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Menard receives Gallivan Award

By **Brendan Rooney**
Correspondent

HOLYOKE – Earlier this week, on Dec. 9, the Holyoke St. Patrick’s Day committee officially announced that James Menard was crowned the recipient of the 2026 Daniel J. Gallivan Award. The reveal came via a gathering at the Elks Lodge in the Paper City.

The award is named in honor and recognition of Gallivan, who was from South Hadley and a longtime member of the St. Patrick’s Committee, and the award is given annually to a member of the Parade Committee who, while not a resident of the City of Holyoke, has made significant contributions to the overall success of the Parade and/or the Association.

Menard joined the Parade Committee at just 18 years old and has been a hardworking and dedicated member ever since. His commitment spans many years during which he has played an integral role in some of the Parade’s most cherished traditions, such as being involved with the Road Race Committee, where he strives to help organize one of the region’s most anticipated athletic and fundraising events. In addition, Menard’s work and reliability quickly became noticed,

See **AWARD** page ??



Tradition ‘lights up’ City

HOLYOKE – Last Saturday evening, the center of the city was full of activity as the Parade of Lights and annual Tree Lighting were held at Holyoke City Hall. The ceremony included performances by the Madigal Choir and Holyoke High Bell Ringers. It also featured an appearance from Santa and some other familiar characters to entertain the many children who attended the event. There are more holiday celebrations in the coming weeks, including a Hanukkah event this Sunday and a Kwanza event the day after Christmas.



Top photo, Santa waves to the crowd. Above, Vianny Anaya talks to Disney character Elsa.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Road work to cease

By **Gregory A. Scibelli**
gscibelli@turley.com

HOLYOKE – With snow falling and staying on the ground due to frigid temperatures, Mayor Joshua Garcia announced late last week that the city is now in a moratorium for road work through the middle of April next year.

“To ensure safe, passable streets and protect recently resurfaced pavements from winter damage, the Holyoke DPW is now implementing a winter road-work moratorium from Dec. 9 through April 15, 2026.” Garcia stated in a press release.

During this period:

- No routine road construction, resurfacing, repaving, driveway construction, or non-emergency street cuts will be permitted.

- Work will be limited to emergency repairs only (e.g., water or sewer main breaks, hazardous roadway failures, or other issues that pose an immediate risk to public safety or essential services).

- Contractors and utility companies are expected to delay non-urgent projects until after the moratorium lifts in spring.

- Any emergency roadway work conducted under the moratorium will require advance coordination and City approval to ensure compliance with safety, traffic control, and restoration standards.

Garcia says repair work taking place with the different types of storms the city encounters make the morato-

See **WORK**, page ??

Treasurer position becomes appointed

By **Gregory A. Scibelli**
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HOLYOKE – Months after voters in the city favored making the city treasurer’s position an appointed position rather than an elected office, the Holyoke City Council finally added the position to the city ranks by ordinance.

The ordinance establishes the position and sets a pay range that the city council will go by in order to find an individual to take the position.

The new ordinance sets the salary for the appointed treasurer at a starting range of \$101,000 to \$140,000. Unlike an elected position, the ordinance for the appointed position sets minimum requirements to be the treasurer. Job requirements include having at least a Masters Degree in accounting or finance and/or public administration. It also seeks three to five years of prior experience in the field.

As an alternatives, someone who applies for the position and only holds a Bachelor’s Degree can substitute the advanced degree with five to eight years of experience.

The city council will be the interviewing as well as the appointing authority.

During discussion of approving the new position, there was discussion about an eventual goal to have the treasurer and tax collector positions combined. The tax collector is already an appointed position.

Changing the treasurer to a city job rather than an elected position was unanimously supported by the city council and Mayor Joshua Garcia. The Massachusetts Department of Revenue, which just recently released aid payments to the city amidst issues with resolving the city’s financial records for the past few years, has long recommended to city’s and towns change the position to appointed so that a qualified person could be in the position.

Holyoke’s current treasurer is Rory Casey, who was the fourth treasurer elected in 10 years, is not planning to be in the running to be the new treasurer once one has to be appointed at the end of his term in early 2026.

With the ordinance being approved, the city will need to act quickly to hold an application process and then conduct interviews. The council would then need to agree to on a candidate and make an offer and negotiate with

See **POSITION**, page ??

Chamber power hour highlights community generosity

HOLYOKE – The Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce’s recent Power Hour event showcased the profound generosity of the local business community, resulting in significant contributions to The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts.

The event, hosted by 850 High Street LLC, brought together business leaders to support vital local causes and demonstrated a powerful response to community needs.

During the event, Grzelak, Grzelak and Associates, PC presented a \$5,000 check to The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. Daruma BBQ, a new Chamber member and recently established Holyoke business, contributed a \$1,000 check, amplifying the impact of the gathering and underscoring the commitment of both long-standing and new businesses to the region’s well-being.

In a display of immediate community support, refreshments from the Power Hour event were delivered directly to firefighters monitoring the scene of the recent fire at Franklin and High Street. The fire occurred in close proximity to the event’s host, 850 High Street LLC, and the donation provided on-scene support to the first responders. This spontaneous act of kindness highlighted the Chamber’s ability to pivot and address real-time community needs.



Grzelak, Grzelak and Associates, PC presented a \$5,000 check to The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. Numerous food donations came in as families are still reeling from last week’s fires. Submitted photo

The Power Hour served as a testament to the business community’s dedication to tackling food insecurity and supporting local heroes. The funds presented will aid The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts in its mission to provide nutritious food to individuals across the region, while the direct food donation offered timely relief to emergency personnel.





Celebrate Hanukkah Dec. 14

HOLYOKE — A Hanukkah celebration organized by Congregation Sons of Zion in collaboration with Congregation Rodphey Sholom will be held at Holyoke City Hall, 536 Dwight Street, on Sunday, Dec. 14, at 5:30 p.m. The public is invited.

This tenth annual celebration at City Hall will include the lighting of the Menorah, speakers, songs, and refreshments. There will be dreidels, gelt, and a reading corner for children.

For 2025, Hanukkah

begins at sundown on December 14 and lasts for eight nights. The holiday ends at sundown on Dec. 22. The first day of Hanukkah takes place each year on the 25th of the month of Kislev in the Hebrew calendar, which corresponds to November-December in the Gregorian calendar. The Hebrew calendar is based on the lunar cycle, which means the dates of the holiday change yearly.

Information: Holyoke Mayor's Office, 413-561-1600.

COLLEGE NOTES

Holyoke Community College recognizes fall 2025 graduates

HOLYOKE — Holyoke Community College is proud to recognize the following students who will complete their requirements for graduation at the end of the fall 2025 semester. These members of the Class of 2026 were recognized at HCC's third Fall Graduate Reception on Monday, Dec. 1, in the college's Leslie Phillips Theater and will also be invited to participate in HCC's 79th Commencement exercises at

the MassMutual Center in Springfield, Mass., on May 30, 2026.

Holyoke graduates:

Fatima Bergman, Dustin Bonnoyer, Genesis Cardona, Julian Danilchenko, Ish Flores, Ana Gillis, Eliana Langlois, Legheda Laporte, Han Laprade, AJ Lassend, Shawn Lebron, Lizbeth Martinez, Kiara Martinez Melendez, Steven Pinkney, Kristen Renta-Vazquez, Lily Rivera, Stephen Szewczyk, Mahaya Tabin.

Head Start recognizes leadership groups

SPRINGFIELD — Holyoke, Chicopee, Springfield Head Start (HCS Head Start) is proud to acknowledge the dedicated members of its Board of Directors and parent-led Policy Council; as well as welcome new members to each. Everyone involved in these two leadership groups continue to show their deep commitment to the organization's mission of providing high quality early childhood education and family support services.

The HCS Head Start Board of Directors provides strategic oversight, fiscal management, and leadership for the program. Key responsibilities include hiring and evaluating the Executive Director, approving the annual budget, establishing policies, ensuring legal and regulatory compliance, and guiding the long-term direction of the organization. The Board works to create a healthy learning

environment and oversees the program's overall mission and goals.

2025-2026 Board of Directors Executive Committee:

- Board Chairperson: Susan Gosselin, 10 years on Board (8 years as Chair); retired Director of Literacy, Springfield Public Schools; Springfield resident

- Board Vice-Chairperson: Raymond Akers, 11 years on Board (8 years as Vice-Chair and previously on Policy Council); retired from Costco; Springfield resident

- Board Treasurer/Clerk: Alison Walsh, CPA, 14 years on Board (10 years as Treasurer/Clerk); Boisselle Morton & Wolkowicz, LLP; Springfield resident

Additional Board Members:

- Andrew Balder, M.D.: 15 years on Board; Baystate Mason Square NHC; Longmeadow resident

- Cynthia Miller,

M.Ed.: First year on Board; Springfield International Charter School; Hampden resident

- Daniel Blakesley, Esq.: 6 years on Board; Pellegrini, Seeley, Ryan & Blakesley, PC; Longmeadow resident

- Jennifer Wallace Jacoby: 11 years on Board; Professor, Mount Holyoke College; Amherst resident

- Kate Barlow, Ph.D.: First year on Board; Pediatric International, Therapy Services, LLC; Wilbraham resident

- Marie-Ange Delimon: 2 years (previously on Policy Council); Director of Community Impact, Tech Foundry; East Longmeadow resident

- Sally Carlton, Ph.D.: 11 years on Board; retired Psychologist, Chicopee Public Schools; Holyoke resident

Across the country, Head Start organizations engage parents and commu-

nity representatives to make up local Policy Councils. These individuals provide input and guidance on program decisions. Council members play a critical role in shaping policies, ensuring accountability, and representing the voices of the families and communities served by HCS Head Start. Their active participation helps ensure the program remains responsive, effective, and aligned with the needs of the children and families it serves.

2025-2026 Policy Council Members:

- Jasarah Burgos: Chairperson

- Kathy Gasque: Vice-Chairperson

- Gladys Rivera: Shared Governance Liaison

- Amber Cichowski

- Cinnamon Smith

- Esther Alicea

- Fanny Perez

- Maritza Sostre

- Monalisa Smith

- Raven Core

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.

HG&E announces extra holiday discount

HOLYOKE — Holyoke Gas & Electric's Commission recently approved an extra 10% Holiday discount for HG&E customers, to be applied to energy services billed during the December billing cycle.

"The holidays are a special time to reflect on what makes Holyoke such a strong community," said HG&E Commission Chairman Fran Hoey. "We hope this extra discount brings a bit of relief and cheer to our customers as we celebrate the season together."

For the average homeowner who heats with natural gas, the combined discounts (prompt payment and

holiday discount) amount to savings of approximately \$80 on their bill. HG&E has implemented a holiday discount each year since 1992. This discount applies to commercial and residential gas and electricity customers who are not already participating in an economic development discount program and is subject to the prompt payment discount terms.

While HG&E is proud to offer some of the lowest utility rates in the region, we understand that inflation and the rising cost of everyday expenses are having an impact on our customers and we are here to help. HG&E has a variety of resources

that can assist customers who are facing financial hardship, including payment plans, energy efficiency programs, and connections to fuel assistance.

For customers who are looking to save energy and money this winter, HG&E has a variety of resources that can assist customers, visit hged.com/save or contact customer service by calling (413) 536-9300.

"Everyone at HG&E sends their best wishes for a warm and bright holiday season," said Jim Lavelle, General Manager.

For more information please contact, Kate Sullivan Craven at 413.536.9333 or ksullivan@hged.com.

Plow contractors wanted in city

HOLYOKE — With winter nearing, the Department of Public Works is seeking individuals to assist city plow operators in the 2025-2026 winter season.

Qualified individuals with the proper equipment are encouraged to apply in person at: DPW, 63 Canal Street, Holyoke

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Email:jamie@turley.com

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HCC to hold Walk-In Week Dec. 15-18

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College will hold a special “Walk-In Week” registration event for its Wintersession and Spring 2026 semester classes Monday, Dec. 15, through Thursday, Dec. 18. During Walk-In Week, prospective students and accepted students can complete their enrollment steps to be ready for the start of Wintersession or the spring semester. Students can apply for admission, take

the college placement test, meet with an academic adviser, register for classes, and set up financial aid. Walk-In Week will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and takes place on the first floor of the Campus Center on the main campus at 303 Homestead Ave. HCC’s 10-day Wintersession term begins Monday, Jan. 5, and ends Friday, January 16. The Spring 2026 semester begins Tuesday, Jan. 20.

Students can earn up to four transferable credits by taking Wintersession classes in anthropology, communications, criminal justice, economics, environmental science, geography, law, management, mathematics, nutrition, psychology, social science, and sociology. Most Wintersession classes are offered entirely online. Full 15-week spring semester classes begin

Jan. 20. HCC will also run three accelerated spring flex start sessions: Flex Start I classes begin Jan. 20 and run for seven weeks; Flex Start II classes begin Monday, Feb. 2, and run for 12 weeks; Flex Start III classes begin Monday, March 23, and run for seven weeks. Class schedules for both Wintersession and Spring 2026 semester classes can be found on the HCC website: hcc.edu.

HCC welcomes Michaud as director of facilities

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College recently welcomed Richard Michaud as its director of facilities and engineering.

Michaud comes to HCC with decades of experience in facilities management, engineering, infrastructure and utilities improvement projects.

Most recently, he worked as the chief engineer and director of facilities management for Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Administration Medical Center in Bedford, Mass., where he was responsible for facilities operations, maintenance and repair, new construction and renovations. He previously worked for 12 years as project engineer for the VA Boston Healthcare System. Michaud earned

his bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering at Boise State University and holds a master’s degree in business administration from Phoenix University. He served for 24 years with the U.S. Navy, including 10 years with the Civil Engineer Corps. He was honorably discharged in 2014.

“We’re excited that Richard has joined us,” said Narayan Sampath, HCC vice president of administration and finance. “His depth of knowledge and experience, both at the VA and in the Navy will be a valuable asset to HCC. I look forward to working with him and his team in the future addressing the infrastructure needs at the college.”

Michaud started his job at HCC on Nov. 10.

Library Giving Tree now available for taking

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 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 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.

Providence Place to host free concert Dec. 14

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.

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@providenceplace.org.

NAMI holding calendar raffle fundraiser for February 2026

HOLYOKE – NAMI-WM is holding a calendar raffle fundraiser for February 2026. Participants will pay \$15 for a chance to win prizes awarded each day of the month. These prizes include gift cards to various local businesses, and cash prizes. Through our fundraising, we are able to raise awareness and provide essential education, advocacy, support groups and programs throughout your Western Mass area.

Mental health support and awareness has become an increasingly important issue with all of the changes in the world. Our dedication and commitment to mental health awareness and support within our communities is vital. Our Board of Directors, along with our dedicated staff, colleagues and volunteers work together with an ongoing goal to get our services, advocacy and assistance out into the community.

Santa Sprint to support Holyoke Pride set for Saturday

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.



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.

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

Are you having difficulty communicating with your partner, struggling with boundaries, and healthy relationships?

We invite you to join us Friday afternoons from 1-2:30 pm to explore these topics and more.

This group will be held in zoom, is educational, confidential, and free.

Please contact **Pat James 413-726-8661.**

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Guest Column



About tax filing status and Medicare

Dear Rusty:

I'm trying to figure out if I should change my IRS filing status to "Married - Filing Jointly" prior to getting reviewed for my Medicare Part B and Part D.

My current IRS status is "Married - Filing Single" and I noticed this filing status is more stringent. I will be turning 62 this year (2025) and I've read that Medicare will review my income two years prior to turning 65. Any input would be appreciated.

Signed: Uncertain Senior

Dear Uncertain:

Your IRS tax filing status has no bearing on your eligibility for Medicare Part B (coverage for outpatient healthcare services) or Medicare Part D (insurance coverage for prescription drugs). Medicare is an individual healthcare program, so enrolling in Medicare provides coverage for you only, not your spouse, your spouse's Medicare eligibility will be individually evaluated.

What your IRS filing status may affect is the amount of your Medicare Part B and Part D premiums. There is a Medicare provision called Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount, which sets the income thresholds on which your Medicare premiums are based and those thresholds are different if you file your income tax as a single or as "married/filing jointly."

The IRMAA thresholds can change annually and there's no way to yet determine what they will be when you are able to enroll in Medicare at age 65. They are currently \$106,000 if you file as a single, and \$212,000 if you file your taxes as "married/jointly." If your "provisional income," your combined income from all sources, exceeds the threshold for your filing status, you will pay higher than standard Medicare Part B and Part D premiums. If your income is lower than the threshold, you will pay only whatever the standard Medicare Part B premium is for the year you start Medicare and there will be no supplemental premium for your Part D coverage.

For information, the IRMAA supplements are progressive that is, the more you exceed the threshold by, the higher your IRMAA premium supplement will be. To see the current IRMAA thresholds and supplements again, these will likely change when you are eligible for Medicare visit www.cms.gov/newsroom/fact-sheets/2025-medicare-

parts-b-premiums-and-deductibles.

You are correct that your Medicare premium, when you enroll, will be determined by your total income from two years prior. So, if you plan to enroll in Medicare at age 65, sometime in 2028, it is your 2026 income which will determine your Part B and Part D premiums, and that income will be defined by your 2026 income tax return. Note, too, that Medicare premiums are reevaluated each year, based upon your IRS income tax return from two years prior.

FYI, there are advantages to filing your income tax as "married/jointly" vs. married/filing separately and those are best evaluated by your tax advisor. We are not tax advisors here at the AMAC Foundation. And while it's true that the IRMAA thresholds are higher when you file as "married/jointly," it's also true that your total income as a married couple will be used when determining your IRMAA premiums for Medicare. So, once again, it is probably best to consult with a qualified income tax advisor for guidance on whether it is best, financially, for you to change how you file your income tax in 2026, considering that you will be enrolling in Medicare in 2028.

One final thing: If you are still working and have "creditable" healthcare coverage from your employer, "creditable" is a group plan with at least 20 participants, then you can delay enrolling in Medicare until your employer coverage ends thus temporarily avoiding the Medicare premiums. In other words, if you have creditable healthcare coverage from an employer, you don't have to enroll in Medicare immediately at age 65.

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 informational purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadviser@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.



Guest Column

Christmas decoration trivia

Last week I provided you with a few tips on how to make a simple evergreen swag and wreath. Hopefully you gave it a try.

For this column I thought it would be fun to share some fun facts with you, many of which I just learned today. You see, I will be working with a group of students tomorrow and wanted to have some cool trivia up my sleeve.

I'll be bringing in all the Christmas greens I talked about a week ago and will pass them around to each student: juniper, hemlock, fir, white pine and more materials, including rose hips, pine cones and holly. Read on to see if what I share is new to you, too!

For example, did you know that the Easter White Pine (*Pinus strobus*) is the tallest tree in the northeast? It also goes by the name "the



by Roberta McQuaid

shows up in Christmas decorations are pine cones. What I learned today is that the correct terminology is to generically call them "cones," since they are only pine cones if they come from a pine tree! Logical point!

The hard cones we use for decorating are female and their main purpose is to keep the naked seeds inside safe. They will open and close to maintain proper humidity levels.

Some close so tight that they need the heat of a wild fire to have them open enough to drop their seeds! Cones can stay on a tree up to 10 years without falling off.

The kids will find it funny that dinosaurs even ate pine cones, the *Parasaurolophus*, to be exact! These trees belong to a group of plants called Gymnosperms, that have

See GARDEN, page 5

Give yourself the gift of self-compassion



your health

By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column



Remember "tough love"? It was all the rage in the '80s and legitimized unkind or even cruel behaviors in pursuit of persuading a loved one to change their behavior.

"Positive narratives of tough love not only coursed through communities but also became a staple for television shows for decades," wrote Peg Streep in *Psychology Today*, "despite the fact that there is no evidence - and never has been - that what is called tough love works in any context, including addiction."

So there. Tough love doesn't work on ourselves either.

It's been shown that negative self-talk, beating ourselves up when we don't meet our own expectations, and ruminating over our perceived failures don't do anything to improve our state of mind. In fact, it's damaging - and if you've ever been assessed for depression, those are some of the behaviors that might be identified.

There's a better way. This holiday season, give yourself the gift of self-compassion.

It's not just an idea. It's a way of living.

There's even an institute for its study and implementation, founded by Kristin Neff, an associate profes-

sor of educational psychology at the University of Texas at Austin. A pioneer in the field of self-compassion research, she conducted the first empirical studies on self-compassion more than 20 years ago and now runs the Self-Compassion Institute (self-compassion.org).

What is self-compassion? Neff explains that self-compassion is showing yourself the same care and consideration you would show to a friend who is struggling or feeling bad about themselves.

"It means being supportive when you're facing a life challenge, feel inadequate or make a mistake," she writes. "Instead of just ignoring your pain with a 'stiff upper lip' mentality or getting carried away by your negative thoughts and emotions, you stop to tell yourself: 'This is really difficult right now, how can I comfort and care for myself in this moment?'"

She points out that when we berate ourselves for mistakes or setbacks, we lose confidence and often give up. "By contrast, self-compassion

See HEALTH, page 5

the HOLYOKE Sun

TEAM



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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.



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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. 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*.

TJO Animals surpass Giving Tuesday goal

SPRINGFIELD — The Foundation for TJO Animals and the Thomas J. O'Connor Animal Control and Adoption Center (TJO) are celebrating a record-breaking

Giving Tuesday, marked by exceptional community support, a highly successful adoption event, and an outpouring of generosity that far exceeded expectations.

To kick off the campaign, the Foundation hosted a two-day adoption event in which all adoption fees were waived thanks to a \$2,000 sponsorship from longtime supporters Ted and Barbara Hebert.

Over the course of just 48 hours, eighteen animals were adopted into new, loving homes.

"The adoption center was buzzing with people who wanted to support TJO and open their homes to animals in need. It was incredible to see," said Janna Brown, executive director of the Foundation for TJO Animals.

The Foundation initially set a Giving Tuesday fundraising goal of \$20,000, with every dollar matched by devoted supporters Jan and Bernadette Piepul.

As donations surged, the goal was increased to \$25,000 — and the Piepuls

matched that as well.

By the morning after Giving Tuesday, total donations had climbed to more than \$57,000, making this one of the Foundation's most successful campaigns to date.

A significant portion of the funds came from Monarch Fore Charities, whose contribution exceeded \$10,000 and helped propel the campaign to new heights.

"Our main goal for Giving Tuesday this year was to spread awareness about TJO — who we are and what we do for animals in the Pioneer Valley," Brown said. "Money raised

will go directly toward medical care for the never-ending influx of animals coming into TJO, as well as clinic supplies and a much-needed new washer and dryer — you wouldn't believe the amount of laundry!"

The Foundation for TJO Animals extends its deepest gratitude to its donors, supporters, volunteers, and the community for rallying behind local animals in need.

The funds raised will provide vital medical treatment, support adoption efforts, and enhance the overall well-being of animals throughout the region.



JUMP, from page 4

sion provides the emotional safety we need to keep trying, even when things don't go as planned," she explains. "Most importantly, it allows us to learn and grow from our mistakes rather than getting derailed by shame and anxiety."

Neff has created a little industry featuring books, workshops, coaching and videos that you can pay for, but there are also many free resources like guided practices and self-compassion exercises. A good place to start might be the self-evaluation, which asks how often...

- I'm disapproving and judgmental about my own flaws and inadequacies.

- I try to be loving towards myself when I'm feeling emotional pain.

- I'm intolerant and impatient towards those aspects of my personality I don't like.

Learning to practice self-compassion

Can we teach ourselves

to become self-compassionate? Yes, but it takes work, and we may be trying to undo decades of behavior that stems from how we were raised, the people we've been exposed to, and the way we're used to talking to ourselves.

Here are a few things you can try:

Turn it around: Let's say you make a mistake at work or mess up a project. Rather than beating yourself up ("I'm such an idiot!"), imagine a friend in the same situation. Would you tell them they're an idiot? Probably not. You'd listen to them, offer a shoulder and discuss what to do differently the next time.

Put it in perspective: Remind yourself that struggle is a part of the human experience. You can say: "I'm not alone in feeling this way," or "We all struggle sometimes."

Soothe yourself: Find a mantra that works for you: "I will accept myself as I am," for example. You can also place your hand over

your heart or give yourself a hug.

Challenge negative thoughts: Write down what you're thinking or feeling, read it over and then replace those negative thoughts with kindness and compassion.

I wish all of you a peaceful — and self-compassionate — holiday season!

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, R.N., a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of 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 to set up a free phone consultation.

HEALTH, from page 4

indeed been around since prehistoric times.

Many of our favorite Christmas trees are Fir trees (Abies spp.), with the Balsam Fir being one of the most common. Firs have needles that are soft and flat, and attached to twigs one by one, versus the pine that we learned attach in clusters.

An average, it takes about seven years to grow a decent size Christmas tree. According to my research, the first Christmas tree was in Latvia in the year 1510.

By the early 1800's German and Irish immigrants had brought the custom to America but it still took some time for it to catch hold.

Juniper (Juniperus spp.) is another evergreen that often makes its way into our Christmas wreaths and arrangements. The species

can produce greenery that is either smooth or picky.

One of the biggest draws to using juniper is that it smells nice and often has attractive waxy looking berries along with the foliage. It was interesting to learn that these berries are actually cones.

The seeds are protected well within the tough outer coating and can pass through an animal's digestive tract intact. That way the seeds can be dispersed far and wide — wherever the animal is traveling, I guess!

I've done complete articles on Holly (Ilex spp.) before, but I did learn a few new interesting tidbits with this most recent bout of research. The plant has a unique defense mechanism.

Lower foliage is extra spiny to reduce deer from browsing. Upper foliage is not nearly as spiny. There are chemicals in holly berries

that make the berries unpalatable to birds and other wildlife at first, but as winter goes on they begin to taste a little better.

Still the birds only eat a few at a time thereby dispersing seeds at various rates and locales. I think all of this is so interesting and so carefully orchestrated to continue the species!

Well, I hope my research has been entertaining, and I do hope that the students enjoy my show and tell tomorrow!

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.

Visit us at www.turley.com

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CLUES ACROSS

- Spiritual leaders
- A type of solution
- Fortified wine
- Edible mollusk
- They precede C
- A way to compare
- Government lawyer
- "Game of Thrones" actor Ciaran
- The eighth month (abbr.)
- Very willing
- ___ ex Machina
- Makes happy
- Type of berry
- A doctrine
- Popular Dodge truck model
- Dekagram
- Naturally occurring solid
- Company officer
- Villains
- Cricket frogs
- Influential German
- psychologist
- Endured
- A female domestic
- You can get stuck in one
- Cigarette (slang)
- Fiber optics network
- Group of blood disorders (abbr.)
- Employee stock ownership plan
- Belonging to the bottom layer
- Sound
- MLB legend Hank
- Very attractive person
- Late beloved sportscaster Craig
- South Dakota
- Mocking
- Symbol for gold
- Longtime Braves pitcher Julio
- Humor
- Shawl
- Preliminary patient assessment

CLUES DOWN

- Animal disease
- Commercial
- Necklace material
- Containers
- A way to save for your future
- Colorado Heisman winner Rashaan
- Dipped down
- Head injury (abbr.)
- Lay about
- Intestinal
- Opposite of yes
- Caused to be loved
- Spiritual leader of Islam
- Businesslike
- Not in
- Number above the line in a fraction
- An animal with its own day
- Pouch
- Swedish krona
- Start over
- Field flowers
- Fourteen
- A visual way to interact with a computer
- Up-to-date
- Campaigns
- Touch lightly
- "Boardwalk Empire" actress Gretchen
- Violent seizure of property
- Supporter of the Pope
- Anxiety
- Body fluid
- One who's faking it
- Title of respect
- Chilean city
- City in central Japan
- Silk garment
- A form of dance
- Automobile
- The man
- Justice Dept. head honcho

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
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 Friday 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
 WEEKEND MASSES:
 Saturday 4 p.m.
 Sunday 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
 DAILY MASS AND ROSARY
 Monday - Friday: ROSARY 6:15 a.m.
 Monday - Friday: MASS 6:45 a.m.
 Legal Holidays: ROSARY 7:30 a.m.
 Legal Holidays: MASS 8 a.m.
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www.blessedsacramentholyoke.org
 Facebook: @bspolyokema

First Baptist Church
 Pastor Theresa Temple
 1976 Northampton St., Holyoke
 (413) 533-7728
firstbaptistchurchholyokey@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:
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 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
 34 Jarvis Ave., Holyoke
 Office: (413) 536-3369
 Office: stpetersholyokey@gmail.com
 Pastor: revdebma@gmail.com
 Website: www.stpetersholyokey.org
 Social media: facebook.com/stpetersholyokey
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 The Rev. Canon Joel Martinez
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 Days and Hours of Services:
 Sunday: 8 a.m.
 Sunday: 10 a.m.
 Sunday: 5 p.m. (Spanish)

Museum announces return of annual Penguin Plunge

WESTFIELD – Amelia Park Children’s Museum announces the return of the Penguin Plunge to be held on Saturday, Jan. 24, 2026, at 1 p.m. at Hampton Ponds State Park, Westfield MA. Check-in begins at 11:30 a.m. Proceeds from the Penguin Plunge will benefit the museum.

“The Penguin Plunge is a long-standing tradition in Westfield. We are very excited that we’re able to host the Penguin Plunge in 2026.” said Diane Chambers, Executive Director of the museum. “We want to make this event a Plunge for the record books!”

Through the years participants and sponsors of the Plunge have helped to raise over \$370,000 to support Amelia Park Children’s Museum.

Plunge participants may join as an individual or as a team. Each participant pledges to raise a minimum of \$75 from friends and

family and is encouraged to collect as many sponsors as possible. Those under the age of 18 will receive a registration discount of \$25.

There are monetary prizes of “cold hard cash” for the top three individuals or teams that raise the most money; first place - \$300, second place - \$200, third place - \$100.

A costume contest is part of the fun, and participants are encouraged to come dressed creatively. There will be prizes for Best Individual Costume and Best Team Costume.

Register in advance online or at the Plunge on the day of the event from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Participants will receive a free 2026 Penguin Plunge T-shirt (while supplies last).

Sponsorship opportunities, registration and pledge forms are available via the museum website <https://www.ameliaparkmuseum.org/penguin-plunge> or can be picked up at the museum.

St. Patrick’s Committee opens Colleen applications

HOLYOKE – The St. Patrick’s Committee of Holyoke is proud to announce that applications are now open for the 70th Annual Holyoke Grand Colleen Pageant on Jan. 3.



For seven decades, the Grand Colleen Pageant has been a signature event of Holyoke’s St. Patrick’s celebrations, honoring the heritage, pride, and accomplishments of young women of Irish descent. Serving as the kickoff to Parade season, the pageant is more than a competition - it is an opportunity to represent one’s community, celebrate Irish culture, and join a legacy of ambassadors who have played a special role in the city’s most cherished tradition.

This year, the Committee is excited to announce an expanded eligibility that opens the door for even more young

women to participate. In addition to residents of Holyoke and South Hadley, contestants from Holyoke’s bordering communities of Easthampton and Southhampton are now eligible to enter the competition.

“Being chosen as the Grand Colleen is about so much more than wearing the crown,” said Kate Caligaris, Colleen Committee Chair. “It’s about leadership, pride in one’s Irish heritage, and the chance to be part of something larger than yourself. We’re thrilled to welcome young women from our neighboring communities to share in this tradition.”

What’s new this year?
• Expanded eligibility: Young women from Holyoke, South Hadley, Easthampton and Southhampton are now invited to apply.

• Broader community representation: The Committee hopes this expansion will foster regional pride and strengthen bonds across neighboring towns.

Contestant Eligibility
Applicants must:
• Be 17-22 years of age as of March 17, 2026
• Resident of Holyoke, South Hadley, Easthampton or Southhampton
• Be single (never married, not a parent)
• Claim Irish ancestry
• Complete a resume and application

Awards & Opportunities
The Grand Colleen will receive:
• \$3,000 to be used as a scholarship or trip to Ireland
• Professional portrait
• Tiara

The Grand Colleen and Court will receive:
• Gifts from local businesses and Colleen Patrons
• A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to serve as com-

munity ambassadors during Parade season

Important Dates

• Oct. 1: Applications open
• Dec. 27: Deadline to submit application to enter the Grand Colleen Pageant

• Dec. 28: Colleen Orientation at Mrs. Mitchell’s Public House, Holyoke, 2 p.m.

• Jan. 2: Grand Colleen Pageant Rehearsal, at Holyoke High School, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

• Jan. 3: Grand Colleen Pageant at Holyoke High School Auditorium, 6:00-9:30 p.m.

• Jan. 4: Colleen Tea at Donovans, Holyoke, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

• Feb. 14: Grand Coronation Ball at The Log Cabin, Holyoke

Apply now! www.holyokestpatricksparade.com/apply. For any questions, please contact Kate Caligaris, Colleen Committee Chair at (413) 627-8716 or holyokecolleens@gmail.com.

WORK, from page 1

rium a good idea.

“Winter weather – snow, ice, freeze-thaw cycles – complicates paving and repair work, increases risk of pavement damage, interferes with plowing operations, and can lead to degraded road quality when conditions are not optimal,” Garcia stated. “A winter moratorium helps preserve our streets, ensures safety, and reduces maintenance costs.”

While the moratorium is in place, there are always exceptions, specifically for emergency situations or sit-

uations where the public’s safety necessitates the work.

“The only allowed exceptions are for urgent, unforeseen emergencies that threaten public health, safety, or essential services,” Garcia stated. “Any such emergency work will be coordinated by the DPW to limit disruption and ensure proper restoration in spring.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding in helping us keep Holyoke’s roads safe and in good condition throughout the winter season.”

The city does have a number of road projects that need to be completed. Among

them, the Appleton St. bridge is currently closed due to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation following an inspection that showed the bridge was structurally insufficient. A full timeline of that bridge repair has yet to be determined.

It is unclear of the city’s moratorium applies to state roads like Route 202 or 5 and if it can be enforced on MassDOT.

Prior to the moratorium being put in place this week, the city had made a dent in the FY2026 paving program, getting a few projects done prior to the end of the construction season.

POSITION, from page 1

the individual to begin their appointment.

The city council could also vote to have Casey remain in the position temporarily beyond the end of

his elected term until an appointed treasurer could be named.

Since approving the ordinance for the treasurer position, it has not been posted for people to start applying.

While the treasur-

er position will need to be filled soon, more immediate is the position of city auditor as Tanya Wdowiak has also announced her resignation and will be leaving her position this month. She will also need to be replaced in the near future.

AWARD, from page 1

which helped garner him the respect of fellow volunteers, paving the way to his current role as Co-Chair of the Float Committee. In this position, Menard works with the Float Committee to oversee the design and construction of the iconic Grand Colleen float—a signature symbol of the Parade’s pageantry and pride. And on Parade day, Menard is a main foundational staple, predicated on reassuring presence at the “Float Lot,” where he works tirelessly to guarantee that each float is perfectly staged and ready to roll.

Offering insight into why Menard garnered the achievement was 2026 Parade President Jim Wildman.

“James Menard represents the very best of our Committee’s tradition of service,” Wildman said.



2026 Daniel J. Gallivan Award Recipient James Menard and his wife, Katie Menard.

Submitted photos

“His energy, commitment, and genuine love for the Parade embody the spirit that keeps this celebration thriving year after year. And because of this, we are proud to honor him with the Gallivan Award and grateful for everything he brings to our community and our cherished events.”

In addition, Menard

was a child of the Paper City, but now resides in Chicopee with his wife, Katie, whom he married in November 2025. Beyond his Parade involvement, Menard works in the security department at Baystate Health and volunteers with the Civil Air Patrol, Air Force Auxiliary at Westover Air Force Base.

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<p>#2 One Large 1 Topping Pizza, 10 Buffalo Wings & 2 Liter Soda \$32.99 +Tax</p>	<p>#13 Two 16” Grinders with Bag of Chips & Can of Soda \$25.99 +Tax</p>
<p>#4 One Party Size Cheese Pizza, 20 Buffalo Wings & 2 Liter Soda \$44.50 +Tax</p>	<p>#16 Large 1 Topping Pizza, Small Cheese Calzone, 2 Liter Soda & 10 Wings \$43.50 +Tax</p>

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 Any Pita Pocket with French Fries & a Can of Soda \$11.99
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 Any 16” Grinder with French Fries & a Can of Soda \$15.50
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<p>#5 8” Grinder or Pita Pocket with Fries & FREE Can of Soda \$14.25+Tax</p>	<p>#6 One Large 2 Topping Pizza, & FREE 2 Liter Soda \$23.99 +Tax</p>
<p>#10 One Large 1 Topping Pizza, 20 Wings & FREE 2 Liter Soda \$40.99 +Tax</p>	<p>#14 One Medium 1 Topping Pizza, 10 Wings & FREE 2 Liter Soda \$30.99 +Tax</p>

EXPRESS DELIVERY: Holyoke, Chicopee, South Hadley & West Springfield

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EARLY DEADLINES FOR ADS & LEGAL NOTICES

New Year’s will bring early deadlines for all ads & legal notices to run in TURLEY PUBLICATIONS the week of Dec. 29, 2025 - Jan. 2, 2026:

Friday, December 26 at 2 PM for January 1 issue

• Country Journal • The Register • Wilbraham-Hampden Times
• Agawam Advertiser News

Monday, December 29 at 2 PM for January 1 issue

• Sentinel • The Journal Register
• Ware River News • Barre Gazette

Tuesday, December 30 at 2 PM for January 2 issue

• Quaboag Current • Town Reminder
• The Holyoke Sun • Chicopee Register

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In observance of **NEW YEAR’S** for Dec. 29-Jan. 2 newspapers there will be an **EARLY CLASSIFIEDS DEADLINE!**

Place your advertisement no later than

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Turley's Henry, Peterson recognized for work

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

LUDLOW – For nearly 20 years, two people have anchored the sports department at Turley Publications.

When you think of sports in the Journal Register, Sentinel News, Agawam Advertiser, or Ware River News, you think of David Henry and Tim Peterson.

Both have been members of the Turley Sports staff for almost two decades, covering every sport offered by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, and connecting with thousands of athletes over the course of their careers.

Their job has been to see that the deserving student-athletes who work hard and

achieve milestones, league titles, Western Mass. titles, and college success get recognized by their communities.

Last Friday night, it was their turn to be recognized for their dedicated work.

The Pioneer Valley Soccer Officials Association awarded Henry and Peterson with Letters of Commendation.

The PVSOA, which held its awards banquet at the Ludlow Polish-American Club on Dec. 5, recognized the pair for their dedicated service of reporting and photographing boys and girls soccer, impacting multiple communities throughout the region.

The PVSOA Awards Committee believed their longtime service at Turley

Publications was deserving of the letters.

Peterson had a more conventional background in sports journalism. He participated in his high school newspaper at Oxford High School and went on to work at the Southbridge Evening News.

In 2007, he transitioned to being a freelance writer for Turley Publications. At first, Peterson had an established rapport in the Palmer-Monson and Ludlow-Belchertown areas. But in recent years, readers can find Peterson in almost any one of the towns in Turley's 11-newspaper, 17-high school coverage zone.

"I really enjoy it," Peterson said. "I just love

See TURLEY, page 8



Turley Publications Sports writer Tim Peterson and photographer David Henry were recognized last Friday night at the Pioneer Valley Soccer Officials Association. They are pictured with PVSOA member Joe Santos.

Submitted photo



Members of the girls basketball team warm up.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com



Jasani Colon looks to pass.



Kyra Lippman dribbles into the arc.



Genesis Rivera gets the short jumper.

Lady Knights preseason practice

HOLYOKE – Earlier this week, Holyoke High School girls basketball practice in the gym at home.

The Tigers had a scrimmage at Northampton

on Tuesday and are preparing for their regular season on Friday, Dec. 12.

The Knights will face at out-of-region opponent as Central Mass.' Shepherd Hill visits for a 6 p.m. start.

HCC Cougars earn victory against Northern Essex

HOLYOKE – Women's basketball got back to their winning ways on Thursday night, earning a 65-59 home victory over regional opponent Northern Essex CC. The Lady Cougars dominated early on, scoring 38 points in the first half to

take a 17-point lead into halftime. Holyoke was able to hold off a strong second-half push from their opposition on their way to the win

J o h a n n y s Andrades (Springfield, MA / Putnam Vocational

Technical HS) played brilliantly for the Cougars, leading the team in points, rebounds and assists. Andrades scored a season-high 21 points while grabbing nine rebounds and dishing eight assists. Emily McGrail (Ware, MA / Ware

HS) had a team-high four blocks for Holyoke and was second in points with nine.

Women's basketball is in second place in the New England standings with a 3-1 regional record. They are 4-3 overall and 4-1 versus NJCAA opponents.

PVSOA hold 79th awards banquet

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

LUDLOW – There are multiple soccer officials associations throughout the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, all which are responsible for the recruiting, training, assigning, and evaluating of soccer referees that do high school games, as well as some youth leagues.

The Pioneers Valley

Soccer Officials Association is the only organization that is still doing awards banquets, recognizing athletes, its members for longtime service, and contributors to the soccer community.

Last Friday night at the Ludlow Polish American Club, the 79th iteration of the awards banquet was held and the same positive vibe could

See AWARDS, page 8



David DelBuono, the outgoing PVSOA President, was inducted into the Massachusetts Interscholastic Soccer Officials Association. He was recognized at the PVSOA banquet for that accomplishment by James Duggan.



Joe Santos was the Downie Award winner this year. He stands with James Duggan.



Reid Savoie receives a service award from David DelBuono. Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Worcester Railers comeback falls short

R E A D I N G , PA — The Worcester Railers HC (9-9-1-1, 20 pts) fell to the Reading Royals (10-9-2-0, 22 pts) on Saturday, December 6th, with a final score of 4-5 in front of a crowd of 3,494 at the Santander Arena. The Railers are back in action on Wednesday night against the Adirondack Thunder at will take on the Royals again on home ice on January 14th at 7:05 p.m. EST.

Reading struck first with an early goal, scored by Massimo Rizzo (1-2-3), assisted by Nolan Burke (1-1-2) and Carter Berger (0-2-2) at 4:09 in the first. The Royals extended their scoring streak to two goals, the second added by Jeremy

Michel (1-0-1), assisted by Rizzo and Ben Meehan (0-1-1) at 15:45 in the first (0-2). Worcester answered with a power play tally of their own at 17:46, scored by Gleb Veremyev (1-0-1), assisted by Anthony Callin (0-1-1) and Drew Callin (0-1-1) (1-2). Reading bookended the first period with their third goal of the night from Burke, assisted by Rizzo and Berger at 19:24. Reading grabbed the only goal in the second period, a tipped shot from Robbie Stucker (0-1-1), redirected by Nick Capone (1-0-1), also assisted by Artem Kulakov (0-1-1) at 7:46. A final Reading goal was scored by Kyle Haskins (1-0-1) at 2:54 in the third. Worcester answered the Royals' fifth

goal with three goals in the second half of the period. The first by Matt DeMelis (1-1-2) (2-5), the second by Anthony Repaci (1-1-2) (3-5), and the third by Lincoln Hatten (1-1-2) (4-5). The clock ran out just as Worcester pushed for their goal to tie the game and force overtime, but the game ended in a 5-4 Royals' victory.

Reading opened the game with an early lead at 4:09. Royal's forward Massimo Rizzo (4th) tucked the puck in between the pipe and left skate of Parker Gahagen (0-1). Reading stretched their lead to two goals with a score from Jeremy Michel (1st) at 15:45 (0-2). A chance for the Railers to narrow the

gap came late in the period as they went on their third power play of the night, which opened the ice for Anthony Callin to feed a pass from behind the net to Gleb Veremyev (2nd) for Worcester's first goal at 17:46 (1-2). T.J. Walsh headed to the box shortly after the tally for holding, which put Reading on their first power play of the night. Nolan Burke (3rd) nabbed a goal for the Royals 28 seconds into Walsh's penalty to re-establish their two-goal lead. Shots on goal were 12-16 in favor of Reading.

The Royals' fourth goal of the night came just over a third of the way through the second period from forward Nick Capone (2nd).

Worcester played the period on the defensive and found themselves down a man on two separate occasions. Neither penalty resulted in a Royals goal, but Capone's scored soon after the clock ran out on Riley Ginnell's time served for high-sticking. Worcester was kept off of the board in the second which left the score at 4-1 Reading to close the second. Worcester trailed in shots on goal with nine to Reading's 12. Reading was assessed one penalty served by Ben Meehan.

As play resumed in the third, Worcester worked to cut into the Royals three-goal lead, turned four as Kyle Haskins (5th) added another to Reading's tally for the evening at 2:54. Worcester

opened the floodgates on Reading's net and scored three times in the second half of the period. Matt DeMelis scored an even strength goal at the 12:41 mark to make it a three-goal game. Worcester then called its timeout and pulled goaltender Thomas Gale to give the team an extra attacker. Repaci (6th) (3-5), and Hatten (8th) (4-5) each added their own goals with the extra-attacker on to get back to within one. Despite their offensive push across the final 2:30 of the third, Worcester fell short by one as the final horn sounded. The final score was 5-4 Reading. Final shots were 41-35 Worcester, and final penalties were six for the Royals and three for the Railers.

TURLEY, from page 7

covering sports and I really enjoy watching high school soccer."

Peterson also named baseball as one of his favorite sports to cover. Peterson, especially over the past several years, has had no shortage of exciting competition to cover. He's been at most major championship games in Turley's coverage area, and even enjoys traveling around the state to schools he has never been to thanks to the state's new tournament format.

Peterson was not even taking much of a break at the PVSOA banquet, forgoing receiving too much recognition, and focusing his attention on the award winners at the event (see related stories).

Henry did not have a typical path to becoming Turley's longstanding sports photographer since 2006.

He had a more than 30-years career in the military in the United States Air Force. He spent many of his years working as a mechanic at Westover Air Reserve Base right in his hometown of Chicopee.

But he also spent some of his time overseas during his early days in the military.

"I bought my first SLR while I was in Thailand," Henry said. He was looking to capture moments from his tours in foreign places and began taking pictures.

He eventually built his own dark room at his home. But he did not do too much more with photography until digital became more preva-

lent and he was encouraged to apply to the Chicopee Register following his retirement from the military in 2006.

He was put in contact with then-sports Editor Lou Zoldy, and has been a fixture with Turley Sports ever since. Additionally, over the years, his non-sports photo spreads have also been a huge support for Turley's mission of capturing the big events in the communities. Among other things, he has covered the St. Patrick's Day Parade in Holyoke for many years, and has done many photo spreads in Agawam, Holyoke, and Chicopee in recent years.

In accepting their letters of commendation, both thanked the PVSOA for recognizing their work. Henry recognized the student-athletes and their accomplish-

ments as what has found him the most enjoyment in the work he has done for the past 20 years.

Turley Sports is dedicated to the coverage of high school sports with a boots-on-the-ground type of approach, attending as many events as possible with photo or story coverage. Both Henry and Peterson's loyalty to Turley and to the student-athletes in the region personify the approach and the pursuit of that mission.

Peterson was just the third writer to be recognized by the PVSOA while Henry became the first photographer to receive a letter of commendation from the organization. The PVSOA has been awarding letters of commendation since 1979.

T-Birds get big win over Bruins

PROVIDENCE, R.I. - The Springfield Thunderbirds (6-11-3-2) rode an otherworldly performance from their goalie to a 3-1 win over the Providence Bruins (17-5-0-0) on Sunday inside Amica Mutual Pavilion.

Vadim Zherenko had the busiest first period of anybody in the building, as the T-Birds goaltender was subjected to 15 attempts in a furious first-period push by the Bruins. Zherenko stood his ground, relenting only a power-play one-timer to Georgii Merkulov.

However, before Merkulov broke through, the T-Birds used their first shot on net of the day to get a fortuitous bounce and a 1-0 lead as Matthew Peca threw a puck off the legs of Hunter Skinner and through Michael DiPietro at 6:20 of the first period.

Providence wound up outshooting Springfield by a 15-2 margin in the opening frame, but the T-Birds responded with a great start to the second, as Chris Wagner found open space in the low slot and wired a perfect wrist shot over DiPietro's glove at

2:04, off a great find from Nikita Susuev.

The T-Birds played a much more balanced second period, limiting Providence's high-danger chances and allowing Zherenko clear sight lines to deny all 11 Bruins shots that did reach the net.

The pressure only intensified in the final 20 minutes for Zherenko, as the Providence attack emptied the tank on the Springfield goal mouth with 20 shots on net in the final period, but "Big Z" had responses every single time, including a highlight-reel denial of Christian Wolanin on a one-timer from the right-wing circle in the closing minutes.

Sam Stange eventually gave the T-Birds a breath with an empty-netter with less than 30 seconds to play to usher the visitors to a victory. Zherenko completed his masterpiece with 45 stops.

The T-Birds are back on the ice next Saturday, Dec. 13, as they pay a visit to Utica to take on the Comets; puck drop is set for 7:00 p.m. at Adirondack Bank Center.

AWARDS, from page 7

be felt in the room as the PVSOA gave out their sportsmanship awards, most valuable players, and other miscellaneous awards for service, contributions and dedication to the soccer community at large.

James Duggan, who was the master of ceremonies at last Friday's banquet, said he thinks it's amazing that the PVSOA is still going strong with its banquet.

"You are all a part of history," Duggan told the award winners. "Our program gets bigger every year as we

have the entire history of our awards in that program."

Chief among the recognized people at the banquet are the sportsmanship awards. Coaches like Eric Degnan of Monson girls soccer and Tom Rivet of Chicopee boys soccer, both of whom were present at this year's awards ceremony for other recognition, often said the sportsmanship awards for their teams were huge honors.

Degnan, who recently retired from coaching, said making sure his teams showed exemplary sportsmanship was even more important than win-

ning league titles, and multiple sectional and state championships. Degnan has received nine sportsmanship awards from the PVSOA, all with Monson.

Rivet has three from the group. Two came with Chicopee boys soccer and one with East Longmeadow.

Outgoing President David DelBuono, who received an award, emphasized the importance of holding the annual event.

He said he appreciated the hard work of all the officials who continue to work hard for the student-athletes

on the playing field.

The event was attended by family and friends of the awardees along with several recognizable faces who have served as officials for many years.

Duggan said he is looking forward to having everyone back next year for the 80th years of the awards. The banquet was established in 1946.

The PVSOA recognizes individuals with the Jimmie Downie and Larry E. Briggs Awards as well as plaques given to referees who had achieved milestone years of service..

Public Notices

COMMUNITY OUTREACH MEETING

Bulrush LLC (microbusiness-es) is giving notice of a Community Outreach Meeting in the parking lot at **1 Cabot St. Holyoke, 01040**, their proposed location, at **5:15 pm on Dec 29th, 2025**. There will be an opportunity for the public to ask questions or, email ezra@blueskiescan.com 12/12/2025

City of Holyoke

Invitation to Bid

IFB 2026-25H

Compliance Contractor

The city of Holyoke is seeking to collaborate with a contractor that works to bring properties into compliance with state laws and local city ordinance. The compliance contractor brings compliance to areas that have been neglected and have been

cited as noncompliant with state and local regulations. Areas may include biological waste, blood, syringes, human and animal feces, diapers, and sharp objects. Those awarded with the contract to be the compliance contractor of the city must be able to work in conditions and meet the requirements of the position which include but not limited to; Get properties into compliance within 7 days which is to include, board & securing, removing overgrown vegetation, **graffiti removal**, and monitoring. Will work with Board of Health, Building, PD and local vendors. All supplies for board and secure and personal protective equipment would be purchased and supplied by the supplier. Documents will be available starting on 12/10/25 by requesting electronically from morrowj@holyoke.org or in person from the

purchasing office. Or in person at no charge from the Purchasing Department. Bids will be accepted until 12/30/2025. **SUBMISSIONS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED ELECTRONICALLY TO morrowj@holyoke.org on or before 2PM 12/30/2025**. The electronic timestamp will be the determining time. Submissions are to have the title "Compliance Contractor Submission" in the subject line. More than 1 contractor may be chosen. The estimated contract value is aprox \$50,000 a year total, not per contractor. The city reserves the right to contract with respondents for up to 3 years based on appropriations and contractor performance. The city follows Ch.30B, Ch.149 and all other applicable purchasing laws. The city reserves the right to reject any and all bids. 12/12/2025

City of Holyoke Office of Purchasing Invitation to Bid IFB 2026-19SD Holyoke High Roof

The City of Holyoke, 536 Dwight St, Holyoke, MA 01040, the Awarding Authority, invites sealed bids for IFB 2026-19SD the Kelly Elementary Building Updates Project located at 216 West St, Holyoke, MA 01040. The work is estimated to cost \$6,650,000. 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 PAINTING, FLOORING, MISC METALS, ELEVATOR, 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 8, 2026, at 2:00 PM and publicly opened, forthwith online. Prime Contractors must be certified by DCAMM in the category 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 17, 2025, at 2pm for both General bidders and Filed Sub Trades. Bidders are able to meet at the main entrance of Kelly Elementary School, located at 216 West St, Holyoke, MA 01040.

General Bids will be received until January 16, 2026, at 2:00 PM and publicly opened, forth-

with online. Only pre-qualified General Bidders may submit bids. 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 (BDO# B25-HQ8P) or in person at Nashoba Blue, Inc. at 433 Main Street, Hudson, MA 01749 (978-568-1167) on Wednesday December 10, 2025 after 9:00 AM. Questions due by December 31, 2026, at 2:00 PM. The city reserves the right to reject any and all bids if in the city's best interest. 12/12/2025

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The Holyoke Sun OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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

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

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



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The Christmas lights are active in the city.



Holyoke's 2025 Christmas tree is lit outside city hall.



Armyics Harris and Limaya Gonzalez with one of the lit trees inside City Hall.



Anayha Lopez stands with the sleigh.



The Holyoke High School bell ringers perform.

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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In observance of **CHRISTMAS** for Dec. 22-26 newspapers there will be an **EARLY CLASSIFIEDS DEADLINE!**
Place your advertisement no later than
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