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Rebekah's Closet collecting toys, books

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – Rebekah's Closet at the United Congregational Church of Holyoke is doing a toy and book drive from now through Dec. 23.

The church is open to collect donations between 9:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. Monday through Friday. People are also welcome to call the church at 413-532-1483 to schedule a drop off time if that works better for their schedules.

From now through Dec. 23 people are welcome to come pick up toys from the church on Wednesdays and Thursdays between 9:30 a.m. and 2 p.m.

To pick up toys a person has to have a referral from a shelter, school or a similar organization stating that they are in need.

Rebekah's Closet Coordinator Paula Thouin is glad that she is able to help provide these toys and other items to families who need them.

"The joy of seeing the faces of the mothers when they are getting clothing and toys and things that they need," Thouin said. "I've always said I get more doing this outreach than I give."

Thouin finds this moment to be especially special as she was once in a similar position as many of these families.

"I was a single mother of a two-year-old son at one time," Thouin said. "There was one Christmas that I only had money to buy one toy for my son and someone showed up and anonymously dropped off a big box of wrapped toys for him and a couple of gifts for me."

Due to this experience, Thouin wants to help other people to be able to give gifts to their children that they otherwise may not be able to afford.

Rebekah's Closet is an organization dedicated to helping lower income families to get the supplies they need for their children.

They accept donations of clothing, books, diapers, carriages, car seats and other needed items for young children.

"We are always looking

See COLLECTING, page 10



The local historic district is located at Fairfield Avenue.

Turley photos by Quinn Suomala

Local Historic District Commission looking for new members

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – The Local Historic District Commission for the city is looking for new members.

This commission is in charge of overseeing the historic district in Holyoke, which is located at Fairfield Avenue.

Fairfield Avenue is the one historic district in the city, as to become a historic district an area has to go through a process on the state and national level. Each building on the street has to be verified.

"It is quite a long and

extensive process," Chair of the LHDC Lauren Niles said.

Since earning the name of a historic district can be such an extensive process, the LHDC works to ensure that the district continues to keep its historic feel.

"The LHDC is an oversight committee that makes sure that all the exteriors of buildings in the local historic district meet the historic criteria," Niles said.

The LHDC has been key in helping to maintain this historic area of Holyoke.

"We have so many wonderful buildings in Holyoke

that have such historical significance and this just preserves that," Niles said.

Niles was compelled to join the LHDC as she truly does care about historic preservation.

She is a resident of Holyoke and does not live too far from Fairfield Avenue.

"One of the things that drew me to Holyoke is the historic architecture we have here," Niles said.

She was also interested in this commission as she appreciated that they worked with

See HISTORIC, page 10



The houses of the local historic district are all preserved to ensure they continue to have their historic feel.



Each building goes through a long process to get a historic designation.



The LHDC is looking for more members.



Meetings of the LHDC are held monthly.

School committee discusses budget

By Quinn Suomala
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – The school committee discussed setting up a new policy for their budgeting procedures for when they get back into local control.

They plan to change their policy so that they only have to review budgeting transfers of over \$25,000.

Prior to this, the policy was that they had to look at any budgetary transfer, which the committee believed could cause a backup in their work flow.

There are 3,500 accounts in the school district budget, so if the committee had to approve every single transfer this could take up a significant portion of their time.

Due to this, the finance committee and Receiver/Superintendent Anthony Soto recommended a procedure to the school committee to have them look only at transfers over \$25,000.

"We had a meeting on budget with Glenn Koocher and that was one of the recommendations he had as well as having to decide what level you want to decide what budget process at," Soto said.

Glenn Koocher is the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, so the committee did want to ensure that they took his advice under consideration.

Initially, some committee members were hesitant to approve this procedure as it contradicted one of their policies, policy DBJ.

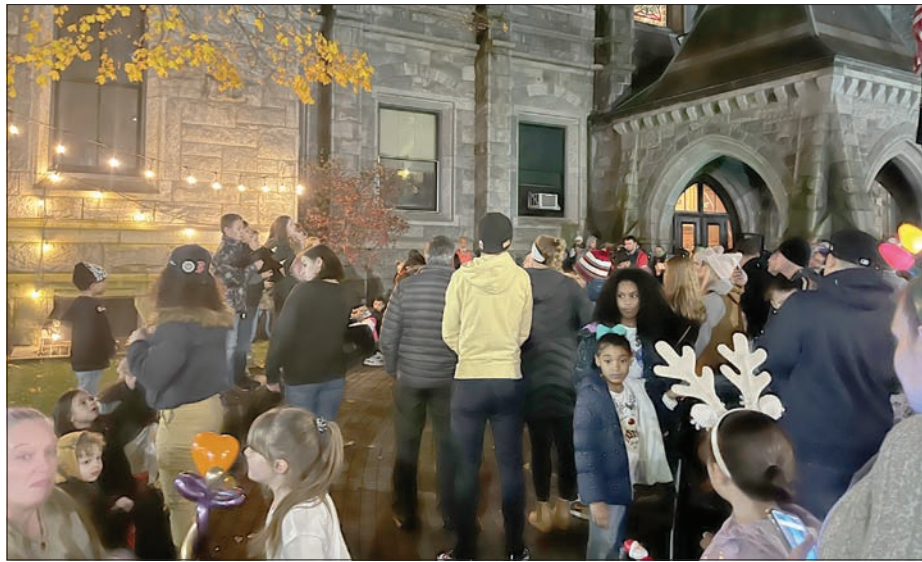
Policy DBJ states that the school committee will consider requests for transfer of funds as recommended by the superintendent and that the school committee will consider all line items in a timely manner.

School committee members did not want to implement a policy that could potentially contradict this.

However, Soto and others proposing this change clarified that they could approve this procedure and then send it to the policy and governance committee for them to discuss updating the policy.

Due to this, the committee approved this procedure

See BUDGET, page 10



City Hall will host a tree lighting event on Dec. 7.

File photo

City Christmas tree lighting to be held Saturday night

HOLYOKE – The City’s traditional celebration of the holiday season will kick off Saturday, Dec. 7.

From 3 until 5 p.m., the Holyoke Merry Go Round at Heritage Park will offer free rides. Children and families will have the opportunity to pose for photos with holiday characters. Also, at the Holyoke Children’s Museum, young people are invited to decorate ornaments in the Art Studio. All the while, roaming Dazzle Day Balloon Artists will entertain by twisting balloons into all manner of creative shapes.

At 5 p.m., City Hall will open for one and all to warm up with hot chocolate, cookies, and popcorn. Holiday characters will circulate in the hall, and a DJ will provide holiday music.

At 5:15, the First Lutheran School Ambassador’s Choir will perform. The Holyoke High School Madrigal Choir will perform at 5:30.

At 6 p.m., Holyoke Mayor Joshua A. Garcia will invite everyone outside for the annual Parade of Lights and the lighting of the Christmas tree that was provided by PeoplesBank.

Senior Center offers Bright Nights trip

HOLYOKE – Enjoy cookies and cocoa at the Senior Center before a leisurely bus ride through the 750,000 lights at Bright Nights in Forest Park. This three-mile drive-thru spectacular features festive scenes, iconic characters, and peaceful gardens, all illuminated for a joyous holiday experience.

\$15 per person and includes a Bright Nights admission, bus transportation, and driver tip. Payment in full is required to reserve a spot and must be received no later than Thursday, Dec. 12.

The bus departs from the Senior

Center at 4:30 p.m. to arrive at Bright Nights at 5 p.m., and be back in Holyoke by approximately 7 p.m.

Limited seats are available and reservations will be accepted on a first-come first-serve basis.

These are rain or shine events, and tickets are non-refundable unless a space can be filled by someone on the wait list. Payment for tickets can be made by check, payable to the Holyoke Senior Center, or by cash.

Please plan to drop a payment by the front desk at the Senior Center.

Girl Scout cookie season kicks off

HOLYOKE – More than 400 Girl Scouts and their families will gather at the Mass Mutual Center on Saturday, Dec. 7 from 4 to 6 p.m. to kick off “Embrace Possibility”, which reflects the Girl Scout Cookie Program theme for the 2024/2025 season.

Activity stations set up around the concourse reflect the cookie season theme and are designed to build business savvy skills to help girls run and manage their Girl Scout Cookie businesses online and in person.

The “cookie rally” begins at 4

p.m. and then at 6 p.m. Girl Scouts and their families join Boomer and the Springfield Thunderbirds for an action-packed hockey game.

During Girl Scout Cookie season, each girl sets out to sell delicious cookies while also building entrepreneurial and business skills that are imperative for leadership and future success.

Girl Scout Cookie order taking begins Dec. 11. Community cookie booth sales begin Jan. 17, 2025 and continue through March 16.

Mall extends hours for holiday shopping

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Mall is excited to announce their extended holiday hours to provide guests with a memorable and magical holiday shopping experience.

“There’s something magical about the in-store holiday shopping experience,” said Kristen Hinckley, marketing director at Holyoke Mall. “From spending quality time with friends and family in a fun, festive environment to finding the perfect gift for everyone on your list, and bringing it home the same day, it’s a tradition and experience that online shopping simply cannot touch. We’re

excited to celebrate the holiday season and can’t wait to share everything we have in store.”

The holiday festivities will continue on Black Friday with a performance by Dane Kane’s Rising Stars from noon to 3:30 p.m.

These talented young singers will perform holiday classics along with pop favorites on the lower level in Macy’s Court. The Westfield State Cheerleaders



will also have a gift wrapping station to spread cheer, raise funds for their team, and offer a convenient option for customers taking advantage of Black Friday deals. Shoppers who would like to bring

home their holiday presents beautifully wrapped can visit them on the Upper Level near Target from noon to 3 p.m. 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.

Santa Claus makes stop through Donahue School

HOLYOKE – Santa, Mrs. Claus, Frosty, and their festive friends are making a magical stop at Donahue School on Thursday, Dec. 12 from 5 to 6:30 p.m.

This highly anticipated holiday event has already received RSVPs from more than 500 students and family members eager to join the fun. Families will have the opportunity to meet Santa, take memorable photos, and receive a special gift generously

donated by Toys for Tots.

After meeting Santa, families can visit Mrs. Claus and other holiday characters for a heartwarming experience featuring cookies and cocoa in the cafeteria. Frosty the Snowman will also be there—weather permitting—to add some extra frosty fun!

The festivities will include holiday music, craft-making, and coloring stations for all to enjoy. Guests are encouraged to bring their own phones

or cameras for photo opportunities. For those without a device, photos will be taken and shared via email or text.

This event is proudly sponsored by The Sheriff’s Department and Hamel’s Creative Catering, whose generous contributions help bring the magic of the holidays to our community.

Join us for this joyful evening as we celebrate the holiday spirit together. Don’t miss out on the magic!

Wistariahurst Museum to hold holiday open house

HOLYOKE – You better watch out, you better not cry. Better not pout, Wistariahurst is telling you why: our Holiday Open House and Festive Market is comin’ to town! On Dec. 7 and 8 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., the mood will be right and the spirits up during this captivating weekend of jubilation. Our beloved museum will be decorated with the splendor of the holiday season and filled with cheer as we welcome guests back into our halls. Visitors will be able to explore the first



floor of the museum, listen to holiday-themed music, and discover the fun of our Wisty Railroad train set on display. But wait, there’s myrrh! Our winter wonderland will feature our Festive Market with local vendors selling 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.

“There is nothing

better than feeling the magic of the holiday season inside of the museum,” Rachel Powell, office assistant, muses. “The greatest gift we see at the museum is seeing people of all ages come together to celebrate the museum and community in the warmth of our halls.”

Wistariahurst Museum’s 4th 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.

Giving tree at library

HOLYOKE – 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 please do the following: Stop by the lobby of the Holyoke Public Library.; Select one (or more) ornament(s) from the giving 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 Wednesday, Dec. 11 at 6 p.m.; Gifts returned after this date and time will have to be held as extra items for next year.

Christmas toy, book drive opportunity

HOLYOKE – Looking for a way to give back this holiday season? Donating a new board book or toy to Rebekah’s Closet Christmas Book and Toy Drive may just be the way to do it. (see related story, front page.)

Rebekah’s Closet is an Outreach Mission of the United Congregational Church of Holyoke which supports young families with clothing and supplies for their infants and toddlers. Now through Dec. 23, Rebekah’s Closet is seeking donations of new children’s board books or toys for children from ages birth through age 5. Donations may be dropped off at the Church Office weekdays from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m.; pickups may be arranged by calling 413-532-1483 to schedule a pickup time.

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.

Mount Holyoke Range State Park offers December programs

REGION – Free public programs open to all. Meet inside the Notch Visitor Center, unless otherwise noted. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Inclement weather may cancel programs, call ahead. Trails may be snow-covered, icy, or muddy. For more information call (413) 253-2883

OPEN

Tuesday through Sunday

Notch Visitor Center, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Open December through mid-March. The Visitor Center features park orientation, trail information, exhibits, restrooms, and drinking water. Accessible by PVRTA public transit (Amherst R38). Wheelchair accessible. 1500 West Street, Rt 116, Amherst.

ONGOING

Tuesdays through Sundays

9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

RANGE REVEALS, Self-guided exploration stations reveal the wonders of the Range. Park staff available to help

uncover the story. Ages 7 and up.

How was the Range Formed?

The Mt. Holyoke Range has unique geology. Dig a little deeper into its fascinating formation & timeline. How is that story meaningful today?

See the Forest through the Trees.

Trees can reveal a greater ecosystem. Identify trees year-round —by bark! No leaves? - no problem! Learn basic clues, and try out your new skill. See the forest in a whole new way!

Wildlife on the Range.

Winter is a great time to see what animals live in the park. See how to identify these animals by the tracks they leave behind, and see what they've been up to!

ONGOING

Tuesdays through Sundays

WINTER WONDERLAND CHALLENGE Self guided exploration. Ask the Visitor Center staff for the challenge trail route and try one of these challenges as you trek. Return and share

with park staff your discoveries. Ages 5 and up.

Animal Tracking Excursion—who's been here?

Tree Bark Challenge Course—identify winter trees.

WINTER HIKING TIPS Before hitting the trail visit our hiking safety info board in the Visitor Center lobby. Park staff offer great trail suggestions too.

Thursday, Dec. 12 & 19

1-2:30 p.m.

NICE & EASY HIKE, About a mile, easy, staff-led hike geared for seniors, but open to all. Enjoy simple pleasure of a hike outdoors and conversation with others. Dress for weather, wear sturdy footwear and bring water. Hiking poles are welcome. Inclement weather cancels.

Fridays

10 to 11 a.m.

KIDLEIDOSCOPE, For ages 3-6, accompanied by an adult. Discover

local wildlife who make the park home. Includes a story, activity, and a craft. Siblings & friends welcome. Topics: Dec. 13, animal tracks; Dec. 20, animals sheltering in winter; and Dec. 27, winter hibernation.

SCHOOL VACATION WEEK

Dec. 21 through Jan. 1

STORYWALK*: Snow Birds, by Kirsten Hall

For families with children. Some birds migrate to warmer climates for winter—but what about those that stay and live through snowy weather? Walk and follow the story on the Visitor Center grounds.

*The StoryWalk® Project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. Story Walk® is a registered service mark owned by Ms. Ferguson. This StoryWalk® is provided by Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation Interpretive Services.

HCS Head Start announces new policy-making council members

SPRINGFIELD – When Head Start began in 1965, its founders understood that parents are critical partners in its work to educate young children. They also understood that this partnership meant parents should help decide which services would most benefit their families and those in the community. As a result, Head Start created a formal leadership and policy-making role for parents and community members called the Policy Council. This group of dedicated leaders are as vital today as they were nearly sixty years ago at the organization's inception, and here in the local community that is no different.

Holyoke, Chicopee, Springfield Head Start (HCS Head Start) is proud to share the election of the 2024-2025 Policy Council composed of parents of currently enrolled children and members-at-large of the communities served by HCS Head Start, which may include

parents of children who were formally enrolled. This newly elected group of leaders includes (in alphabetical order):

- Amber Cichowski, MA Head Start Association (Community Representative)
- Chalen Vasquez (Parkside Early Learning Center, Ludlow)
- Cinnamon Smith, Westover Job Corps (Community Representative)
- Dakota Bailes (Westover Head Start Center, Chicopee)
- Fanny Perez (Mason Square Head Start & Early Head Start Center, Springfield)
- Gladys Rivera (Carew Street Head Start Center, Springfield)
- Jeimy Diaz (Churchill Head Start Center, Holyoke)
- Katherine Gasque (Madison Head Start & Early Head Start Center, Springfield)
- Milagros Arocho Pumarejo (Robinson Gardens Head Start Center, Springfield)

Springfield)

• Sulema Chaj (Mason Square Head Start & Early Head Start Center, Springfield)

"I love working with Policy Council representatives," shares Nicole Blais, Chief Executive Officer, HCS Head Start. "Parents are key to the success of Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The Policy Council gives parents a seat at the table to make that difference. They help to keep our program responsive to the needs of our children and families. Also parents get to see another side of program operations. We have witnessed the benefits of how this inclusive leadership allows us to work together to support the work done at Head Start everyday, particularly around program planning."

Policy Council is part of Head Start's commitment to collaborating with parents at every level of the program.

Council members work alongside the Board of Directors and members of HCS Head Start Senior Leadership, to help set program direction, exercise fiscal and legal oversight, and create a balanced representation of voices that ensure stakeholder input, diversity and accountability to the community.

Children, parents, and the program as a whole, benefit when parents take on leadership roles. Children learn more and experience healthier development at school and at home. Parents can become more confident, gain skills, and connect with other parents and staff. Program staff learn about the strengths, interests, and needs of the children, families, and community they serve.

If a HCS Head Start parent or family member has questions about Policy Council, they're encouraged to connect with their child's teacher, family service worker, other staff member.

WSU launches paramedic program

WESTFIELD – Westfield State University is excited to announce the launch of its new Paramedic Program, beginning January 2025. Developed in collaboration with key healthcare providers and emergency management organizations-including Cooley Dickinson Hospital, Holyoke Medical Center, Mercy Medical Center; Fire Departments from East Longmeadow, Longmeadow, Southwick, and Westfield; and EMS providers from Chapin Ambulance, Northern Berkshire EMS, and Cataldo Ambulance - this program addresses the critical regional demand for highly skilled emergency medical professionals.

The program is designed to support workforce development by establishing a direct career pathway for Emergency Medical Technicians to advance to Paramedics. Through strong partnerships with employers in the field, Westfield State ensures the curriculum reflects

industry standards, equipping students with the skills and expertise needed for immediate employment in emergency medical services.

Students will benefit from a comprehensive curriculum, expert faculty, and state-of-the-art training facilities. The program includes one year of classroom instruction followed by clinical, field, and capstone internships, and can be completed in two years or through an accelerated 12-18-month track. To meet the diverse needs of working students, the program offers hybrid live lectures enabling remote participation with the in-person classes. Hands on skills labs are held in-person.

Applications are now open for the inaugural class starting Jan. 7, 2025. Prospective students can visit www.westfield.ma.edu/paramedic for detailed admission requirements and program specifics.

College theatre workshop to perform

SPRINGFIELD – The College Theatre Workshop at Springfield Technical Community College will hold three performances of This Random World: The Myth of Serendipity, a thought-provoking comedy by acclaimed playwright Steven Dietz.

The performances, directed by STCC professor Phil O'Donoghue, will be held at the Scibelli Theater on campus on Dec. 5, 6 and 7 and are free to the public, with donations accepted.

The public is invited to join the College Theatre Workshop for this engaging journey exploring how lives intersect in surprising ways. "This Random World" centers on Scottie, an older woman nearing the end of her life. Through interconnected stories involving her children, caretakers and strangers, Dietz weaves a tale that reminds us of the "myth of serendipity" - the idea that life's random encounters are often more connected than they appear.

"This play is a one-joke wonder," says Chuck Lavazzi of KDHX Radio in Louisville, Ky., "but the variations on that joke are so ingenious that it never goes stale, remaining thoroughly entertaining right up to the surprising final scene."

Director Phil O'Donoghue expressed his enthusiasm for the production, saying, "'This Random World' has challenged both actors and audiences over the years. It was a hit when it opened in 2016, and it remains a hit

to this day. Our cast has embraced the challenges of this amazing play, and I know our audiences will, too."

Steven Nelson, Interim Dean of the School of Liberal and Professional Studies at STCC, said the play offers students a unique opportunity to explore deep themes of connection, chance and the human experience.

"The campus community looks forward to the College Theatre Workshop's productions each semester, and we encourage the greater Springfield community to join us and see 'This Random World,'" Nelson said. "Thank you to Professor O'Donoghue and his talented students for their hard work in bringing this thought-provoking play to our stage at STCC."

Performance Details: Dates and Times Dec. 5 at 11 a.m., Dec. 6 at 7 p.m., Dec. 7 at 7 p.m., at Scibelli Theater, Building 2, Springfield Technical Community College. Admission is free but donations are appreciated.

Cole Wood serves as the Production Manager, ensuring a memorable and seamless experience for the audience.

"Come experience 'This Random World' at STCC, where a web of connections and coincidences unfolds, challenging perceptions about fate, relationships and life's unexpected twists," O'Donoghue said. "Don't miss this opportunity to enjoy a play that has captured audiences nationwide."

UCCH offers community meal Dec. 13

HOLYOKE – The United Congregational Church of Holyoke is inviting everyone to their monthly Community Meal, where they'll be serving lasagna with salad, rolls and more. Dinner will be served on Friday, Dec. 13 at 5 p.m. and will be immediately 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 St. 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. We welcome all individuals, regardless of where they are on their journey. To learn more about UCCH, please visit the website at www.uccholyoke.org, find us on Facebook or Instagram, or call the office at 413-532-1483 Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Guest Column



Am I entitled to more Social Security from my ex-husbands?

Dear Rusty:

I am 76 years old and a retired high school counselor/teacher. I was married to my first husband from 1968 until 1981. He is still living and he remarried two more times and, I believe, he is currently divorced. He is 77 years old. His income was always much higher than mine. I was married to my second husband from May 1989 until we divorced in April 2017. My second husband died in June 2023. What I wonder is if I am entitled to receive Social Security benefits based upon the income of either of my ex-husbands?

Signed: Twice Divorced Spouse

Dear Twice Divorced:

Divorced spouses are entitled to the same benefits as a current spouse if their marriage lasted at least 10 years which, in both cases, yours did. The other caveat is whether your own SS retirement benefit is less than you are entitled to from either of your ex-husbands. If your own SS retirement benefit is less, then you will get an incremental amount on top of your own SS retirement to bring your total monthly benefit up to your spousal or surviving spouse) entitlement.

Since your first husband is still living, it is likely that your best financial option is to claim a surviving ex-spouse benefit from your deceased second husband. The reason is that survivor benefits from husband # 2 are based on his actual benefit at his death, whereas benefits from a living ex-spouse, husband #1, are based upon his full retirement amount. In other words, it is likely that 100% of deceased husband #2's benefit at his death is more than 50% of living husband #1's current benefit at his Full Retirement Age.

It is, of course, possible that 50% of your

See SECURITY, page 5

Election letters to the editor welcome

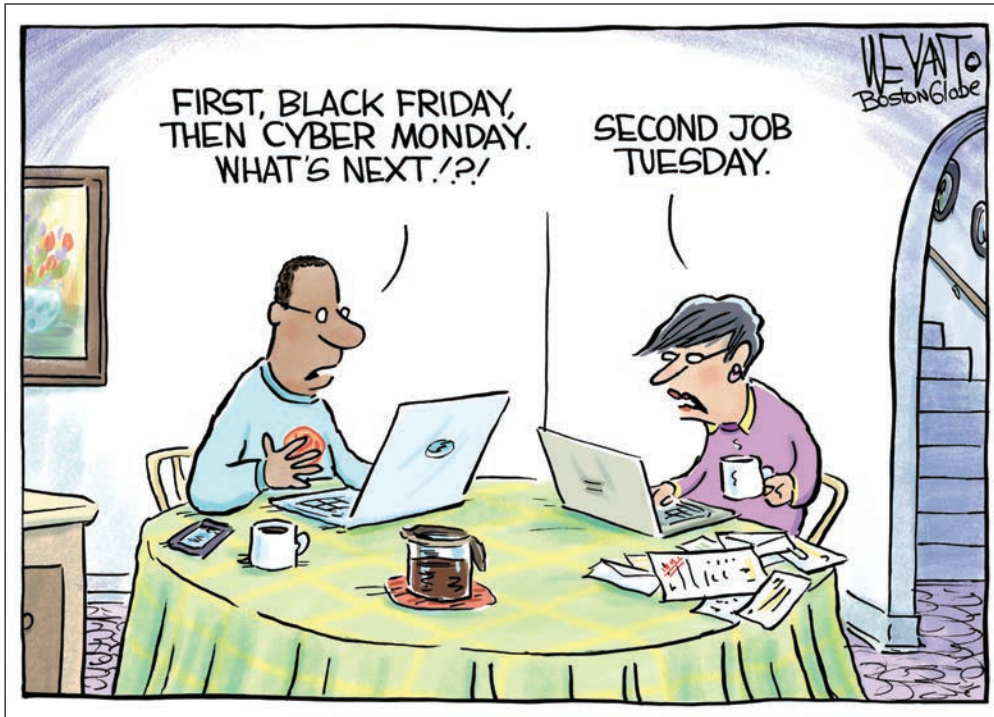
The Holyoke Sun welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to The Holyoke Sun, care of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

For more information, call 413-283-8393.

Campaign news

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

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



Guest Column

Live tabletop Christmas trees become year-round houseplants



Norfolk Island pines are nearly as popular as poinsettias this time of year, gracing chain store and supermarket shelves just after the Thanksgiving holiday, or perhaps soon after Halloween, these days!

Not sure exactly what they look like? Think mini Christmas tree.

These cute conifers come table top ready, predecorated with tiny little ornaments and a festive foil sleeve. Most stand less than a foot tall, yet the amount of holiday cheer they bring to someone who otherwise wouldn't have a Christmas tree is immeasurable.

Unlike cut Christmas trees, potted Norfolk Island Pines need not be discarded once the holidays have passed. Simply take their decorations off and they become an easy to maintain houseplant.

Although they look as if they would be hardy to our area, they are not, so don't plan on giving them a spot outdoors come spring-

time, or you'll lose them with the first hard frost of fall. Norfolk Island, from which the plant hails, is situated in the southern Pacific Ocean, northeast of Sydney, Australia – a much warmer climate indeed!

The only locations within the United States that the Norfolk Island pine is hardy are Hawaii, and parts of Florida and California. Southern Florida is home to many commercial growers of the plant.

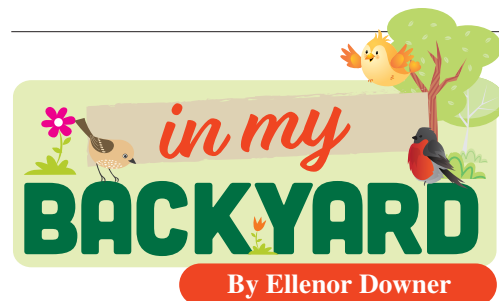
It is interesting to note that the Norfolk Island pine isn't a true pine at all. Rather it is an evergreen plant with needle-like leaves.

Side branches rise from the main stem at wide angles, giving it a symmetrical, triangular outline, especially when young. In the wild, heights can top off around 200 feet, with diameters between 9 and 10 feet. As a houseplant, it is very slow growing.

To keep your Norfolk Island pine looking its best for seasons to come, provide it with good quality light- a few feet from a south or west facing window is ideal. Give it a quarter turn at each watering and you will be rewarded with a nice straight stem.

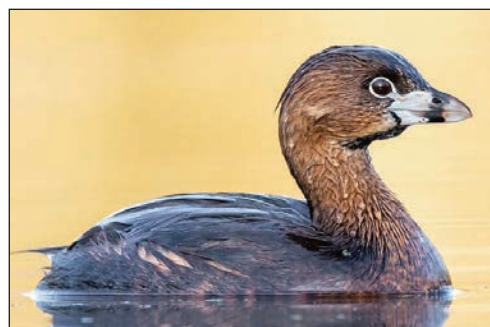
If window space is out of the question, it will do okay in a well-lit room as well, providing the lights are on for most of the day. Temperatures should range between 60-70 degrees during the day; slightly cooler at night.

See GARDEN, page 5



A Brimfield resident, who frequently emails about bird sighting saw a pied bill grebe in Warren on Nov. 6.

The pied-bill grebe is about 12 inches long. It is stocky and brown with a short stout bill. During the summer months, the grebe has a black ring around a white bill with a black chin. In winter the bill either shows a faint ring or no ring at all and the chin is light.



Pied-bill grebe

This grebe feeds by diving underwater and catching fish, aquatic insects, frogs and crayfish. The pied-bill grebe is one of the earliest migrant grebes to return and often arrives on ponds before the ice is all melted. They summer on lakes and ponds and winter in sheltered saltwater bays.

The female lays six to seven bluish green eggs in a platform nest of decaying vegetation, attached to growing vegetation in shallow water. In territorial skirmishes, males come together and tilt their heads up while calling. Parents may do a distraction display of flapping their wings between dives when their young are in danger. Their white rear feathers may be flashed when alarmed.

During breeding, calls are a "cow cow cow cow," a loud "keck keck" in alarm and a softer "cuk cuk cuk." The grebe generally remains quiet in winter.

Wild turkeys

I continue to see either one to three Tom turkeys or larger flocks of hens in my travels around Central Massachusetts. Although wild turkeys are now a common site, I never tire of spotting them.

Low flying geese

A few days a low flying flock of geese flew over my yard just above tree top level.

See BACKYARD, page 5

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

Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

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

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

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

Three Signs That You're a Difficult Patient



Difficult patients come in all shapes and sizes, but they all have one thing in common: they make life harder for their healthcare providers, whether they know it or not.

Healthcare providers not only work in a frustrating, fast-paced healthcare system, they spend much of their time helping people who won't help themselves. Are you one of them? If so, it could be interfering with your healthcare and therefore your health!

Here are three signs that your providers might think you're a difficult patient:

You Don't Follow Doctors' Orders

Noncompliance is one of the most pressing issues in healthcare today. When patients don't follow their care plans or medication guidelines, problems arise.

Noncompliant patients have poorer health outcomes—and they waste everyone's time and money. Yet if a provider were to ask a patient, "Do you plan to be non-compliant?" most patients would exclaim "no!"

So, what's the disconnect? Noncompliance happens for many reasons: a lack of understanding, an inability to pay for prescriptions, or a myriad of behavioral health and social issues.

Unfortunately, it's unlikely your doctor will ask you, "What's your plan for following these instructions?" But if you tend to ignore your doctor's instructions, you need to create a plan to do just that.

You Come off as Being Angry or Entitled

Some patients have good reason to be unhappy with the quality of their healthcare. Some have been on the receiving end of medical error. Some feel they've been treated poorly or have skewed perceptions of the healthcare system.

Whatever the reason, angry, entitled patients are their own worst enemies. Alienating care providers rarely results in better health outcomes.

Doctors, nurses and social workers are human beings. As such, they gravitate

See HEALTH, page 11

GARDEN, from page 4

It is important that the Norfolk Island pine be kept from temps below 50 degrees for any length of time or injury may occur. Therefore, be sure it is in a bag or protective sleeve when you bring it home from the store in chilly winter weather. Keep its soil moist but not soaking wet.

Sometimes lower limbs may brown and then drop. Age, as well as erratic watering can cause this problem. Repot and check watering practices.

Fertilize in the spring, once active growth resumes.

Perhaps the most cherished of all tender herbs is Rosemary (*Rosemarinus*

officinalis), the herb of remembrance. Its needle like leaves and fragrant foliage make it a wonderful candidate for use as a table top Christmas tree!

One of the more common questions when people toured Old Sturbridge Village's greenhouse in the off-season, was "How do you manage to overwinter your rosemaries? They are some of the biggest I've ever seen!"

In a controlled setting such as a greenhouse, it's really not that difficult. Tender plants can be given as much sun as Mother Nature provides, but with the use of thermostats and vents, temperatures can be kept to a minimum.

We set the thermostat at 55 degree night temperatures, and vents opened

when daytime heat reaches seventy. Low temperatures like these won't push the plants into growth when winter day length and daylight can't support it. Because of this the plants are stocky, not lanky.

We watered when the soil is dry to the touch – sometimes this might be as infrequently as twice a week during an overcast stretch, or as often as every day if the sun is out. For home culture, a sunny but cool locale is best.

For me, it's my "mudroom!"

One treat that many gardeners don't get to appreciate is the beautiful blue flowers that are borne on the plant in the short days of winter. Legend ties the plant to the Virgin Mary, saying that

flowers that were originally white were turned to blue when she spread her cloak on its branches.

Yet another reason that makes it a great choice for a mini Christmas tree!

With any luck, a Norfolk Island pine and Rosemary can go from being great Christmas decorations to wonderful year round houseplants.

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

SECURITY, from page 4

first husband's FRA entitlement is more than 100% of your second husband's benefit at death, in which case your ex-spouse benefit from your first husband could be more. The only way to sort this out is to contact Social Security at .800-772-1213 to make an appointment to apply for surviving ex-spouse benefits from your deceased second husband. Explain that your first ex-husband is still living and that you are unsure of what your benefits are as your first husband's ex-spouse.

Social Security will be able to determine from their records, which one provides you with a higher benefit amount, provide each husband's Social Security number when you call. As I said, your best financial option will likely be to take your survivor benefit from your deceased

second ex-husband note, however, if your first ex-husband also dies before you, you can subsequently file for a survivor benefit from him, if that is more than you are getting from your second husband's record.

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.

BACKYARD, from page 4

They honked as they went. I assume they landed in one of the beaver ponds near my home.

Birds at feeders

I put out shelled peanuts and sunflower mix seeds in the morning in my tray feeders. I have black-capped chickadees, tufted titmice, white breasted nuthatches, an occasional downy woodpecker, mourning doves and squawking blue jays.

I have not put out suet cakes yet as I want to be sure the black bears are hibernating. Last year, I bought a new suet holder for this winter. I don't want to put it out to early in case a bear shows up and walks off with it. Somewhere in the woods around my home, there must be a large pile of suet feeders taken by bears. If I was lucky enough to find them, I think most would be smashed and unusable.

Common raven

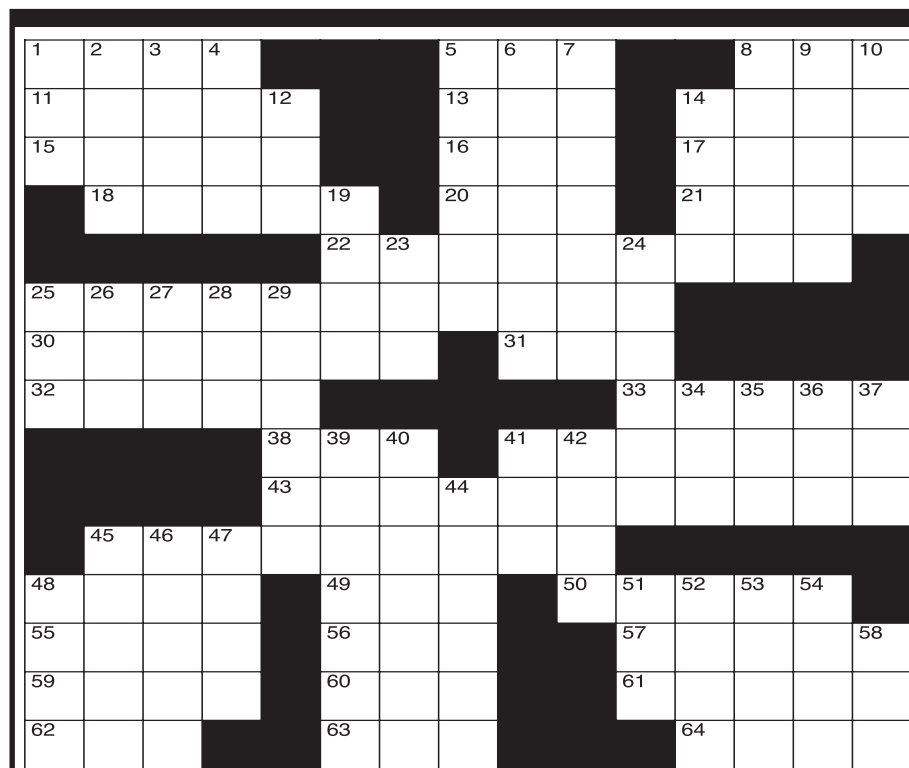
I continue to hear the common raven and sometimes see them flying overhead. They are much larger than the crow and make a low gronking sound.

Mass Audubon bird sightings
Cape Cod weekly wildlife sight-

ings are sponsored by the Bird Watchers General Store in Orleans and Mass Audubon's Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary. The following sightings were reported between Nov. 13 and Nov. 19. Cape Cod's second-ever record of a spotted towhee was found at the Provincetown Airport on Nov. 16. A very rare pine grosbeak, two white-winged crossbills and a late prairie warbler were also seen there. A snowy owl was seen in Provincetown. Along Race Point Road a western tanager and two evening grosbeaks were seen.

Birds from Race Point in Provincetown this week included a pacific loon, 400 long-tailed ducks, 1,300 white-winged scoters, 1,500 red-breasted mergansers, 500 sanderlings, 400 dunlin, five Pomarine jaegers, 1,080 razorbills, a common murre, two dovebies, 85 black-legged kittiwakes, 70 Cory's shearwater, 215 great shearwaters, four sooty shearwaters, two Manx shearwaters, 3,200 northern gannets, two Lapland longspurs and 24 snow buntings.

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



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Bar bills
- 5. Recipe measurement (abbr.)
- 8. Swiss river
- 11. Czech Republic capital
- 13. "Officially known as"
- 14. A French abbot
- 15. Having a strong sharp smell or taste
- 16. Local area network
- 17. Data transmission speed measure
- 18. Embarrass
- 20. When you hope to get there
- 21. This (Spanish)
- 22. Gives up
- 25. Churchgoer
- 30. Current
- 31. Slang for gun
- 32. Small drum
- 33. Vanished union bigwig
- 38. Rocker's tool of the trade
- 41. Dearth
- 43. 2024 Olympics host (abbr.)
- 45. Excess blood in the vessels
- 48. Afrikaans
- 49. Agreement between provider and customer
- 50. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- 55. Ancient Syrian city
- 56. Witch
- 57. Celebrations
- 59. Long period of time
- 60. A team's best pitcher
- 61. Current unit
- 62. One-time aerospace company
- 63. French/Belgian river
- 64. Swedish rock group

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)

- 2. Genus of clams
- 3. Remark
- 4. Actor LaBeouf
- 5. Ohio town
- 6. Olympic sport
- 7. Cure
- 8. Behave in a way that belittles
- 9. Shares a boundary with
- 10. Give advice
- 12. Promotional materials
- 14. Assist or encourage, usually in some wrongdoing
- 19. "Agatha All Along" actress Kathryn
- 23. Small piece
- 24. King of Camelot
- 25. Parts per thousand (abbr.)
- 26. Small Milky Way constellation
- 27. One who challenges authority (abbr.)
- 28. Equal (prefix)
- 29. Shawl
- 34. S. American wood sorrel relative
- 35. The end
- 36. Supervises interstate commerce
- 37. Yes vote
- 39. Officer of high rank
- 40. Church office
- 41. Tire pressure measurement
- 42. From a distance
- 44. Photographs
- 45. Industrial process
- 46. Nobel Prize-winning physicist
- 47. Map out
- 48. Mammary gland part of female mammal
- 51. Honorable title (Turkish)
- 52. Spongelike cake leavened with yeast
- 53. Speak incessantly
- 54. Poetry term
- 58. Relaxing space

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 9

2025 Grand Colleen pageant applications available

HOLYOKE – The Saint Patrick’s Committee of Holyoke is excited to announce that its application for the 69th annual Grand Colleen pageant is now live on their website. Eligibility, requirements, and the online application can all be found at holyokestpatricksparade.com/apply.

Applications will be accepted now through Sunday, Dec. 29. On Monday, Dec. 30, all contestants will have an orientation meeting at the Wyckoff Country Club and the pageant will take place on Saturday, Jan. 4, 2025 at Holyoke High School.

Each year the Grand Colleen Pageant decides the five finalists who then go on to the Coronation Ball to have

their Grand Colleen crowned. The Grand Colleen reigns with her Colleen Court on a majestic float over the two-mile parade

route. Not only does the honor of being a Colleen represent women who are proud of their Irish heritage and community,

but the journey helps them build connections, gain self-confidence, and develop skills that will help in their present and future career paths.

2024 Grand Colleen Elizabeth Gourd said, “I want to encourage anyone who is considering running or running again to please do so. This contest pushes you about 10,000 feet outside of your comfort zone but it will reward you for every single foot. It has changed my life for the better and I hope it can do the same for you.”

The 72nd Holyoke St. Patrick’s Parade will be held on Sunday, March 23 and the 48th Holyoke St. Patrick’s Road Race will be held on Saturday, March 22, 2025.



2024 colleen and court.

File photo

AAA reminds drivers that snowy conditions call for reduced speeds

REGION – As drivers cope with the first wintry weather of the season, AAA offers the following tips for driving safely in snowy, rainy, and icy conditions.

Stay home. If you really don’t have to go out, don’t. Even if you can drive well in bad weather, it’s better to avoid taking unnecessary risks by venturing out.

Drive slowly. Always adjust your speed down to account for lower traction when driving on snow or ice. Curbing your speed provides you with more time to react.

Accelerate and decelerate slowly. Apply the gas slowly to regain traction and avoid skids. Don’t try to get moving in a hurry and take time to slow down for a stoplight. Remember: it takes longer to slow down on icy roads.

Increase your following distance. Allow five to six seconds of following

distance between your vehicle and any vehicle in front of you. This space allows you time to stop safely if the other driver brakes suddenly.

Know your brakes. Whether you have antilock brakes or not, keep the heel of your foot on the floor and use the ball of your foot to apply firm, steady pressure on the brake pedal. Don’t pump the brakes.

Don’t stop if you can avoid it. There’s a big difference in the amount of inertia it takes to start moving from a full stop versus how much it takes to get moving while still rolling. If you can slow down enough to keep rolling until a traffic light changes, do it.

Don’t power up hills. Applying extra gas on snow-covered roads just starts your wheels spinning. Try to get a little inertia going before you reach the hill and let that inertia carry you to the top. As you reach

the crest of the hill, reduce your speed and proceed downhill slowly.

Don’t stop going up a hill. There’s nothing worse than trying to get moving up a hill on an icy road. Get some inertia going on a flat roadway before you take on the hill.

“Driving safely in wintry conditions takes practice, and many people in our region might be out of practice,” said Mark Schieldrop, Senior Spokesperson. “Bad weather and sloppy road conditions are a factor in nearly half a million crashes every year.”

The return of wintry conditions is also a reminder for drivers to check the condition of their tires, replace worn wiper blades and keep an emergency kit in their vehicles. Some suggested winter-related items include:

First-aid kit

- Blankets
 - Drinking water/snacks for everyone in the car including pets
 - Flashlight with extra batteries
 - Rags, paper towels or pre-moistened wipes
 - Basic toolkit including duct tape and warning devices such as flares or reflectors
 - Ice scraper/snow brush, shovel
 - Jumper cables/jump pack
 - Traction aid such as sand, salt or non-clumping cat litter
 - Tarp, raincoat and gloves
- AAA Northeast is a not-for-profit auto club with offices in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, New Hampshire and New York, providing more than 6.5 million local AAA members with travel, insurance, finance and auto-related services.



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South Hadley converts win over Holyoke

SOUTH HADLEY – On a rainy Thanksgiving morning, South Hadley High School football scored a victory over Holyoke 16-14, relying on a pair of two-point conversions to make the difference in the game. Each team scored a pair of touchdowns in the matchup, but South Hadley made conversions while Holyoke kicked point-afters. South Hadley scored both their touchdowns in the first half, and Holyoke threatened to take the lead late in the game, but the Tigers held them off late to get the win in the “Battle of the Bridge.”



Matthew Domoulin on a run.



Jayden Cauley-Guzman and Jacob Colon go for a tackle.



Devin Velez heads to the left side.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



Avantaey Rivera makes a tackle.



Lyshad Wilson leads the tacklers on a play.



Rory Norton makes a play on the ball.



Holyoke's goalkeeper makes a stop in the game.

All-Star soccer action

SPRINGFIELD – Last Monday night on the turf of Pope Francis High School, high school soccer held all-star games. Class C and D played in one match while A and B clashed in another. Goalie Landon Koziara represented Holyoke High while Rory Norton, a Holyoke resident, represented Hampden Charter School of Science in the match.



Landon Koziara punts the ball away.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Railers takes two of three on the road

WITCHITA, KS – The Worcester Railers HC (8-10-0-1 17pts) fell to the Wichita Thunder (10-9-1-0, 21pts), on Saturday night by the final score of 6-2 in front of a crowd of 4,009 at the INTRUST Bank Arena. The Railers are back on the ice next at the Cool Insuring Arena taking on the Adirondack Thunder on Wednesday, December 4 at 7:00 p.m. EST.

It was Wichita who tallied the first goal on the board as they took an early 1-0 lead 1:08 into the first period, with a goal from Jeremie Bucheler (1-1-2). Joe Carroll (1-0-1) extended the lead to 2-0 6:01 into the first. Colin Jacobs (1-0-1) then netted one for Worcester making it a 2-1 game. Wichita then scored two unanswered to finish the first period coming from Nolan Kneen (1-0-1) and Nolan Burke (1-0-1) making it a 4-1 Wichita lead headed into the second period. Anthony Repaci (1-0-1)

scored the only second period goal with his power play goal with under a second remaining in the period. Wichita closed the game out with two third period goals, the first coming from Michal Stinil (1-1-2) on the power play while Braden Hache (1-1-2) was able to score on the empty net to close out the scoring, leaving the game with a 6-2 final score.

The scoring came early from Wichita through the first 20 minutes of play. Wichita got started with a goal from Jeremie Bucheler (4th) just 1:08 into the game. Joe Carrol (7th) extended the Wichita lead to 2-0 6:01 into the first. The Railers answered back with a goal from Colin Jacobs (2nd) with just over eight minutes to go in the first. Wichita finished the period by pushing their lead to 4-1 with goals from Nolan Kneen (1st) and Nolan Burke (3rd). Shots favored Worcester in the

first 22-12.

Despite the five total goals in the first both teams scoring slowed down in the second period. It looked as if the second period would go without a score until Anthony Repaci (14th) scored a power play goal with under a second to go in the period making it a 4-2 game heading into the third period. Shots favored Worcester 12-8 in the second.

The third period was another low scoring period on both ends. The stalemate was broken when the Thunder got on the power play and cashed in with a goal from Michal Stinil (10th) 16:15 into the third period. The Railers went with an empty net late in the third trying to make the comeback, but the Braden Hache (1st) of the Thunder was able to get the puck all the way down the ice and score on the empty net making the final score 6-2. Shots favored Worcester 16-12 in the third and 50-32 in the game.

Hall of Fame hosting pair of college matchups

SPRINGFIELD – The MGM Springfield Basketball Hall of Fame Classic, presented by the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, takes place on “World Basketball Day,” Saturday, Dec. 21, at the MassMutual Center and will be televised nationally on CBS Sports Network.

“We are proud to work with local stakeholders to bring local businesses in as sponsors of the Basketball Hall of Fame Classic,” said John L. Doleva, President and CEO of the Naismith Basketball Hall of Fame. “Thank you to MGM Springfield and the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism for supporting the Hall of Fame Classic and helping us fulfill our mission of celebrating and promoting basketball’s history and bringing four great teams to the ‘Birthplace of Basketball.’”

“This iconic event in the birthplace of basketball is a hoop dream realized for many of the sports’ up and coming stars,” said Louis Theros, MGM Springfield President and COO. “MGM Springfield is incredibly proud to support and celebrate the Classic, honoring basketball’s rich legacy, inspiring future generations, bringing visitors to downtown, and shining a light on the City of Firsts.”

“The Basketball Hall of Fame Classic is a slam dunk for Massachusetts tourism,” said Kate Fox, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism. “By celebrating World Basketball Day in the sport’s birthplace, we’re inviting visitors from across the country to experience the excitement of the game and explore our state’s diverse offerings.”

Tickets for the 2024 Basketball Hall of Fame Classic are on sale now via massmutualcenter.com and the MassMutual Center Box Office. For more information, please visit hoophall.com. Group ticket pricing and hospitality opportunities are also available.

T-Birds climb back above .500 with win over Bruins

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – The Springfield Thunderbirds (10-9-1-0) got off to a quick start en route to a 3-2 win over the Providence Bruins (8-10-2-0) on Sunday afternoon at Amica Mutual Pavilion on a day when the two teams sported throwback jerseys. Springfield donned the Indians jerseys circa 1979, while the Bruins wore their late 1990s gold “Pooh Bear” logo jerseys.

The T-Birds jumped ahead on the scoreboard for a sixth consecutive game, this time just 3:51 into the contest. Scott Harrington settled a puck at the right point and fired it toward the net mouth with two teammates setting up screens. Aleksanteri Kaskimaki showed terrific hand-eye coordination, successfully spiking it down to the ice between the legs of Bruins goalie Michael DiPietro, giving the T-Birds a 1-0 lead. Harrington picked up his first point as a T-Bird, and Dalibor Dvorsky earned the secondary assist to extend his point streak to five games.

Colten Ellis drew the net for a second consecutive start, looking to extend a five-game streak without a regulation loss, making nine stops in the opening period. The Bruins’ first and only power play of the period, though, got the game evened when Patrick Brown cleaned up his own rebound following a splendid Ellis save at 13:49, evening the slate, 1-1.

Springfield failed to connect on its first power play, but the T-Birds took advantage with 1:56 of man-up time to begin the second. Samuel Johannesson got the play started from the right point, whipping a pass in the left circle to Marcus Sylvegard. The winger uncorked a shot that DiPietro deflected but could not cover. The rebound sat in the blue paint, where Matt Luff swooped in to backhand the puck across the goal line to give the T-Birds the 2-1 lead just 38 seconds into the middle period.

The Bruins attack could not get anything going in the T-Birds end, register-

ing just four shots on Ellis for the duration of the second. Springfield’s offense remained opportunistic and extended the lead at 13:04 when Dylan Peterson flipped a puck toward the net, allowing Reece Newkirk to slip it into the blue paint and Drew Callin to bury the loose change to make it a 3-1 score.

Providence did not go down easily as defenseman Mason Millman connected for his first goal as a Bruin with a slap shot just 1:36 into the final period to make it a 3-2 game. The Bruins had the bulk of the offensive chances in the final period, but Ellis and the Springfield defense did enough to prevent the home side from finding an equalizer. Ellis, who is now 5-0-1 in his last six starts, had 25 saves in the victory.

The T-Birds, who now sit above the .500 plateau for the first time since they won their season opener, rest up before welcoming the Bridgeport Islanders on Friday night at the MassMutual Center, with puck drop set for 7:05 p.m.

International Volleyball Hall of Fame mourns loss of Charlie Diener

HOLYOKE – The International Volleyball Hall of Fame announced the passing of Board of Directors member Charlie Diener on Oct. 29. He was a dedicated and long-time member of the IVHF Board of Directors. Charlie’s passion for volleyball and his unwavering commitment to the Hall of Fame were

exemplified through his leadership as past Chair of the Events Committee and his many years of service to our mission.

“Charlie’s legacy will live on in every event that we host, in every inductee that we honor, and in the many lives that he influenced while on the IVHF Board,” said IVHF

President Steve Bishop. “Back in 2017 we honored Charlie (and Rick Barry) with the inaugural IVHF President’s Award for their longtime service. They set the standard for future recipients of this award.”

“Charlie’s contributions went far beyond the planning and execution

of events,” said George Mulry, IVHF Executive Director. “He brought energy, creativity, and a collaborative spirit that inspired those around him. His tireless work and genuine love for the sport have left an indelible mark on our organization, and his efforts have played a significant role in shaping the IVHF’s legacy.”

► In The News

Christmas by Candlelight returns to Old Sturbridge Village

STURBRIDGE – Old Sturbridge Village is pleased to announce the return of Christmas by Candlelight, a cherished holiday celebration of New England’s festive traditions.

Tickets are now on sale to the public for select dates in November and December.

The Village will transform into a stunning winter wonderland beginning Nov. 29, featuring over 85 beautifully decorated trees on the Christmas Tree Trail, over 80 wreaths, hundreds of candles illuminating the pathways, and 5,625 feet of garland adorning historic buildings. Each evening of the program will kick off at 4:30 p.m. with a magical lighting ceremony.

Visitors can experience a variety of activities, including knitting Christmas stockings and baking traditional holiday treats. Guests can stroll through

the picturesque village and cross the enchanting Christmas Wish Bridge, a scenic path lined with trees along the Quinebaug River. Children will have the chance to meet Santa and Mrs. Claus in their new cabin, where they can share their holiday wishes.

Visitors are also encouraged to participate in the annual Gingerbread House contest, where creative entries will be displayed for public voting.

“Christmas by Candlelight is a celebration of the cherished traditions that make the season truly special,” said Rhys Simmons, Director of Interpretation at Old Sturbridge Village in a press release. “Our goal is to transport you back in time with an experience that delights all the senses. Picture twinkling lights adorning the trees, the enticing aromas and flavors of mulled cider and freshly baked gin-

gerbread, and the familiar sounds of holiday carols echoing all around.”

This year’s Christmas by Candlelight will feature an array of live entertainment, including historical performances and readings of Christmas tales for children. New this year is “Upon a Midnight Clear – An Acoustic New England Christmas,” a musical journey showcasing local artists reinterpreting classic carols.

In addition to the festivities, guests can explore the origins of classic traditions such as nutcrackers and gingerbread, along with a remarkable miniature nativity scene featuring over 600 pieces. The Richardson House will showcase Italian Christmas customs.

There will also be plenty of opportunities for holiday shopping

at the Miner Grant Store and the Ox & Yoke Mercantile.

“This event has become a tradition for so many guests year after year, and many families look forward to it as the highlight of their holiday season,” continued Simmons. “We invite everyone to experience the joy of the season, relish in classic traditions, and create new memories with loved ones this winter at Christmas by Candlelight.”

Christmas by Candlelight is made possible by our generous sponsors: Cornerstone Bank, Country Bank, G&F Precision Molding, and Southbridge Credit Union.

For more information on tickets and full event details, visit the Old Sturbridge Village website.



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. HD24P2495EA

Estate of:
Brian S Gallup
Date of Death: 04/06/2021
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Late and Limited Formal Testacy and/or Appointment** has been filed by **Carol D Gallup of Holyoke, MA** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: **Carol D Gallup of Holyoke, MA** be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in **unsupervised administration**.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 12/27/2024. 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 29, 2024
Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate
12/06/2024

LEGAL NOTICE CITY OF HOLYOKE GAS & ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT HYDRAULIC TURBINE MECHANICAL MAINTENANCE & REPAIRS ON-CALL SERVICES ANNUAL CONTRACT

Sealed bids for the above contract will be received by Holyoke Gas & Electric Dept until **2:00 p.m. December 20, 2024**, 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 \$25,000 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 in the best interest of the City of Holyoke.

Please mark sealed envelopes "**Bid for Hydraulic Turbine Mechanical Maintenance & Repairs On-Call Services Annual Contract**" and address them to:

James M. Lavelle, Manager
Holyoke Gas & Electric Dept
99 Suffolk St
Holyoke, MA 01040
12/06/2024

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. HD24P2434EA

Estate of:
David James Lumbr
Also known as:
David J. Lumbr
Date of Death: 08/21/2024
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 **Jon D. Lumbr of Southampton, 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: **on D. Lumbr of Southampton, 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 12/19/2024. 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 21, 2024
Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate
12/06/2024

City of Holyoke PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The Holyoke Stormwater Authority will hold a Public Hearing on **Monday, December 16, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.** to hear, pursuant to Section 38.0 of the Holyoke Ordinance, an application for a Stormwater Permit requested by AE-ESS Holyoke, LLC to construct a commercial 3-megawatt Lithium-Ion Battery

Energy Storage System (BESS) on a parcel located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Bobala Road and Kelly Way, known as parcel 176-00-004.

The hearing will be held in

person and remotely via video conference. Meeting location and zoom link will be posted on the City's meeting website in advance of the meeting at: <https://www.holyoke.org/departments/public-meetings/>
A copy of the application and site plan may be obtained electronically by sending an email to the Holyoke City Engineer at houllev@holyoke.org or by appointment requested through this same email address.

STORMWATER AUTHORITY:
Mary Monahan, Chairman
12/06/2024

City of Holyoke License Board

Notice of Public Hearing
The Holyoke License Board will be holding a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, December 18, 2024, at 5:15 pm.** You can join via Zoom.com; ID 89957138363; CALL IN: *67 646 558 8656, regarding the application for a **Transfer of License for Wyckoff Golf Inc. at 233 Easthampton Road**, pursuant to M.G.L. Ch.138.

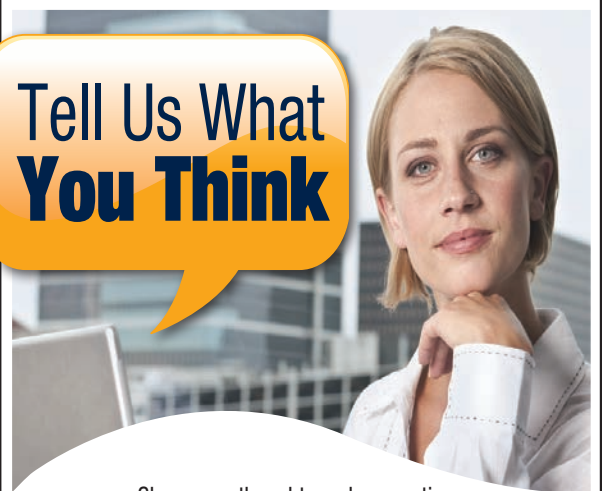
Applicant:
Wyckoff Golf Inc.
License Board:
Anthony Luciano
12/06, 12/13/2024

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.

Decluttering program fundraiser offered

HOLYOKE – NAMI-WM will be holding a Responsible Decluttering Program fundraiser at our office; 1221 Main Street, Suite 100, in the Catherine Horan Medical Building. Volunteers will be collecting housewares, gently used clothing, towels, small household appliances, books, sporting goods and much more. All clothing should be in kitchen or 30 gal. size trash bags, durable goods should be in manageable size boxes. Anything wet or soiled, in non-working condition, and any baby safety items will not be accepted.

Call the office to arrange a time to drop off items or to have them picked up. Visit the website to find a list of items that will be accepted.



Share your thoughts and suggestions with our staff and your fellow readers. Participate in our opinion pages, or contact us anytime with your feedback!

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Early Deadlines
for all LEGAL NOTICES...

All Papers Will Deadline Thursday, Dec. 19 at Noon for Publication Dec. 23-27

Happy New Year!

All Papers Will Deadline Friday, Dec. 27 at Noon for Publication Dec. 30-Jan. 3

Happy Holidays!

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 \$225, 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.

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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

A cherished local holiday tradition turns 52

By Tina Lesniak
Correspondent

SOUTH HADLEY – Starting Dec. 12, Santa’s Land at Buttery Brook Park will usher in its 52nd year as a cherished holiday tradition for the South Hadley community. This year, despite ongoing playground renovations, the festive magic is alive and well as families enjoy a series of exciting updates and timeless favorites.

“Even though there are renovations being performed on the playground, visitors to Santa’s Land will still enter through the south entrance to the park from Route 33 where it is decorated for the season,” said David Bernier, a member of the Friends of Buttery Brook and the chairperson of this year’s event.

Visitors to the event can meet and take a photo with Santa Claus, share their Christmas requests, then receive a cookie and coloring book from Mrs. Claus. After the visit, families can enjoy free hot chocolate on the log cabin porch and then take in the lighted displays of the park.

“Unfortunately pictures with Santa for purchase has been eliminated due to the decline in interest as visitors are taking their own photos with their phone cameras,” explained Bernier. “Visitors are welcome and encouraged to take photos of their visit with Santa to make those lasting memories. In lieu of the cost of the photos we welcome any donations to the park during this event. As always, the



Camden Harnas visits with Santa at the event.



File photos Lillian Schmitter with Santa at Santa Land last year.

donations raised go back into the park for the ongoing improvements to the park. This year we’ve added a calendar raffle to the event in place of the pictures.”

The roots of Santa’s Land run deep in the community. The event was originally created in 1972 by Joseph Taylor, the then-director of the South Hadley Parks and Recreation Department, with help from volunteers Joseph Ledoux and Paul Belarose. Held in the park’s original cabin, Santa’s Land quickly became a local holiday favorite. In the early 1990s, the event was taken over by Friends of Buttery Brook Park, a non-profit, all-vol-

unteer organization that continues to organize the event each year, in addition to several other community activities.

This year, Bernier, who has been involved with Friends of Buttery Brook Park for a decade and serves on the organization’s Board of Directors, is leading the event as its new chair. As a greeter at Santa’s Land in previous years, Bernier loves to hear from visitors who return year after year.

“There are the grandparents who as children were brought by their parents and have returned with their children and now bring or accompany their grandchild-

ren to see Santa and take in all of the wonderful lights and decorations that Bill Simard and the crew from the parks department work so diligently at every year to make this a memorable event for all who attend,” said Bernier. “Listening to the stories and memories, seeing and talking to the children who are filled with excitement and joy that they are going to see Santa makes it all worth the time and effort put into this wonderful tradition.”

Santa’s Land at Buttery Brook Park runs from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Dec. 12 to 15 and Dec. 19 to 22. The event is free, but donations are welcome.

HEALTH, from page 5

to those who are pleasant to deal with. They may subconsciously steer clear of difficult patients and family members.

Frankly, in these situations, all a provider can do is to listen to a patient’s complaints and address whatever is in their power.

It’s never okay to berate a care provider, yet it happens all the time. Often patients don’t realize how badly they’re behaving.

Find a way to share your concerns or frustrations with civility, even on a bad day.

You Talk Too Much During Appointments

When patients talk nonstop, it makes it challenging for providers to discern the important information from everything else. It’s rather like the boy who cried wolf; doctors may eventually tune out.

Doctors have limited time to see each patient. Excessive talkers unknowingly steal time from the next patient, while making it harder for providers to hone in on what’s important.

Ask yourself: who does most of the talking during your doctor visits?

How to Be a Good Patient

If you want good healthcare—and

who doesn’t?—start by being a good patient. Follow your physician’s instructions and medications as prescribed, even when you don’t feel like it.

Share your healthcare concerns with your physician, but in a respectful manner. Ditto your frustrations. Don’t create distractions from the main issue: your health!

Be mindful that in today’s healthcare environment, ER doctors and hospitalists are generally allowed about five minutes per patient. Doctors’ office visits are booked in 15-minute increments. So be prepared: create a list of issues you want to discuss and keep the conversation on point.

Remember, it’s never in your best interest to be a difficult patient. Partner with your providers to give them what they need, so they can best attend to your health.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of Northshore Patient Advocates LLC (NSHore). She is also founder and CEO of Nurse Advocate Entrepreneur, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. Teri offers a free phone consultation to newspaper readers as well as to nurses interested in becoming advocates. Reach her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com.

HISTORIC, from page 1

residential buildings and thus got to work more closely with the community.

Through working on the committee she has been able to interact with people who live on Fairfield Avenue and other people in the city who also care about historic preservation.

“A highlight for me has been getting to know the other commissioners and getting to know the people that live on Fairfield,” Niles said.

She has also enjoyed getting to tour other areas in Holyoke where people are thinking about applying to be in a local

historic district.

“It’s interesting to see all of the amazing architecture in Holyoke up close and personal,” Niles said.

One of the main things Niles wanted to emphasize about the commission is that they do truly work with the residents of the historic district.

If someone on Fairfield Avenue is interested in changing the exterior of their building they have to fill out a certificate of applicability and give it to the commission.

The commission then discusses if the change is keeping with the historic nature of the building. If they have any hesitation on approving the change, they

always work with the community member to find a resolution that works for everyone.

For those uncertain about coming before the commission to request a change, Niles promises that the process is simpler than many believe it to be.

“It is a very simple process to come before the board,” Niles said. “We really work with the community to solve any restoration they want on their homes.... we are always trying to work with homeowners to make it viable for them to keep up the historic nature of their home.”

Niles encourages anyone interested in the commission to apply. If someone

is uncertain if the commission is a good fit for them, they are welcome to go to a meeting of the commission.

“They can come and audit a couple of meetings and see if it is something they want to be involved in,” Niles said.

They meet on zoom at 5:30 p.m. on about every third Thursday of each month. Links to their zoom can be found on the city calendar at <https://www.holyoke.org/calendar/>.

Anyone interested in this commission is welcome to apply. They will be asked to submit their resume and information to the website at <https://www.holyoke.org/board-and-commission-interest-form/>.

COLLECTING, from page 1

for good, used clothing that is freshly washed for ages premature through 24 months,” Thouin said.

Monetary donations are also more than welcome as they can help the organization to purchase different items they need.

This organization was started in 2008 by the church as a way to support the community.

They have been serving the communities of Holyoke, Chicopee, Springfield and West Springfield for the last 16 years.

Unfortunately, due to a lack of funds, they are going to be focusing their efforts on the communities of

Holyoke and Chicopee beginning next year.

Thouin is grateful to all of the volunteers who have lent their time to this organization.

“It’s a good team that I have, we work well together and I am very appreciative of their volunteering to help the families,” Thouin said.

To pick up items from Rebekah’s Closet people need to have referrals from an organization such as a shelter, school, doctor or other similar organization stating that they are in need of these materials.

They also need to call to schedule an appointment so the workers at Rebekah’s Closet can ensure that someone from the organization is there to meet them for the pickup.

BUDGET, from page 1

and now the policy and governance will discuss altering the policy to match.

Until the school system comes out from under receivership, this procedure will simply have them practicing reviewing the different budgetary transfers but they will still not have any actual say.

“When they bring it for us it would not be for us to approve it, it would be for us to accept and receive until we take back local control,” Committee Chair Mildred Lefebvre said.

This will help the committee ensure that they are ready for when they are fully in charge of approving the different budget transfers.

“They are basing this on when you

have it for you to start implementing what that process is going to look like and at the same time you are showing them you know what you’re doing,” Lefebvre said. “This way they see we are doing what we are supposed to be doing.”

“We are going to start doing everything, even if we don’t have actual local control...but we have to have everything ready so that the minute that it happens we know what we are going to do after,” School Committee Member Yadilette Rivera-Colon said.

Now this procedure will go to the policy and governance subcommittee where they will discuss altering policy DBJ to match this procedure.

They plan to discuss this policy at their meeting on Dec. 18, amongst other policies within section D.

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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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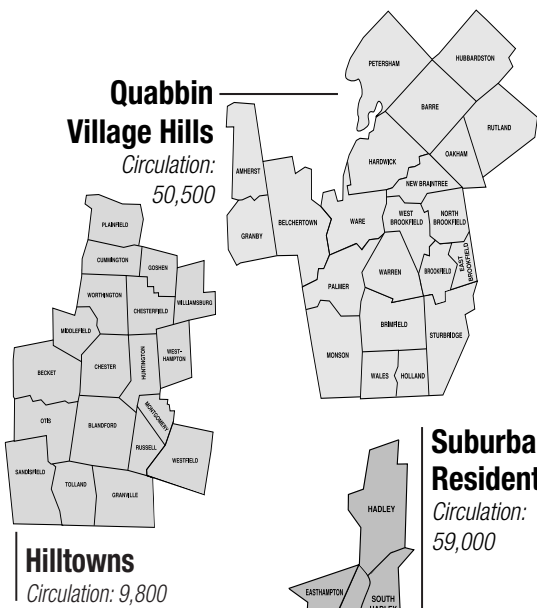
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In The News

HCC Foundation welcomes new board members

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College Foundation, Inc., the nonprofit fundraising arm of Holyoke Community College, has added four new members to its Board of Directors, including two alumni.

Rob Cestola, of Southamptton, a certified public accountant, and tax and finance consultant who serves as board treasurer for Dakin Humane Society; Dan Desrochers, of South Hadley, director of communications at Amherst College and former marketing director at Greenfield Community College; Deborah Rodriguez, of Springfield, an HCC graduate from the class of 2004, licensed clinical social worker, psychotherapist, and founder of FAROS counseling services; and Matt Manganelli, of Southamptton, an HCC graduate from the class of 2009 and retail lending sales manager at Westfield Bank who serves on the Western Mass Mortgage Review Board for the Massachusetts Division of Banks.

“Attending Holyoke Community College and earning an accounting certificate was an important step in my return to higher education as an adult,” said Manganelli. “I went on to the University Without Walls program at the University of Massachusetts, graduating with a BA in accounting, and then Western New England University for my master’s.”

New board members attended their first meeting Dec. 3.

“We are thrilled to welcome these community leaders to the HCC Foundation Board of Directors,” said Amanda Sbriscia, HCC’s vice president of Institutional Advancement and executive director of the HCC Foundation.



Deborah Rodriguez



Matt Manganelli



Rob Cestola

“The expertise and unique perspectives that Rob, Dan, Deborah, and Matt bring to the board will strengthen our ability to advance the Foundation’s mission, which is ultimately to support the success of every HCC student. This is such a committed and passionate board. Their leadership and good governance are what enables the HCC Foundation to be a strategic partner to the college.”

The HCC Foundation has total

assets of \$25.5 million and an endowment of \$18 million, the largest of all 15 community colleges in Massachusetts, due in large part to nearly 200 endowed scholarships and other funds established by alumni, faculty, staff, and friends of the college. In 2024, the HCC Foundation provided more than \$6 million to the college to support scholarships, academic programs, student support services, and facility improvements.

In 2023, the HCC Foundation Board of Directors was recognized by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges with the John W. Nason Award, a national honor that recognizes exceptional leadership and initiative.

Festival of trees at Agawam Library

AGAWAM – The Agawam Library is hosting a community-wide holiday gallery of hand-made trees throughout the library. The trees will be designed and created by participants and placed on display.

Who can participate in the Festival of Trees? Anyone. Individuals, teams, families, friends, classes groups, and co-workers are encouraged to collaborate and make trees out of unusual materials. All ages are welcome. We challenge you to come up with fun and creative ways to make a tree from scratch. Think of any kind of material (soda cans, Styrofoam, egg cartons, etc.) that you can fashion into a tree of some sort. Be creative and think of something unique.

You may drop off your completed tree any time between now and Dec. 6. There will be an opening reception for the Festival of Trees on Monday, Dec. 8 from 6:30 to 8 p.m.

Dan Kane & Friends to perform free holidays concert

SOUTH HADLEY – The Dan Kane Singers and Friends featuring Freddie Marion, will be performing on Sunday, Dec. 15 at St Theresa Church, 9 E Parkview Dr., South Hadley from 2 to 3:30 p.m.

The Friends of the South Hadley Seniors invite you to join us for this free Holiday Inspirational Concert. Free cookies and cocoa following the concert. No RSVP needed.



Scarlett Legasey

January 25, 2023

Parents: Thomas & Jessica Legasey, Rutland
Grandparents: Donald & MaryAnn Dunbar, Ware
Thomas & Sharon Legasey, Spencer

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Deadline for photos and forms is Monday, December 16, 2024



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