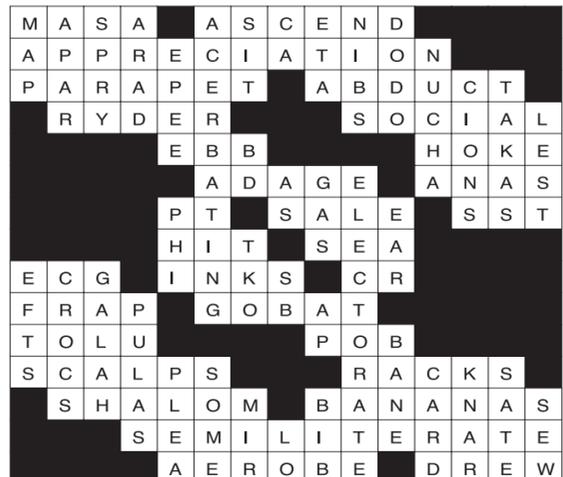
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This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate that is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertising in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain about 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.

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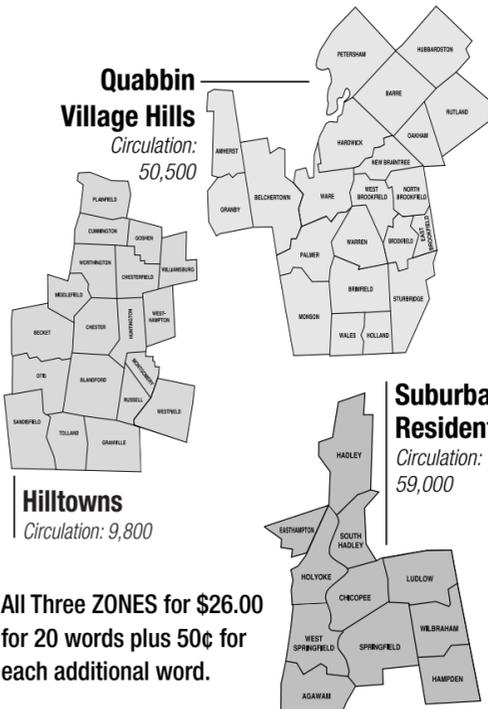
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29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
33 Base Price \$32.50	34 Base Price \$33.00	35 Base Price \$33.50	36 Base Price \$34.00
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## In The News

### HEALTH, from page 5

ing about the power of music to soothe and connect with dementia patients.

A 2018 study found that music activates parts of the brain that are more resistant to diseases like Alzheimer's, including the prefrontal cortex. Other research has consistently found that memories of music, along with the ability to play music, are often preserved longer than language and other memory skills. Yes, the brain works in mysterious ways.

Music therapy is widely recognized as a valuable non-drug therapy that can help manage many dementia symptoms, such as depression, agitation, apathy and anxiety. It can also encour-

age speaking and social interaction and even improve cognitive function. Family members and caregivers also enjoy the benefits of music therapy because it may make their jobs a bit easier.

There are some 8,000 licensed music therapists around the country who work with people of all ages and abilities, including those with physical and cognitive challenges. Whether or not a music therapist is on staff, some memory-care facilities incorporate music into their care of dementia patients.

Over a decade ago, residents at the Coler Memory Care Unit in New York were given iPods with personalized playlists. Results showed a decreased use of antipsychotic medications, reduced falls and fewer

physical altercations, they reported. Not incidentally, staff morale improved and the approach was shown to be highly cost-effective.

There are two main types of music therapy.

- **Active:** Playing an instrument – even simple percussion instruments – and singing appear to be most effective for reducing depressive symptoms and improving cognition.

- **Receptive:** Just listening to music seems to reduce agitation and may be more suitable for patients in advanced stages of dementia.

While a structured music therapy program may involve weekly lessons, art activities and guided listening, you don't need to be a music therapist to try music to help a loved one with

dementia.

Here are some recommendations and caveats:

Results may vary. Dementia patients are all individuals, and they may not respond in the same way to music. The stage of their disease, personal preferences and cultural background can impact a patient's receptivity.

Introduce it gradually. Experiment with an hour of music at different times of the day. You may find that evening or bedtime is best because many patients experience "sundowner" syndrome, which tends to increase agitation and anxiety.

Personalization seems to provide the best outcomes. Did your loved one play an instrument? You could see

if their muscle memory will let them play it. Otherwise, think about the kinds of music they enjoyed before their illness and prepare playlists just for them. Some baby boomers today may enjoy some soft rock more than classical.

Be wary of loud or fast-paced music. This can increase the agitation that you're trying to reduce.

Observe the effects. Music may prompt a loved one to reminisce, improving their sense of self.

Remember that, as of yet anyway, there's no cure for Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia. All you can hope for, really, is a calmer, happier loved one who is perhaps reliving some fond memories or emotions.

As Randi said, "If it

were not for her music, my mom would have just be another lost little old lady."

*Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, R.N., a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of [www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com](http://www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com), which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. A Monson, MA resident, she is the author of "How to Be a Healthcare Advocate for Yourself & Your Loved Ones" and her new book, "Advocating Well: Strategies for Finding Strength and Understanding in Health Care," available at Amazon.com. Contact her at [Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com](mailto:Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com) to set up a free phone consultation.*

### GARDEN, from page 4

window!

First determine how many you want to make, then set up an assembly-line of sorts. Choose a sturdy green for the base of the swag-extra Christmas tree boughs would be perfect for this as well.

I cut however many I need to the same size, and I lay them out pretty side up. Next, I choose another type of green a bit smaller and put it on top. I repeat the process six or seven times until I have a nice upside-down "fan."

Here too, varying texture is nice, although Mom's feathery white pine and pine cone swags are pretty by themselves.

To complete your swag, wrap wire around the stems four or five inches down from the top, leaving a loop

on the back for a hanger. You can cover the wire with a bow. I have often wired two swags together horizontally.

Place a bow in the middle, where the two intersect and hang your creation over a window or door, or even underneath a window for a different take on decorating.

Whether this is your first attempt at wreath and swag making or you've been at it for years, enjoy this holiday ritual, just as my mom and dad did.

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

### BIRDS, from page 4

for warmth.

They breed in the far north and montane west and visit most of North America during winter. Although it used to nest almost exclusively in boreal spruce-fir forests, the golden-crowned kinglet has expanded its breeding range southward into conifer stands of the Midwest and Appalachians.

They usually raises two large broods of young,

despite the short nesting season of the northern boreal forest. The female feeds her first brood only up until the day after they leave the nest. She then starts laying the second set of eggs while the male takes care of the first brood. The male manages to feed eight or nine nestlings himself and he occasionally feeds the incubating female too.

An interesting fact about golden-crowned kinglet's is each nostril is cov-

ered by a single, tiny feather.

The oldest golden-crowned kinglet on record was a male and at least 6 years, 4 months old when it was recaptured and re-released by a Minnesota bird bander in 1976.

#### Other Brimfield birds

This month the Brimfield resident saw a Carolina wren flipping over leaves in his garden. He said, "We joined the 'leave the leaves' movement and don't do a major fall clean-up to benefit the critters that survive the winter under the leave and in the other material left in the garden."

He also noticed robins and cedar waxwings in the crab apple tree in his yard. He said, "We don't usually see these species eating the crab apples until later in the winter. Fortunately there is a bumper crop of fruit on the trees this year. A couple of robins were also on the ground searching for food and I saw one robin at some pokeberry aka, pokeweed, eating the fruit. He has not seen any water fowl at the local ponds he visits regularly."

#### Lots of bluebirds

I received an email from a reader, who said his wife saw approximately 40 bluebirds on the causeway stonewall at Quabbin Reservoir.

#### Bald eagles

My daughter, Paula, took photos of a bald eagle in a field along the Ware River, on Church Street in Ware recently.

I saw a bald eagle perched in a tree on the shore of the Ware River not far from the Gilbertville line. It may have been the same eagle.

#### Migrating geese

I saw a large flock of Canada geese in a small, pond along Route 32 in Ware on Nov. 15. They covered over half the pond.

#### Helping birds

When it is time to take the Christmas tree down, place it outside to offer shelter to birds and other critters. Some people hang peanut butter filled pine cones rolled in birdseed or pieces of suet to provide some high energy food. Planting evergreen trees especially spruce and firs are away to attract the golden-crowned kinglets and offer a living shelter year round.

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



Turley Photo by Paula Ouimette

A bald eagle landed in a field after it had caught another bird for prey.

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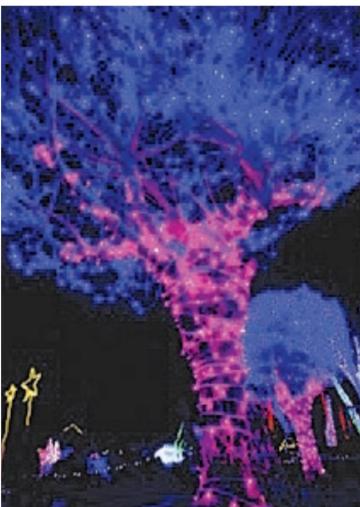
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