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# HOLYOKE the Sun

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## Peck name to remain

HOLYOKE – The city’s new middle school will launch a new chapter for about 550 students in grades 6-8 when it opens next fall—but with a name and mascot that are already quite familiar to residents of the city: William R. Peck School.

After months of public engagement and several community surveys to choose an identity for the new school, on Monday, Dec. 9, the School Committee and district leadership made the final determinations:

- The new school will retain the name William R. Peck School, the same name as the school that stood at the site of the new middle school for 50 years—from 1973-2023—before it was demolished almost a year ago to make way for the new one.

- The school’s mascot will continue to be a phoenix—a mythical bird that symbolizes renewal, hope, and transformation—as it was for the original Peck School from 2016 until it closed in 2023.

- The school’s colors will be red and black—the same color scheme used by Holyoke STEM Academy’s STEM Beats music group, which will be moving to the new school when it opens in fall 2025.

The new 107,475-square foot middle school will replace the poorly designed, energy-inefficient original William R. Peck School that was no longer able to meet the needs of a modern education. Funding for the new school was approved by the City of Holyoke and Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) in June 2023.

See PECK, page 9

## City welcomes holiday season

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Parks and Recreation put on the annual Holyoke tree lighting at Holyoke Heritage State Park and City Hall.

The events of the day began at Holyoke Heritage State Park where children and their families could get free rides on the merry-go-round, meet holiday characters and get balloon animals.



Tenisha and Israel enjoyed the holiday festivities at the merry-go-round.

The festivities continued at City Hall later in the evening.

Turley photos by Quinn Suomala

Carol Lesperance from Parks and Rec loved getting to see the families and their children enjoying the merry-go-round.

“The highlight would be this part because of the kids,” Lesperance said.

President of the Friends of the Holyoke Merry-Go-Round Joseph McGiverin is glad that the merry-go-round could participate in this community event.

“It helps out the merry-go-round, it brings us some good customers but it is also festive and a great tradition here in the city of Holyoke,” McGiverin said.

During this time, families also gathered at the Children’s Museum to decorate different holiday ornaments.

This portion of the event was run by the Children’s Museum Program Coordinator

Emme Geryk. Geryk enjoyed getting to help children and families to get creative and decorate the ornaments.

“My favorite activities are always ones where we are able to have staff stationed in the art studio and the staff able to get excited about what we’re doing,” Geryk said. “The ornaments are the perfect opportunity because they become a beautiful mess...and it is something that everyone gets into.”

Geryk also felt that the ornaments could work for a variety of holidays, allowing her to include more families in the festivities.

“While it is something that is super fun for the tree lighting and fits in with the Christmas tree, it also makes sense for a variety of winter holidays,” Geryk said.

See HOLIDAY, page 6

## City Council discusses use of newly awarded forestry grant

By Quinn Suomala  
Staff Writer

HOLYOKE – The city council discussed an urban forestry grant that they received that is worth \$1 million.

This grant is from the USDA Urban and Community Forestry and will go toward helping Holyoke to improve their urban tree canopy.

According to City Councilor Patti Devine, this project will implement recommendations from the 2021 Holyoke Urban Forest Equity Plan and the 2023 Public Tree

Inventory Analysis

“The bulk of the funding will be used for contracted tree work and to address our list of priority tree removals and pruning,” Devine said. “Additional activities will include contracted training, consulting services and equipment rental.”

The funding can only be used for the environmental justice zone of the city, according to City Councilor Meagan Magrath-Smith.

“That has impacts for us as we think about budget season and where our priorities are as councilors and where we are

*“The bulk of the funding will be used for contracted tree work and to address our list of priority tree removals and pruning,”*

- City Councilor  
Patti Devine

providing the necessary funding for us to be able to respond to our tree issues across the city,” Magrath-Smith said.

Now that this grant funding has been secured, the purchasing department has been working on figuring out how they are able to use the funding under federal guidelines.

“The purchasing department is going through the process to better understand the federal requirements of such grants and how best to put out the bids and understand how much money it will cost to do this work,” Magrath-Smith said.

One difficulty this creates is that many contractors who are willing to work under the restrictions of federal guidelines are more costly to hire. Therefore, the city is trying to find a contractor who can work well with these guidelines at a reasonable price.

They already went through one round of trying to find a contractor but were unsuccessful, so now they have begun the process of a second round.

“They [the purchasing department] are working on

See XXXXXXX, page 9

# Way Finders receives grant to help with work program

SPRINGFIELD – Way Finders has received a grant from KeyBank Foundation for \$10,000 to implement its Ready to Work: My Story, My Goals program, which provides employment readiness resources to unemployed and underemployed residents in Hamden County.

KeyBank's funding enables Way Finders to provide a six-week employment readiness course consisting of in-class instruction and one-to-one support for up to 15 low- to moderate-income residents with limited or no documented work experience.

"Taking the first step on the journey to employment can be intimidating, especially if you are missing important things like a valid ID, a resume, interview clothes, or the ability to access and use the internet," says Bea Dewberry, Director of Community Building and Engagement at Way Finders. "This KeyBank funding allows us to work hand-in-hand with Holyoke and Springfield residents, helping them ready themselves for employment, and ultimately securing a more stable future for themselves and their families."

Participants reflect the diversity of Holyoke's and Springfield's underserved neighborhoods, where 35% to 80% of the



KeyBank leaders Greg Mularki, Branch Manager; Analisha Michanczyk, Corporate Responsibility Officer; and Tracy Menges, Regional Community Sales Manager present a grant check to Way Finders Chief Development Officer John Bidwell.

Submitted photo

residents identify as people of color and/or Latino/Latina. At the conclusion of the program, each participant will have a resume and cover letter, understand how to translate their life experiences into marketable skills, improve their dig-

ital literacy skills, conduct a job search and complete an application, and understand area resources and programs that can provide additional and/or ongoing employment support.

Way Finders knows this approach

works – as noted by a program participant who recently re-entered the workforce. "It's OK to put your guard down. It's OK to ask for help. At Way Finders, I feel like my voice was heard, and I'm really grateful."

"KeyBank is proud to support Way Finder's Ready to Work program, as it aligns with our commitment to helping individuals achieve financial stability and independence," said Matthew Hummel, KeyBank Market President and Regional Commercial Banking Executive for Connecticut and Massachusetts. "By investing in workforce development, we aim to empower local residents with the skills and resources needed to sustain employment, obtain affordable housing, and build brighter futures for themselves and their families."

KeyBank Foundation grants are part of a \$40 billion commitment for lending and investments across Key's national footprint established in 2017 and supporting affordable housing and community development projects, home, and small business lending in low- and-moderate income communities, and philanthropic efforts targeted toward education, workforce development, and safe, vital neighborhoods. For more information, visit [www.Key.com/Foundation](http://www.Key.com/Foundation).

## Two more chances to wrap your gifts

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Public Library is offering a self-serve gift-wrapping station.

There will be wrapping paper, tape, and bows provided. Refreshments will

also be served. The first wrapping day was held on Dec. 11.

The remaining dates are Saturday, Dec. 14 from 11 to 12:30 p.m. and Thursday, Dec. 19 from 3 to 5 p.m.

## Mont Marie Rehab supports animal shelters with 'Operation Santa Paws'

HOLYOKE – Mont Marie Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center in Holyoke, where residents often benefit from animal-assisted therapy visits, has launched "Operation Santa Paws" to collect pet supplies and donate them to the Thomas J. O'Connor Animal Control & Adoption Center.

Through Dec. 22, the skilled nursing facility at 36 Lower Westfield Road welcomes donated items such as blankets and towels, dog and cat beds, unopened

pet food/treats, pet toys, grooming products, collars and leashes, and food/water bowls.

Therapy animals play a vital role in long-term care residents' lives, particularly those living with dementia and Alzheimer's. Benefits of animal therapy for seniors include emotional uplift, increased self-esteem, improved social skills, and reduced risk of depression and anxiety. For more information, visit [MontMarieRehab.com](http://MontMarieRehab.com).

## Resident named asst. branch manager

EASTHAMPTON – bankESB recently hired Daniel F. O'Sullivan as assistant branch manager of its 170 Sargeant St., Holyoke office.

O'Sullivan, of Holyoke, has four years of banking experience, and seven years of financial services experience. Prior to joining bankESB, he was the banking center assistant manager at Peoples Bank, and before that, a field insurance



Daniel F. O'Sullivan

agent at Knights of Columbus Insurance. In his new role, he will assist in managing the Holyoke team to provide a customer-first experience while fostering relationships within the community.

O'Sullivan currently serves on the board of directors of Holyoke VNA Hospice Life Care and serves as treasurer of the board of directors of Holyoke Media.

## Valley Opportunity Council program brings in scholarship money

HOLYOKE – The VOC/GEAR UP program, which serves students in Holyoke at the STEM Academy, William J. Dean Technical High School, and Holyoke High North School, recently hosted two Massachusetts College Application Celebration (MCAC) events for local seniors, resulting in more than 300 college acceptances and \$3.6 million in scholarships for one year.

More than 160 high school seniors from Holyoke participated in the MCAC events at William J. Dean Tech High School on November 21 and Holyoke High North on November 25 and 26. The events offered students the opportunity to engage directly with college representatives, workforce development programs, and career-focused organizations.

During the events, seniors were able to receive personalized assistance with applying to colleges, completing the Common App, finalizing college essays, and navigating the scholarship and financial aid processes. Additionally, students had the opportunity to create resumes, undergo interviews, and receive on-the-spot college acceptances, including merit scholarship offers.

The VOC/GEAR UP program announced that this year's events saw the highest level of participation and success since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- 164 Seniors from Holyoke participated
- 447 Applications completed
- 312 On-the-Spot Acceptances
- \$3,634,281 offered in scholarships for one year

"We are thrilled with the success of this year's MCAC events and the positive impact they had on our seniors as they prepare for their next steps after high school," said a VOC/GEAR UP program representative. "We are grateful for the support of the principals at Dean Tech and Holyoke High, as well as the dedicated school counselors who worked tirelessly to help organize and prepare our students for this important milestone."

The VOC/GEAR UP program (Gaining Early Awareness for Undergraduate Programs) aims to increase college readiness and success for low-income, first-generation students. Through a variety of initiatives, VOC/GEAR UP provides academic support, career exploration, and guidance to help students navigate the path to higher education and beyond.

The VOC/GEAR UP program is committed to supporting students in their pursuit of higher education and career success, and events like MCAC play a key role in equipping them with the tools they need to succeed.

For more information on the VOC/GEAR UP program, please contact Mary Colon [mcolon@valleyopp.com](mailto:mcolon@valleyopp.com).

### COLLEGE NEWS

## HCC announces fall 2024 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 2024 semester. These members of the Class of 2025 were recognized at HCC's second Fall Graduate Reception on Monday, Dec. 2, in the college's Leslie Phillips Theater and will also be invited to participate in HCC's 78th Commencement exercises at the MassMutual Center in Springfield, Mass., on May 31, 2025.

Holyoke residents graduating are: Tyler Jonathan Applebee, Darien Bulgado, Katherine Mariel

Cabrera Veloz, Yaritzia Castillo Torres, Dalymar Enid Cuevas Roman, Julleyka Curet, William Diaz, James Michael Dunn, Samantha Lynn Figueroa, Kaya Guzelek, Cathryne Mary Kennedy-Cruz, Daley S. Levesque, Crystalline Amanda Lopez, Desiree Angelica Luna-Walsh, Andres Martinez, Vivian Medina, Jennifer Marie Monserrate, Joseph Nathen Moquin, Bryana Alissah Papke, Izaak Antonio Perez, Elle Elizabeth Platanitis, Rosamond Jacinta Goncalves Porter, Erick Joel Rivera-Gonzalez, Jomar Rodriguez, Katelyn Jasmine Rodriguez, Chasity Santiago, Karen Webb, Rachel Joy Westcott.

## 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](http://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.

Read The Holyoke Sun online at [www.sun.turley.com](http://www.sun.turley.com)

# Richmond becomes MiraVista's new medical director

HOLYOKE – MiraVista Behavioral Health Center is excited to announce the appointment of Dr. Kenneth R. Richmond, MD, MS, as its new Medical Director. Dr. Richmond, a highly respected psychiatrist and experienced leader in the field of behavioral health, brings a dynamic combination of clinical excellence, strategic vision, and unwavering dedication to patient care to MiraVista.

Dr. Richmond's distinguished career spans nearly two decades and includes a remarkable array of leadership roles in both military and civilian settings. He served as Deputy Chief of the Medical Staff and Medical Director of multiple mental health clinics during his tenure in the United States Air Force, where he was recognized with honors such as the Meritorious Service Medal. His expertise, which spans inpatient, outpatient, and telepsychiatry services, as well as public and community psychiatry, will be instrumental as MiraVista prepares to expand its offerings to include onsite, outpatient mental health services in 2025.

"Dr. Richmond is an accomplished leader whose innovative approach to behavioral health and addiction treatment aligns perfectly with our mission of transforming mental health and substance use care in our community," said Francis M. Sauvageau, CEO, TaraVista and MiraVista Behavioral Health Centers. "His extensive experience and passion for fostering positive outcomes will be instrumental as we continue to enhance and expand the care we provide. We are delighted to welcome him to MiraVista and look forward to the incredible impact he will make."

Dr. Richmond holds an MD from George Washington University School of Medicine and a Master's in Organizational Leadership from Quinnipiac University. He completed his psychiatry residency and a Public Service Psychiatry Fellowship at the University of Pittsburgh, where he also



Dr. Kenneth R. Richmond, MD, MS

served as Chief Resident. A Diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and a Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, Dr. Richmond has also contributed to advancing mental health education and awareness through teaching, public speaking, and advocacy.

In his new role, Dr. Richmond will oversee and play a key role in the development of MiraVista's professional staff, including physicians and nurse practitioners ensuring the delivery of high-quality, evidence-based care while championing the organization's commitment to accessible and compassionate treatment for mental health and substance use.

"I am truly honored to join MiraVista Behavioral Health Center and contribute to its mission of providing transformative care," said Dr. Richmond. "Throughout my career, I have been

passionate about creating environments where individuals feel supported and empowered in their recovery. I am excited to collaborate with MiraVista's talented and dedicated team to deliver innovative, patient-centered solutions that make a lasting difference in the lives of those we serve while continuing to distinguish MiraVista as a leader in the provision of mental health and substance use treatment, including Medication Assisted Treatment for those challenged by opioid use disorder."

MiraVista Behavioral Health Center is a leading provider of comprehensive mental health and substance use treatment services for adolescents and adults. By combining clinical expertise with a supportive, stigma-free approach, MiraVista empowers individuals and families to embark on journeys of healing and recovery.

For more information about MiraVista Behavioral Health Center and its services, please visit [www.miravistabhccare.com](http://www.miravistabhccare.com).

## Hibernians name award winners

HOLYOKE – Hibernian President Joe O'Connor along with Ladies Hibernian President Paula Paoli recently announced the selections for the organization's highest awards for 2025. The Man of the Year (Mr. Hibernian) is Dan Murphy of West Springfield and the Woman of the Year (Ms. Hibernian) is Cheryl Dupont of Holyoke. The Christian Charity Award goes to Owen Donohue of Holyoke.

The Mr. and Ms. Hibernian Award is given each year to that person who truly lives by the Hibernian Motto of "Friendship, Unity, and True Christian Charity." This Award will be given at Hibernian Irish Night in Holyoke at the Log Cabin Feb. 22, 2025.

Mr. Hibernian 2025, Dan Murphy said, "It is a humbling experience. For me, it is a great day to be Irish." Dan is married to Cindy Sheridan Murphy and has two step children Ashley and Tyler Ziemba. Dan has been involved with the Hibernians on the Float Committee, Irish Night and Picnic Committees, and the Committee to landscape the Martin Dunn Power Facility.

Ms. Hibernian 2025, Cheryl Dupont said, "I am speechless. I am truly humbled and honored. I get so much more out of the comradery of the LAOH and work we do than I give." Cheryl is married to husband Mark for 43 years and the couple have three children Jessica, Mary Alice, and Ethan. Cheryl has been involved with the Ladies Hibernians,

With her great passion for baking and cooking she is always there to assist with Irish Soda Breads and French Meat Pies for numerous events. She is the Treasurer for Ladies Division 2. She is Chairperson for food for the LAOH Golf Tournament. She has assisted Providence Ministries with Sleeping Bags and participates in making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches every 6 weeks.

2025 Hibernian Christian Charity Award Winner, Owen Donohue said he is "overwhelmed at being selected for the Award and is most appreciative for being chosen."

The Christian Charity Award is given each year to that person who "improves the lives of the people of Hampden/Hampshire Counties." Owen's Award will be given to him at the Hibernian Communion Breakfast at Wyckoff Park Banquet Hall, Holyoke on March 16, 2025. Owen has been a member of the Hibernians since 2007; he is recording secretary, and a member of the scholarship committee. He wrote the article for Holyoke 150th Anniversary book for Republican Newspapers: "A Year in the Life of a Hibernian." Owen has been most involved with supporting the inner city for 30 years youth of Holyoke and "walks the walk": CYO Board member (assists 26 basketball teams which consists of 280 boys and girls ages K-8). He is also a Western Mass Track and Field official.

## OneHolyoke holding community dinner

HOLYOKE – OneHolyoke CDC will host its 9th Annual Holyoke Community Dinner Celebration, this year on Saturday, Dec. 14 from 4 to 7 p.m. at Kelly School, 216 West Street. All Holyoke residents are invited to celebrate the season with a Winter Wonderland-themed free dinner that will also feature live performances, fun activities, and new this year, a silent disco. The organization plans to serve 500 meals to community residents.

OneHolyoke has been hosting its free Community Dinner for the past eight years that brings together hundreds of Holyoke residents. Residents also have the option to take meals to go.

The evening will feature live performances and fun activities, including arts and crafts, bingo, dancing, raffles, a silent disco, and a holiday tree contest with trees sponsored by local businesses and organizations. Sponsored trees are decorated by grades or teams at Kelly School, including staff and students in grades Pre-K through 5th grade, custodial staff, office staff, and more. Those in attendance will be given a ticket to

vote for their favorite tree, and the winning tree grade or team will get a pizza party.

A committee of Holyoke residents and staff from Holyoke Public Schools; Enlace de Familias; staff from the City of Holyoke; MassHire Holyoke; Holyoke Safe Neighborhood Initiative; Nueva Esperanza; MassinMotion; Holyoke Medical Center; and Main St. Bar and Lounge have worked with OneHolyoke to organize this event.

The annual Community Dinner is also supported by nearly 30 sponsoring community organizations and businesses. Platinum level sponsors include Bank ESB; Gary Rome Hyundai; Holyoke Gas & Electric; Holyoke Medical Center; MassinMotion; Master Heo's Tae Kwon Do Child Care; Sublime Systems; Westside Finishing; and Michael Moriarty, Executive Director of OneHolyoke CDC. Gold sponsors include Conklin Furniture, Holyoke Community College, Lawler Insurance, and MIFA. This event is also supported in part by the Mass Cultural Council's Festivals and Projects Grant.

## Book and toy drive seeking donations

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.

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](http://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.

## 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](http://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.

## EARLY DEADLINE For All Advertising & CLASSIFIEDS

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

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



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Guest Column



## Was your IRMAA article incorrect?

Dear Rusty:

In a recent article about Medicare's "Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount" and how IRMAA affects Social Security taxes, you described which income gets included in the IRMAA calculation. You said it is "your combined income from all sources, including 50 % of the SS benefits you receive." That 50% number might be true in some cases, but I think a more accurate, general answer is that "your taxable SS benefit is what gets added to IRMAA." For example, we have enough income every year that we are always taxed at 85% of our SS benefit, so 85% of our SS values get added to our IRMAA. The way your answer reads, a reader of the article might think everyone has 50% of their SS benefit added to IRMAA.

Signed: IRMAA Victim

Dear IRMAA Victim:

I think you may have confused two terms I used when describing Medicare's "Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount" or "IRMAA." I also used the term "MAGI" (Modified Adjusted Gross Income), and it's important to distinguish between those two terms.

MAGI is what determines if the IRMAA provision applies, and IRMAA will affect how much your Medicare premium is. But MAGI is also used for another purpose - to see if your SS benefits are taxable. Your MAGI consists of your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) from your income tax return, plus any non-taxable interest you may have had, plus 50% of the SS benefits you received during the tax year

See SECURITY, page 9

## 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](mailto:thesun@turley.com). Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered for that Friday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election.

For more information, call 413-283-8393.

### Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the 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

## Kissing balls for a new porch



It's really funny that sometimes I have to consult my own columns to remember how to do something.

You see, now that the front porch is done, there is a new area to decorate, an area well-suited for kissing balls! My daughter and I were at the local garden center and there were so many beauties for sale.

Of course it would break my budget to buy one to go in the middle of each pair of columns, so it looks like I'll be making them myself.

The first thing you will need is a styrofoam ball. One that is six inches in diameter would make a good size kissing ball.

Then gather a coat hanger and some wire cutters. Snip away the hook and straighten out the rest. Insert it through the middle of the ball and bend one end as a hanger.

About 18 inches will be showing; it will look better if you choose a gold colored hanger. If not, you can always cover it later.

Getting the piece of wire into the dead center can be difficult, so use a long wooden pick to pre-make the hole. After that insertion will be easy.

Having a selection of greens on hand

will make a pretty kissing ball. Scavenge the landscape for holly, yew, white pine, juniper and the like. Now it is time to insert clumps of greenery into the ball.

Styrofoam is very durable - great for holding all of these stems, but much more difficult to work with than floral foam. For that reason, all but the most rigid stems need to be put on wooden picks before they can be stuck into the ball.

Make small bunches of greenery about four inches long, holding their stems next to the pick and wrapping the attached wire to it. One by one insert these bunches into the styrofoam.

It is best to work randomly around the ball - setting the dimensions if you will, rather than starting in one place and working out. Being that it is round, it will be hard to put it down while working on it.

After a while you'll get into the swing of things by wiring a few bunches of greens, putting them in, wiring a few more and so forth. Finally, give it a good look. Is it a nice, round shape? Is there any foam showing? Where could it use a few berries?

Rose hips or winterberry, or even artificial berries will surely brighten it up, as will strands of ribbon wired to a wooden pick and inserted into the bottom. Wired ribbon is a good choice since it has a little shape; less droopy so to speak.

It will be surprising just how much greenery it takes to make a kissing ball. When I am making wreaths or decorations of any sort I always continue harvesting even after I think I have enough, just as a bit of

See GARDEN, page 5

## Most Americans aren't obsessed with politics



The 2024 election is over, but the arguments about what it means are continuing. Did Donald Trump and the Republican Party win a mandate to govern as they wish? Did Democrats try too hard to appeal to their political base? Or not hard enough?

But drawing conclusions about the meaning of an election, especially about what it says about the American people, is difficult. Most voters simply aren't that focused on politics. They aren't obsessed with the latest news from Washington or what the candidates are saying.

As Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear writes in a recent New York Times column, "When most Americans wake up in the morning, they

are not thinking about politics." They are thinking about their jobs, their finances, their next doctor's appointment. They are thinking about feeding their families and getting their children off to school. They want to know their communities are safe.

"If you are staring at the cost of your child's prescription and wondering how you are going to pay for both it and your family's dinner," Beshear writes, "the offense of the day in Washington, D.C. or the latest crazy thing a politician said just isn't as important."

I couldn't agree more. Those of us who write about government and public affairs often forget that we're in the minority. For most people, they may follow the news, and most of them will vote; but politics, especially national politics, isn't at the top of their daily concerns.

One of the first lessons I learned when I was in Congress was that people care deeply about local matters. They pay a lot less attention to national issues. They are even less worried about international affairs.

See SECURITY, page 9

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

**GARDEN**, from page 4

insurance. It's always better to have extra than have to stop everything and go picking again.

One little factoid for cruise ship trivia: "Kissing bunches" in Old England were comprised of two intersecting circles of greens that were often decorated with fruit as well as figures of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. The "kissing" aspect came from the sprig of mistletoe that hung on the very bottom of the sphere – evoking the same response it does when hung by itself today.

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.



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN  
Guest Column

At the risk of sounding like a broken record (only those of us of "a certain age" know what that means!), one of the most important things you can do to protect yourself and your loved ones is compiling all of your important information in one place.

Precious seconds can be saved if a paramedic responding to an emergency has access to all of the patient's medical information, including health history, medications, surgeries, insurance information and phone number for the primary health care provider.

A good place to put it is on the refrigerator, where a first responder is most likely to look.

But when I got to thinking about it, I realized that our loved ones need a lot more information in an emergency that may result in a hospital or nursing home stay, or even death. I decided to create a booklet that I could use to provide the information my family might need.

Now, I'm offering this valuable new "Emergency Life File" as a free service to my readers. To request one – or two if you're a couple -- email me at teri@northshorern.com.

This is not the same as the information you keep on the fridge or something you would tuck into a suitcase before

a trip. It contains personal identifiable information (PII) that you want to keep in a secured location, one only your family, attorney or financial adviser has access to.

As a patient advocate, I've seen families thrown into turmoil, emotional as well logistical, when they realize they have to make some decisions and start taking care of mom's or dad's accounts and details. It's sometimes hard to think about these things, but giving your family peace of mind knowing that they don't have to figure all of this out on their own is a wonderful, caring gift.

Let's walk through the Emergency Life File. You might be surprised at the level of detail it asks for – things you might not even have thought of.

The first few pages are just what you expect: Name, address, date of birth, gender, ethnicity. There's space for a Social Security number, but if you're not comfortable including it, you can use the xxx-xx-last 4 digits format.

You may include login information for banks, investment accounts, credit cards and real property so your family can access them if you become incapacitated. As a reminder, keep this information in a secure location, but tell your family how to access it.

The next page provides insurance information, including Medicare and Medicaid ID numbers, and contact info for your doctor and patient advocate. After that comes information on any life insurance policies or long-term care policies you are carrying.

There are pages devoted to your online and social media accounts, includ-

ing passwords, so these can be disabled or deleted if you become incapacitated. Also a list of friends and relations who should be notified of your hospitalization or death.

As a dog mom to three King Charles spaniels, I would worry more about their care than about myself in an emergency. So there are pages devoted to them: names, feeding and walking schedules, medications, vet's name and microchip number.

There are also pages where you can list important documents and where to find them, such as advance health-care directive, health-care power of attorney, financial power of attorney, estate plan and will. Also pages where you can note your end-of-life instructions and preferences for a funeral or celebration of life.

One more recommendation: Don't wait too long. You want to compile this information while you're cognitively able to do it and ensure family members know where it is and what's in it.

Again, email me at teri@northshorern.com to request your copy. I hope you will find it to be useful, and that you will let me know what you think.

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
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49	50			51			52			53		
54		55				56				57	58	59
60						61				62		
63						64				65		
66						67				68		

**CLUES ACROSS**

1. Thou \_\_\_ do it
6. Sino-Soviet block (abbr.)
9. Brainstem part
13. Town in New York state
14. Little (Spanish)
15. Continent
16. Retch
17. Short-billed rails
18. Small period of time (abbr.)
19. Confused
21. A team needs one
22. Woman in ancient times
23. Republican Party
24. Spanish be
25. "The Godfather" character Johnny
28. Not around
29. City in Zambia
31. A type of beginning
33. Numb
36. Gurus
38. Small, gray-headed

**CLUES DOWN**

1. One-time Aaron
2. Wings
3. Overly studious person
4. They protect your valuables
5. The Volunteer State
6. Non-hydraulic cement
7. Horse mackerel
8. Jackson and Diddley are two
9. Splendid displays
10. Mountain in NE Greece
11. A daughter or your brother or sister
12. German surname
14. Having more than one husband at a time
17. Romanian city
20. Energy
21. Makes less hot
23. Gas diffusion electrode
25. Former CIA
26. Set an example for others
27. Support of a particular person
29. One from the Big

**CLUES ACROSS**

14. Disorders
17. Indian soldier
18. Tree type
20. Midway between south and southeast
21. Corn comes on it
22. Ship's deck
24. A way to bake
26. Improvised
28. Butterfly genus
30. Baseball fields have them
32. Designated space
34. Discharge
36. Two of something
38. Once more
40. Part of your face
42. Tax collector
44. Cassia tree

**CLUES DOWN**

2. Wings
3. Overly studious person
4. They protect your valuables
5. The Volunteer State
6. Non-hydraulic cement
7. Horse mackerel
8. Jackson and Diddley are two
9. Splendid displays
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17. Romanian city
20. Energy
21. Makes less hot
23. Gas diffusion electrode
25. Former CIA
26. Set an example for others
27. Support of a particular person
29. One from the Big

**CLUES ACROSS**

30. Mountain range
32. Violate the sanctity of something
34. Supervises flying
35. Talks
37. Persian male given name
40. Born of
42. Forcibly take one's possessions
43. Discounts
47. Knockouts
49. Posh Colorado destination
50. Form of therapy
52. British rock band
53. Type of virus (abbr.)
55. The U. of Miami mascot is one
56. Volcanic crater
57. Middle Eastern nation
58. Sinn \_\_, Irish organization
59. Ethiopian lake
61. Bits per inch (abbr.)
65. Equally

**CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 11**



Families lined up to get a free ride at the merry-go-round.



Children got to meet the Snow Queen and play with balloons at the Holyoke merry-go-round for the annual tree lighting.



Families gathered at the Holyoke Children's Museum to decorate ornaments.



Elias Nikolaidis and Rechele Bastarache from Dazzle Day Face Painters created animal balloons for kids.



Families lined up to get animal balloons from Dazzle Day Face Painters. *Turley photos by Quinn Suomala*



Something Royal Party Co. brought the Snow Queen for kids to meet as they celebrated the tree lighting.

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USDA INSP. FRESH HOLIDAY ROAST BONELESS PORK LOIN WITH HAM, CHEESE, PEPPERS, OLIVES, SPICES..... <b>\$4<sup>49</sup></b> lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF TENDERLOIN CUT FREE <b>\$10<sup>89</sup></b> lb	CAPONS..... <b>\$5<sup>99</sup></b> lb
USDA INSP. FROZEN PORK SHOULDER PICNIC. <b>\$1<sup>39</sup></b> lb	USDA INSP. FRESH BONELESS BEEF SIRLOIN SPOON ROAST <b>\$5<sup>99</sup></b> lb	CORNISH GAME HEN ..... <b>\$2<sup>79</sup></b> lb
USDA INSP. STORE MADE ITALIAN SAUSAGE ALL VARIETIES ..... <b>\$2<sup>79</sup></b> lb	USDA INSP. FRESH AMERICAN LEG LAMB <b>\$5<sup>99</sup></b> lb	<b>HOLIDAY APPETIZERS</b>
USDA INSP. KAYEM BUDDABALL SMOKED PIT HAM BONELESS WHOLE..... <b>\$3<sup>66</sup></b> lb	FROZEN IMPORTED LEG RACKS <b>\$14<sup>99</sup></b> lb	USDA INSP. FRESH CHICOPEE PROVISIONS BLUE SEAL KIELBASA ..... <b>\$4<sup>99</sup></b> lb
USDA INSP. HATFIELD OLD TIME SKINLESS SHANKLESS HARDWOOD SMOKED WHOLE HAM ..... <b>\$2<sup>89</sup></b> lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN COOK'S HAM PORTIONS BUTT & SHANK <b>\$1<sup>49</sup></b> lb	USDA INSP. FROZEN CODINO'S MANICOTI w/ RICOTTA 40 OZ <b>\$4<sup>99</sup></b> ea
USDA INSP. FROZEN BONELESS HAM DINNER AVERAGE 5 LB <b>\$1<sup>99</sup></b> lb		USDA INSP. FROZEN BACON WRAPPED SHRIMP 15 COUNT ..... <b>\$8<sup>99</sup></b> ea
		USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN BOS'N CALAMARI 2 1/2 LB BAG ..... <b>\$9<sup>99</sup></b> ea
		USDA INSP. IQF FROZEN COOKED SHRIMP 16/20 COUNT 2 LB BAG ..... <b>\$19<sup>99</sup></b> ea

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**HOLIDAY, from page 1**

Many children and their families stayed working on the ornaments for several hours, much to Geryk's pleasure.

"My favorite is when we get a kid in right away when we open and then they stay the whole time because they just want to keep making and making and making," Geryk said. "There is a friend here who has been here the whole time and is probably on her tenth ornament. It is just fantastic."

At five the crowd traveled over to City Hall where they could enjoy cookies, hot chocolate and other snacks while watching the performances of the First Lutheran School Ambassador's Choir and the Holyoke High School Madrigal Choir.

Each choir performed a mixture of holiday songs for the audience to listen to as they sipped their hot chocolate and got to spend time with their community.

Finally, the night finished off with the highlight of the event, the parade of lights and the lighting of the Christmas tree.

"The tree lighting tells the residents of Holyoke that we are one city, we are together and we want all people to enjoy the holidays," McGiverin said.

Lesperance and McGiverin believed that this tree lighting event truly had something for everyone in the community.

"When you involve multiple things for everyone at the same time, it works out great," McGiverin said.

"We try to put on something for everyone, it is not just the kids," Lesperance said. "We try to bring everyone together for a good time and a bonding relationship with the city."

All in all, the event was the perfect way to kick off the holiday season for many in Holyoke.

# SPORTS

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## Knights look to open season with win

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke High School boys basketball continued getting ready for the regular season this week. The Knights were state tournament participants this year and hope to be again this season. The Knights are scheduled to face SICS on the road Monday evening, Dec. 16 at 7 p.m. They will be at home against Chicopee High on Monday, Dec. 23 at 6:30 p.m.



Jeremiah Vargas dekes as he heads into the paint.



Ritchie Rivera makes a pass around the perimeter.



Holyoke boys basketball was made it deeper in the state tournament last season.



The boys are preparing for their regular season opener.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

### COLLEGE

## Pond scores for WSU win

WESTFIELD – Westfield State senior guard Olivia Hadla (Westfield, Mass.) scored a season-high 29 points and added six rebounds and three steals as the Owls held off a fourth quarter comeback effort from Emmanuel College to secure a 79-74 victory in a non-conference game on Saturday afternoon from the Woodward Center in Westfield, Mass.

The Owls improve to 6-3 on the season while the Saints drop to 3-4 overall. Hadla's 29 points tied for the second-highest mark in her career as her career-high 31-point effort

See WSU, page 8



Jordan King works out during practice Monday.



Calvin Godbolt looks to pass during a drill in practice.

## Lawsuits lead to compliance of scheduling

By Gregory A. Scibelli  
gscibelli@turley.com

PALMER – If you go on the Arbiter Live website to look at your favorite team's schedule, you will notice the end of every season has anywhere from one to three "filler dates."

These filler dates were the subject of lawsuits filed by Minnechaug and Monson High Schools after their failure to comply with the rule resulted in forfeits being assigned to Monson, Minnechaug, and

See LAWSUITS, page 8

## Holyoke High 2024-2025 winter varsity schedule

Boys Basketball			
Saturday, Dec. 14	Home	TBD	TBD
Monday, Dec. 16	Away	SICS	7 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 23	Home	Chicopee	6:30 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 27	Away	Longmeadow	7 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 30	Home	Greater Lawrence Tech	1 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 3	Away	Putnam	7 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 6	Home	Central	7 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 10	Away	Sci-Tech	7 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 14	Home	Northampton	7 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 16	Away	Pope Francis	7:30 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 17	Away	Amherst	7 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 21	Home	Putnam	7 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 24	Away	Central	7 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 28	Home	Sci-Tech	7 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 31	Away	Northampton	7:30 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 6	Away	West Springfield	7 p.m.
Friday, Feb. 7	Home	Chicopee Comp	7 p.m.
Wed., Feb. 12	Home	Tantasqua	6:30 p.m.

Girls Basketball			
Thursday, Dec. 12	Home	Chicopee	7 p.m.
Wed., Dec. 18	Away	Minnechaug	7 p.m.
Friday, Dec. 20	Away	Pittsfield	6 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 30	Away	West Springfield	7 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 7	Away	Central	7 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 9	Home	Longmeadow	7 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 10	Away	East Longmeadow	7 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 13	Home	SICS	7 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 17	Home	West Springfield	7 p.m.
Wed., Jan. 22	Away	Shepherd Hill	6 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 23	Home	Central	7 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 27	Away	Longmeadow	7 p.m.
Thursday, Jan. 30	Away	SICS	7 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 31	Home	Southwick	7 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 3	Away	Northampton	7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 5	Away	Amherst	7 p.m.
Monday, Feb. 10	Home	Northampton	7 p.m.
Wed., Feb. 12	Away	Tantasqua	6:30 p.m.

Swimming (co-op with South Hadley)			
Wed., Dec. 18	Home	Turners Falls	4 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 23	Home	Hampden Charter	4 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 3	Home	Minnechaug	5 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 7	Home	Easthampton	4 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 10	Away	Monson	4:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 14	Home	Hampden Charter	4 p.m.
Friday, Jan. 17	Away	Chicopee	4:30 p.m.
Tuesday, Jan. 21	Away	Renaissance	4:30 p.m.
Monday, Jan. 27	Away	Turners Falls	4:30 p.m.
Wed., Jan. 29	Home	Renaissance	4 p.m.

Wrestling			
Saturday, Dec. 14	Home	Knight-Hawk Tournament	10 a.m.
Wed., Dec. 18	Home	Westfield	5:15 p.m.
Monday, Dec. 23	Away	West Springfield Duals	10 a.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 8	Away	Longmeadow	7 p.m.
Wed., Jan. 15	Home	East Longmeadow	6 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 18	Away	Franklin Tech Duals	9 a.m.
Wed., Jan. 22	Away	Ludlow	6:30 p.m.
Saturday, Jan. 25	Away	Rocky Hill, Conn.	9 a.m.
Saturday, Feb. 1	Away	Cambridge Rindge	2:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 5	Home	Putnam	6 p.m.
Saturday, Feb. 8	Away	Mansfield	9:30 a.m.
Wed., Feb. 12	Away	Chicopee	7 p.m.

### WSU, from page 7

came last year also against Emmanuel.

The Saints led 15-12 with 3:14 to go in the opening quarter before Westfield closed the frame on 13-2 run. First-year wing Caroline Galvani (Framingham, Mass.) started the scoring burst with a three-pointer to tie the game, then after Desiree Robinson (New Haven, Conn.) converted a layup, Hadla responded with a triple on the

### LAWSUITS, from page 7

Pathfinder for either Western Mass. or nonplayoff games played following the end of the regular seasons.

The forfeits were meaningful in terms of determining the schools' power ranking for the state tournament. Minnechaug and Monson were successful in securing a court injunction and did not take the forfeits. Pathfinder did not attempt to use legal means to reverse the forfeits, and the boys soccer team made the Western Mass. finals, which means they won two games after the regular season that were changed to losses for their MIAA ranking.

More than a dozen other schools including

## Railers fall to Maine Mariners

WORCESTER – The Railers 4-3 loss to Maine Saturday night dropped their record at the DCU Center to 3-6-1 in 2024-25. That compares with a .500 mark on the road at 6-6-0.

There is no logic to it, nor is there any specific area or areas that Worcester needs to be better at.

"I don't think there is any one thing you can put on that," coach Bob Deraney said. "There is nothing that significant that says why we've been better on the road than at home."

Some of the Railers' home losses have been lopsided and interesting. This one was headed that way but turned out to have a thrilling, if disappointing, finish.

Worcester fell behind early, 2-0 and the Mariners eventually stretched that lead to 4-1. Then the Railers came alive late in the third period, scoring goals at 11:07 and 18:29, but could not overcome the early deficit.

Griffin Loughran, Anthony Repaci and Anthony Callin had the Worcester goals. Owen Pederson, Justin Bean, Jimmy Lambert and Matthew Philip scored for the Mariners, who snapped a four-game losing streak.

Callin was one of the Railers best players last season. His goal late in the third period was a beauty, a high hard snap shot from the right circle with Worcester having an extra skater, and his first of the year.

"I think it's huge," Deraney said of that goal. "I know it's been weighing on him. He's been sec-

ond-guessing himself, gripping the stick too tight, all those things that happen to a guy who cares so much and wants to contribute to the team."

Repaci scored shorthanded at 11:07 to make it 4-2. He converted a pass from Matt DeMelis. Repaci continues to have a memorable, and perhaps in the long run, unprecedented season. He was 1-1-2 Saturday night and is 16-8-24 in 22 games.

Repaci is up to 160 points in a Worcester uniform. He is tied with IceCats forward Marc Brown for third most in city history.

The Railers could not find any offensive traction until the game was almost over. Maine had the best of things by far, both in terms of time of possession and quality of scoring chances.

The first period was an omen of things to come. About three minutes after the puck drop the Railers incurred three consecutive icing calls in a span of 30 seconds. Then Pederson scored from 15 feet out at 7:37 into the period and Bean put one over Michael Bullion's glove at 9:23 to make it 2-0.

Loughran's goal was a thrilling one.

Early in the first period he caused a turnover that turned into a breakaway, but he got in too deep and Maine goalie Ryan Bischel stopped him. This time he was set up by a great pass from Connor Welch and zoomed in at top speed. His wrist shot from between the circles was essentially unstoppable.

Lambert made it a 3-1 game at 6:39 of the third period, beating Bullion from the side of the net. Philip scored on a breakaway at 17:54.

## T-Birds stay on track with big OT win

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (12-9-1-0) clawed back from 1-0 down after 40 minutes and emerged with a 2-1 overtime victory over the Rockford IceHogs (8-10-3-0) before a sold-out crowd of 6,793 on Saturday night at the MassMutual Center.

After the two clubs exchanged chances in the opening five minutes, the opening period brought very little in the way of offense against Springfield netminder Vadim Zherenko or Rockford goalie Mitchell Weeks.

The T-Birds were uncharacteristically sloppy in the defensive zone, and a pivotal turnover at 2:59 of the second period resulted in Rockford's opening goal as Cole Guttman picked off a loose puck in the middle of the zone and slipped a five-hole shot through Zherenko to make it 1-0 IceHogs. It marked the first time in eight games that the T-Birds allowed the first goal of a game.

Offense did not come easily for Springfield, as the home team was outshot 16-6 in the middle period. Zherenko was at his best, making a pair of other breakaway saves on Guttman among his 24 denials through 40 minutes of play.

Zherenko rose up to make a game-changing stop in the opening seconds of the third, as he stretched out with the left leg to stonewall Samuel Savoie on a breakaway bid to keep the score at 1-0.

Less than three minutes later, Tyler Tucker continued his torrid goal-scoring weekend, flipping a

point shot over Weeks on the glove side, bringing about a Teddy Bear storm and equalizing the game, 1-1.

It appeared as if the Thunderbirds had taken the lead just a few moments later when a Michael Buchinger shot bounded high in the air and into the blue paint. Matthew Peca jabbed the loose puck across the goal line, seemingly making it a 2-1 Springfield lead. Despite being called a goal on the ice, the officials gathered and ultimately waved off the tally, and the 1-1 tie carried to the end of regulation.

The T-Birds rewarded their netminder in the extra session at 3:42 with their 19-year-old phenom stepping into the spotlight. After Aleksanteri Kaskimaki fed the puck through neutral ice to Dalibor Dvorsky, a 2-on-1 developed with Tucker joining the rush. Dvorsky patiently curled the puck to the middle of the ice around a sprawled defender before launching a perfect shot glove-side on Weeks to give Springfield its second overtime win in as many nights.

The rookie's team-leading 10th goal of the season also went down as his first overtime game-winner as a pro. Springfield has now won four straight games and is 8-1-1 in its last ten games, springboarding the team into third place in the Atlantic Division standings.

The T-Birds next embark on one of their longest road trips of the season, beginning with a Saturday contest in Wilkes-Barre against the Penguins on Dec. 14 at 6:05 p.m. at Mohegan Sun Arena at Casey Plaza.

other end to take the lead.

Morgan Berthiaume (Webster, Mass.) located Jordan Grant (Gray, Maine) for a jumper with 46 seconds left, then after two free throws from Hadla, Maddie Pond (Holyoke, Mass.) closed the period with a triple to cap the run as the Owls scored ten points in the final 1:08 of the quarter to take a 25-17 lead.

Westfield pushed the lead into double digits midway through the second quarter. Berthiaume buried a three after corraling an offensive rebound, then a Grant

steal led to a transition bucket for Hadla to open a 30-20 advantage with 6:43 left in the half.

The Owls led by as many as 16 points in the second with Galvani connecting for a three-pointer to extend the lead to 43-27 at the 3:27 mark of the period. A layup and two made free throws from Hattie Sloyan (Greensboro, N.C.) trimmed the Westfield lead to nine on two separate occasions, but Galvani answered with a three in the closing seconds of the half to regain a double-digit advantage, taking a 48-36 lead into the break.

Gomez says she has to back on the site and make sure rosters are updated for the playoffs to ensure JV players added to rosters for tournament are included.

When looking at an individual team's schedules, most teams play 16 to 18 regular season contests. The filler dates are then replaced by Western Mass. playoff games or "nonplayoff" games. Some of those non-playoff games are needed, however. A team that finishes the regular season with a 7-9 record can get into the state tournament with a .500 record. The nonplayoff games played by that team then mean something as they can use them to finish season 9-9 and qualify.

The Arbiter website is exclusively used now for schedules, rosters, and score postings. The results are used by the MIAA to quantify Power Rankings for tournament seeds.



# Black bears topic of Berkshire Green Drinks event

DALTON – Nathan Buckhout, a wildlife biologist with Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife, will speak at the January Berkshire Green Drinks event on Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2025.

This free hybrid event will take place online via Zoom and in person at The Stationery Factory, 63 Flansburg Avenue. The in-person social gathering will begin around 5 p.m.; the presentation and Zoom meeting will start at 6 p.m.

Buckhout will review black bear facts, talk about some of his research on black bears in the state and discuss some common misconceptions and human-bear-related issues that commonly occur and how people can prevent conflicts with them. Additionally, Nate enjoys discussing all types of wildlife and welcomes all questions about any wildlife during the question and answer session following his presentation.

People may learn more and RSVP by visiting <https://tinyurl.com/Jan2025-Berks-Green-Drinks>.

Nathan Buckhout is an Air Force Veteran who was born in Easthampton and graduated in 2007 with a B.S. in behavioral science from the US Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. He then went on to get his Master's in wildlife conservation biology from UMass Amherst in 2014, where he researched spatial-temporal factors affecting human and black bear interactions in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Nathan has worked as a seasonal wildlife biologist in Kodiak, Alaska, Great Smoky Mountains and Yellowstone National Parks, and Tongass National Forest in Hoonah, Alaska; he began working for MA Fish and Wildlife as a wildlife biologist in 2014 and continues to do so. In his free time, Nathan loves to fish, hunt, hike, camp, travel, garden, read and take

care of his "hobby" farm with his wife and three-year-old daughter.

Berkshire Green Drinks, formerly Pittsfield Green Drinks, is an informal gathering on the second Wednesday of the month that is free and open to everyone with any environmental interest. A guest speaker talks about an environmentally related topic for approximately 30 minutes beginning at 6 p.m.; the presentation is followed by a discussion and Question and Answer. The drinks aren't green, but the conversations are. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to join and bring along questions.

Berkshire Green Drinks is sponsored and organized by the Berkshire Environmental Action Team. For more information regarding Berkshire Green Drinks, people may email Chelsey Simmons at [chelsey@thebeatnews.org](mailto:chelsey@thebeatnews.org) or call 413-464-9402.



## PECK, from page 1

"Choosing a new name, mascot, and colors for the district's first new school building in 35 years was an important part of the planning process," said Superintendent Anthony Soto. "Our new school will be a fixture in our community for decades to come, and we wanted an identity for the building that reflects who we are and where we are going. Designing and building a new school was an important component of Holyoke's efforts to strengthen learning opportunities and reimagine the middle school experience."

Chief of Strategy and Turnaround Erin Linville and School Committee member Dr. Yadilette Rivera Colon led a community-driven process to select the new school's name, mascot, and colors.

A working group of 13 members met twice—once to narrow down the choices from a write-in survey with more than 200 entries and a second time to analyze the final survey results. More than 1,800 people—including students, families, staff, and community members—participated in the final survey. The working group made its recommendation for the school name to a subcommittee of the School Committee, as well as shared their recommendation for the colors and mascot with the district leadership team.

Superintendent Soto and the district's leadership team approved their recommendation for mascot and school colors when they met in the morning of December 9. Later that evening, the School Committee approved the school name. If the recommendation had been to change the name of the school to something other than William R. Peck

School, the School Committee would have worked collaboratively with the City Council to vote on a name change.

"I am thankful that 80% of current 6th and 7th graders at Holyoke STEM and Metcalf—the students who will be at the new middle school next year—participated in the survey, and I am excited that their top choices of phoenix as the mascot and red and black as the colors were ultimately selected," said Ms. Linville. "This demonstrates the district's continued equity commitment to seek out and incorporate the voices of those impacted."

Working group members included:

- Sabrina Bolden (RISE Teacher at Metcalf)
- Aaron DiPilla (Music Teacher at STEM)
- Sam Garcia (HPS staff member, Sullivan parent)
- Jackie Glasheen (School Building

Committee, HPS Cabinet)

- Kevin Jourdain (City Council, School Building Committee)
- Mildred Lefebvre (School Committee)
- Erin Linville (Cabinet member)
- Jay Nelson (Morgan/Metcalf parent)
- Everyln Pabon (Morgan/Metcalf parent) and her two daughters who are Holyoke students
- Norm Pacheco (Ethnic Studies Teacher at STEM)
- Dr. Yadilette Rivera Colon (School Committee)

Holyoke Public Schools will invite students to submit logo designs for the new middle school. HPS will also work with the School Committee and school leaders to potentially name rooms within the school after other notable leaders who were recommended during the process.

## GRANT, from page 1

reaching out personally to the contractors that they hoped would put bids in that did not the first round," Magrath-Smith said. "Hopefully the second round goes more successfully."

As they have had to go out for a second round of bidding the project will be on hold until February or March when the purchasing department will hear back about a contractor.

The city council does intend to bring attention to forestry in Holyoke and they believe this grant will be a good avenue to do so.

"This order again highlights the importance of addressing the tree issues in the city," City Councilor Kevin Jourdain said.

One of the biggest priorities of the grant will be to address the list of the 100 most dangerous trees in Holyoke.

The Department of Public Works is working on a report laying out a plan on how they want to address these trees.

"We look forward to getting that report and having a specific plan in place to fix it," Jourdain said.

This will include whether the trees will be handled in-house or through an outside source and what funding, if any additional funding is needed, they require.

"Overall this is a serious problem that needs to be addressed and it needs to be addressed on a rather quick timeline," Jourdain said.

The council is aware that there is a backlog of trees that need to be taken down or trimmed and they hope that these issues will be tackled as quickly as possible once a contractor is hired.

At the request of City Councilor David Bartley, the letter detailing the grant is being put up on the city forestry website so that any residents interested in learning more about it can have easy access to it.

## SECURITY, from page 4

IRMAA is a factor which will increase your monthly Medicare premium if your MAGI is over certain thresholds for your tax filing status. MAGI is used to determine if a higher Medicare premium applies, and it is also used to see if your SS benefits are subject to income tax.

Your MAGI does, indeed, always use only 50% of the SS benefits you received during the tax year (not 85% in some cases). That's because the SS contributions included in MAGI relate to SS contributions your employer paid on your behalf. Only half of your received SS benefits are used to determine MAGI because that's the amount of your SS benefits attributable to your employer's contributions. Said another way, the SS payroll tax you personally paid while working was from your taxable income, so it is not included in MAGI. But the amount your employer contributed was not taxable by the IRS and, thus, is included in MAGI. So, it's the portion of your SS benefits attributable to your employer

which is included in MAGI. Thus, the terminology that MAGI is "your combined income from all sources, including 50% of the SS benefits you received during the tax year" is correct. MAGI is what determines how much of your SS benefits are taxable, but your MAGI also determines if IRMAA applies to your Medicare premiums.

Your benefits are taxable if, as a married couple filing jointly, your total MAGI exceeds \$32,000. If your MAGI is over the first threshold but less than the 2nd threshold (\$44,000 for married filers) then 50% of the SS benefits you received during the tax year are included as part of your income taxable by the IRS. But if your MAGI goes over the 2nd threshold (\$44,000 for married filers) then up to 85% of the SS benefits you received during the tax year will be included as part of your income taxable by the IRS.

In short, MAGI determines how much of your income is subject to taxation. But MAGI is also used to determine if IRMAA applies. And how much your MAGI exceeds the separate

IRMAA thresholds determines what your Medicare premium will be.

So, the article correctly states that IRMAA only counts 50% of the SS benefits received because that is what is included in MAGI (which is what determines if IRMAA applies). But the amount of SS which may be taxable income by the IRS could be up to 85% of benefits received during the tax year if your MAGI is high enough.

*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](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email us at [ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisor@amacfoundation.org). Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.*

## CONGRESS, from page 4

Their concerns are much closer to home.

In my district, the experience was the same whether I was visiting with constituents in cafes, speaking to service clubs or meeting with reporters and editors at local newspapers. People, whether they were Democrats or Republicans, were focused on their communities. They wanted to talk about a new factory, a planned road project or the local school system.

People do pay attention to the national economy, because it affects their lives. They may not know the latest inflation or unemployment numbers, but they know when costs go up for gas, groceries and housing. They care about crime, but their focus is on community safety.

It's true, of course, that Donald

Trump has upended our politics, putting himself at the center of every issue.

The decline of local newspapers, coupled with the rise of talk radio, cable TV news and social media, has nationalized our politics. Tune in CNN or Fox News, and you might think every national issue is a matter of life and death.

Politicians often amplify this thinking as they compete to turn highly motivated voters in a tight election. But that's not most Americans. Most care deeply about their families, their neighbors and their communities. They want the government to share those concerns.

Beshear is a Democrat who has twice been elected governor of a state that just voted 65-35 for Trump. He recommends a focus on kitchen-table issues as a way forward for his party.

"The focus of the Democratic Party must return to creating better jobs, more

affordable and accessible health care, safer roads and bridges, the best education for our children and communities where people aren't just safer but also feel safer," he writes.

In fact, that should be a good agenda for any politician, Democrat or Republican. Meeting the people where they live and trying to improve their day-to-day lives isn't just good politics. It's good governing. We'll all be better off if our elected officials remember that.

*Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.*

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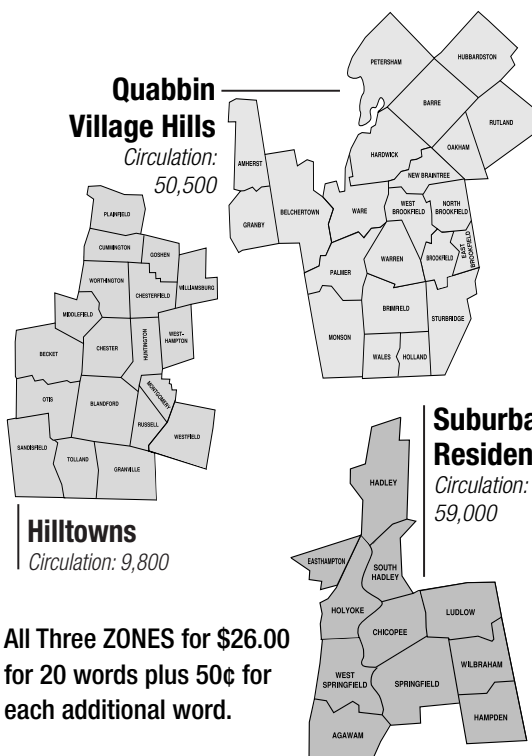
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**City of Holyoke  
License Board**

**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 OF MORTGAGEE'S SALE OF REAL ESTATE**

By virtue and in execution of the Power of Sale contained in a certain Mortgage Deed, Security Agreement and Assignment of Leases and Rents, given by Alycar Investments, LLC, to Bluedog Capital Partners, LLC, dated May 31, 2024, and recorded on June 3, 2024 at the Hampden County Registry of Deeds in Book 25440 Page 541 (the "Mortgage") of which Mortgage Bluedog Capital Partners, LLC is the present holder, for breach of conditions of said Mortgage and for the purpose of foreclosing, the same will be sold at Public Auction at 11:00 a.m. on January 9, 2025, on the mortgaged premises located at 1412 Dwight Street, Holyoke, Massachusetts 01040, a portion of the premises described in the Mortgage.

**TO WIT:  
1412 DWIGHT STREET, HOLYOKE, MA**

The land in said Holyoke, with the buildings thereon, bounded and described as follows:

Beginning at the westerly corner of the intersection of St. Jerome Avenue with the southerly side of Dwight Street; thence running WESTERLY along the southerly side of Dwight Street, fifty (50) feet to a point; thence SOUTHERLY one hundred twenty (120) feet to a point; thence EASTERLY thirty-seven (37) feet to a point on the westerly side of St. Jerome Avenue; and thence in a NORTHERLY direction along the westerly side of said St. Jerome Avenue to the place of beginning.

Subject to restrictions of record.

For reference, see deed recorded in the Hampden County Registry of Deeds herewith.

The premises will be sold subject to any and all unpaid taxes and other municipal

assessments and liens, and subject to prior liens or other enforceable encumbrances of recorded entitled to precedence over the Mortgage, and subject to and with the benefit of all easements, restrictions, reservations and conditions of record and subject to all tenancies and/or rights of parties in possession.

**TERMS OF SALE:**

A deposit of Fifteen Thousand (\$15,000.00) Dollars by certified or bank check will be required to be paid by the purchaser at the time and place of sale. The high bidder will be required to sign a Memorandum of Sale upon acceptance of bid. The balance is to be paid by certified or bank check at Saulino & Silvia, P.C., 550 Locust Street, Fall River, Massachusetts 02720, or by mail to 550 Locust Street, Fall River, Massachusetts 02720, within thirty (30) days from the date of sale. Deed will be provided to purchaser for recording upon receipt in full of the purchase price. The description of the premises contained in said Mortgage shall control in the event of an error in this publication.

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

**BLUEDOG CAPITAL PARTNERS, LLC,**  
Present holder of said Mortgage Deed, Security Agreement and Assignment of Leases and Rents,

By its Attorneys,  
**SAULINO & SILVIA, P.C.**  
**PETER A. SAULINO,**  
**ESQUIRE**  
Saulino & Silvia, P.C.  
550 Locust Street  
Fall River, MA 02720  
PH: (508) 675 -7770  
12/13, 12/20, 12/27/2024

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Probate and Family Court  
Hampden Division  
Docket No. HD24P2542EA  
Estate of:  
William J. Colangelo  
Date of Death:  
October 23, 2024**

**INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE**

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Christopher Sugrue of Westhampton, MA**

a Will has been admitted to informal probate.

**Christopher Sugrue of Westhampton, MA** has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without

supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.  
12/13/2024

**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. HD24P1254EA  
Estate of:  
Hedy Sonja Jaundoo  
Date of Death: 02/27/2024  
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 **Satesh S Jaundoo of Denver, CO** requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

The Petitioner requests that: **Satesh S Jaundoo of Denver, CO** 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 12/31/2024.** 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  
12/13/2024

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Probate and Family Court  
Hampden Division  
Docket No. HD24P2506EA  
Estate of:  
Carolyn Ann Rogers-Harris  
Also Known As:  
Carolyn A. Rogers-Harris  
Date of Death: 10/13/2024  
INFORMAL PROBATE PUBLICATION NOTICE**

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Daniel J. Harris of Holyoke, MA.**

**Daniel J. Harris of Holyoke, MA** has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform

Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner.  
12/13/2024

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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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.publicnotices.turley.com)**

## In The News

# Cooper's Gifts offers Blessing Bracelets for tough times

AGAWAM – Cooper's Gifts has just received its largest order of Blessing Bracelets in the 8 years that the shop has been selling them. "They truly are the perfect gift for any occasion; from birthdays to retirement and encouragement to bereavement; for the good times and the tough times," says Kate Gourde, owner and shopkeeper of Cooper's Gift in Agawam.

The Blessing Bracelet is a phenomenon that has evolved from a gift between a few friends to a scale of over 1.5 million bracelets sold worldwide and a Hallmark movie, *The Blessing Bracelet* (2023), starring Amanda Schull and Carlo Mark.

"Blessing Bracelets are a physical

reminder to pause and think of 4 things in your life that are a blessing. These bracelets are beautiful quality; they are made of sterling silver, pearl beads and semi-precious stones, and some are accented with crystals or charms. They have been a top seller for many years, but the movie about the story behind the bracelets has really made them take off. We love this line for so many reasons; they come from a woman-owned company, are made in the U.S. and a give-back line to boot. That's our favorite part, we love gifts that give back," said Gourde.

Each bracelet is a reminder to appreciate what you have and comes with a tag that reads: "This is a Blessing Bracelet. Whenever you wear it, acknowledge one

blessing in your life for each bead on the bracelet. Each time you are drawn to the bracelet, silently find four people or things you can be grateful for. Be grateful for: your children, a flower, your dog, a perfect cup of coffee, a roof over your head—just find something. The more you wear the bracelet and the more blessings you find, the more you will be blessed. In one year, if followed, you will be aware of a profound change in your life."

"I wrote the tag after experiencing a major shift in my own life that taught me how important it is to be aware of all that you already have," shared Dawn Sprong, founder of *The Blessing Bracelet*. "Through our work, we have been able to help people rescue and adopt animals,

support those in need, create mindfulness programs, form friendships and inspire ourselves and others [to see] that dreams really do come true. We create jewelry with [the] intention to inspire a shift in perspective into gratitude and consciousness, because changing ourselves changes the world," concluded Sprong.

They are truly a staff pick. "We all have our favorite Blessing Bracelets, and we all wear a personal stack. They are always introducing new designs; this year they outdid themselves with gorgeous holiday introductions, like snowflake crystal quartz and black Murano glass with silver and gold leaf accents. Plus, we now have some specialty trio sets that are breathtakingly beautiful," said Gourde.

## Work Opportunity Center holds successful food drive

AGAWAM – On Nov. 14 Work Opportunity Center, Inc. held their 13th annual food drive in front of Geissler's Supermarket in Agawam to collect items for donation to the Springfield Open Pantry. WOC, Inc. would like to thank Agawam residents for their overwhelming generosity. Together we raised \$144.32 in monetary donations and were able to bring 456 non-perishable items to The Springfield Open Pantry via the Rock 102 Mayflower Marathon. Many local families will benefit this holiday season from these donations.

WOC, Inc. is a nonprofit agency in Western MA which services adults with developmental disabilities. This orga-

nization runs a Community Based Day Services program as well as two work programs.

Within their CBDS program, they have a location in West Springfield that services individuals that reside in Agawam and West Springfield. CBDS is designed to enable individuals to enrich their life and enjoy a full range of activities by providing opportunities in social, educational and community activities. The primary goal of the program is to have its participants become fully integrated and have access to their community.

It was the CBDS program that organized and carried out the food drive to benefit The Open Pantry.

## 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](http://www.westfield.ma.edu/paramedic) for detailed admission requirements and program specifics.



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**Friday Night**  
**Spaghetti Night 5-7pm**  
**Trivia Night 7:30pm**  
\$5 per person, groups of 1 to 6 people

**Saturday & Sunday 11-1pm**  
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