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Councilor seeks more information for public

By Gregory A. Scibelli
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HOLYOKE – City Councilor Patti Devine, was among those councilors re-elected last month, has submitted an order seeking improved communication between the various city board and commissions, and the public at-large when complaints, issues, and concerns are submitted.

“Many citizens find it difficult to communicate effectively with city boards and commissions through general board emails,” Devine states. “Especially when their concerns are urgent or require specific follow-up.”

Devine has devised an order to direct the City Council to tell every commissioner as well as members of those boards to provide a direct method of contact, either a phone number or email address alongside the general board email.

“This measure will allow for more direct communication, expedite responses, and increase transparency

See PUBLIC, page 6



There were 33 students who achieved high scores on the MCAS exam and received the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship.

Submitted photo

HHS students receive MCAS scholarships

Earlier this month, 33 high school seniors and their families gathered at the start of the school day to share a breakfast, highlight their academic achievements, and to celebrate the good news: Each student was the recipient of a John and Abigail Adams Scholarship from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

“This is just one of the many opportunities students have to see how their hard work pays off,” said HHS

North college and career counselor Tyler Ochs. “We had an excellent time celebrating our students and look forward to further recognitions throughout the year.”

The John and Abigail Adams Scholarship is granted to students who score in the advanced level on one of three 10th grade MCAS subject areas, and proficient or advanced in the other two categories, and whose combined MCAS score

places them in the top 25% of students in their district. The award comes in the form of a tuition credit for any Massachusetts community college, state university, or any University of Massachusetts (UMass) campus.

During the breakfast, each student was individually presented their reward in the form of a letter explaining how the scholarship works and the dollar amounts per type of college.

Students who were awarded the John and Abigail Adams Scholarship at HHS North include:

Jovan Berrios, Xavian Burgos Colon, Gabriella Cayo, Kameron Colby, Yadrian Diaz, Julian Fasoli, Linken Geddis, Nathaniel Gomes, Janiah Guzman, Jady King, Lilly Lawrence, Gunner Lewis, Kaylie Lopez, Johann Lopez Irizarry, Melanie Malone, Rocelyn Matta, Landon McGowan, Kedian Nieves

Febo, Mia Ortiz, Jaydasen Otero-Concepcion, Yenzel Perez Badillo, Ashanty Provost Ortega, Justin Rivera, Alani Rodriguez, Isabella Rodriguez, Samantha Rodriguez, Anaya Rosario, Steven Santiago, Kierstin St. Lawrence, Lily Tapion, Daisy Thomas and Kaycee Vazquez.

HHS Dean students who will receive a John and Abigail Adams Scholarship will be celebrated in January.

OneHolyoke hosts community dinner

HOLYOKE – Last Saturday night, OneHolyoke CDC through a massive community dinner celebration that was much more than just a dinner for the hundreds who attended. OneHolyoke, thanks to a lot of hard work from volunteers and the generosity of sponsors, offered a holiday wonderland to community children full of activity.

Kelly School in Holyoke was rocking the entire time of the three-hour activity. In the cafeteria, families could enjoy a nice meal served by numerous volunteers. In the gymnasium, there were multiple bounce-houses, coloring, and face painting. In another large room, children could visit Santa, play bingo, and play freely. Outside, there was a train giving rides around the parking lot.

It was the 10th anniversary of the community dinner, and Polar Express décor



Volunteers worked the cafeteria, serving dinner to the public.



Ivive Cordero, president of OneHolyoke CDC, with her family, granddaughter, Nevaeh, 5, daughter Amanda, and husband Luis. See more photos on page 10.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Associate Solicitor states late complaint invalid

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

HOLYOKE – A Holyoke City Councilor’s Open Meeting Law complaint should be dismissed, the associate solicitor for the city told the Attorney General’s Office as well as the mayor and rest of the city council.

Last month, Ward 5 Councilor Linda Vacon filed an Open Meeting Law complaint with the goal of invalidating a vote to spend \$137,500 on contracted services for a firm that is charged with helping the city get its finances in order and updated with the Department of Revenue.

Vacon believed the vote to spend the funds by the city council was done improperly, saying the meeting had already adjourned due to a council rule that places a time limit on meetings. She sought a legal opinion on the vote, just for Mayor Joshua Garcia to vote the request as the solicitor’s office had already deemed the vote valid and the funds have been expanded and the firm is already working with the city.

Vacon’s response was to file the Open Meeting Law complaint on Nov. 7. The original vote for the \$137,000 took place on Oct. 10.

According to response to the state from Associate Solicitor Kathleen Degnan, state law stipulates a limit of 30 days to file an Open Meeting Law complaint under Massachusetts General Law Ch. 30A, section 23b.

“Complaints alleging violations of the Open Meeting Law must be filed

with the public body within 30 days of the alleged violation,” Degnan states.

Degnan said while the complaint was filed with the state within the 30 days, it is also required under the law to file the complaint with the body that made the alleged violation.

“In this case, Linda Vacon did not file her complaint with the public body until Nov. 18,” Degnan stated. “As a result, Linda Vacon did not file her submission to the public body (Holyoke City Council) within 30 days of the date of the violation. It is clear Linda Vacon did file her complaint with your office on Nov. 7, but the Open Meeting Law requires her to submit the complaint the Holyoke City Council prior to submitting her complaint to your office and she did not do so.”

Degnan summarized her position that the complaint should be summarily dismissed because it was not properly filed.

The Attorney General’s office has yet to rule on the complaint though their hands may be tied according to the letter of the law.

Following Garcia’s veto of Vacon’s request for a further legal opinion on the funding vote, the city council did override the mayor’s veto, but the solicitor’s office in Holyoke has stood by the stance that the funding vote was valid, which is why the contract with the financial firm went forward and funding was disbursed.

Vacon’s Open Meeting Law sought for the vote to be vacated and for funds to have to be withdrawn or returned to the city.

Deadline nearing for Holyoke's annual Grand Colleen pageant

HOLYOKE – The St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke reminds young women that the deadline to apply for the 70th Annual Holyoke Grand Colleen Pageant is fast approaching. Applications must be submitted by Saturday, Dec. 27.

This year's pageant, scheduled for Jan. 3, 2026, continues a beloved tradition that celebrates Irish heritage, leadership, and community pride. Serving as the kick-off to Holyoke's St. Patrick's Parade season, the Grand Colleen Pageant offers contestants the opportunity to

represent their community and join a legacy of ambassadors who have played a special role in the city's most cherished celebration.

Women from Agawam, Chicopee, Springfield, Westfield and West Springfield are encouraged to visit their respective committees' Colleen applications for information on their contests.

Expanded Eligibility

For the first time, the Committee is thrilled to welcome contestants from Easthampton and Southamptton, in addition to

Holyoke and South Hadley. This expansion reflects the Committee's commitment to fostering regional pride and strengthening bonds across neighboring communities.

"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."

Contestant Eligibility

- Applicants must:
- Be 17-22 years of age as of March 17, 2026
- Resident of Holyoke, South Hadley, Easthampton or Southamptton
- 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 her Court will enjoy gifts from local businesses and serve as community ambassadors during Parade season.

Important Dates

- December 27: Deadline to submit application to enter the Grand Colleen Pageant
- December 28: Colleen Orientation at Mrs. Mitchell's Public House, Holyoke, 2 p.m.
- January 2: Grand Colleen Pageant Rehearsal, at Holyoke High School, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

- January 3: Grand Colleen Pageant at Holyoke High School Auditorium, 6:00-9:30 p.m.
- January 4: Colleen Tea at Donovans, Holyoke
- February 14: Grand Coronation Ball at The Log Cabin, Holyoke

Apply now. <https://forms.gle/uArhr94XfS-JUMjQv5> or go to www.holyokestpatrickspageant.com/apply. For any questions, please contact Kate Caligaris, Colleen Committee Chair at 413.627.8716 or holyokecolleens@gmail.com.

New restaurant Daruma holding fundraiser for recent fire victims

HOLYOKE – Daruma Japanese BBQ & Sushi AYCE is proud to announce its inaugural give-back initiative dedicated to supporting the recovery efforts for the victims of the recent fires on Clemente and Franklin Streets. As a new addition to the Holyoke business community, Daruma is committed to making a tangible difference by donating 100 percent of ticket revenue from a special 48-hour sales event to the support fund hosted by Enlace de Familias.

The fundraiser offers community members a unique opportunity to enjoy a premium dining experience while contributing directly to neighbors in need. Daruma has allocated 200 certificates for their standard All You Can Eat (AYCE) menu, which includes access to the grille and sushi bar. These certificates are priced at \$32.99 each, with an option to upgrade to the premium grille menu for an additional \$12 fee upon redemption. Please note: per Daruma policy, if one person in a

party upgrade to premium, the entire party will be upgraded. Upgrades can be purchased at the time of redemption; however, rates may vary at that time. Beverage and gratuity are not included in this offer. This initiative presents a potential donation of over \$6,500, with the opportunity to approach \$9,000 through premium upgrades.

Ticket sales will be open for a strictly limited 48-hour window, beginning Friday, Dec. 19 at 12 noon and concluding Sunday, Dec. 21 at 12 noon. Purchased certificates are valid for redemption starting Jan. 2, 2026, through Dec. 31, 2033, making them an ideal option for holiday gifting or future dining.

Purchasers can secure their tickets through the Greater Holyoke Chamber website. Options for receiving the certificates include digital delivery, mail delivery (with a small processing fee), or in-person pickup. While a minimal processing fee applies to digital transactions to cover administrative costs, 100 percent of the

ticket face value proceeds directly to the relief fund.

Despite being a new establishment, Daruma Japanese BBQ & Sushi AYCE has already demonstrated a strong commitment to civic engagement. Following a recent \$1,000 donation to the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, the restaurant is now focusing its efforts on immediate local relief. The management team recognizes the challenges residents face, from changes in SNAP benefits to the hardships of winter and recent tragedies. By cultivating career opportunities for local youth and embracing the diversity of their clientele, Daruma aims to weave itself into the fabric of the Holyoke community.

Community members are invited to participate in this effort to aid recovery and rebuilding. This initiative allows residents to enjoy a meal while knowing their contribution provides essential support to local families during a critical time.

Zoeller receives Paul Poulos Achievement

HOLYOKE – Alicia Zoeller, Administrator of Holyoke's Office for Community Development, was presented with the Paul Poulos Achievement Award from the New England chapter of the National Community Development Association (NCDA) at its annual Fall conference held in New Bedford on Dec. 2.



Alicia Zoeller

The annual award was established in 1997 in honor of the late Paul Poulos, who was a former Executive Director of the Fall River Community Development Agency and former national President of NCDA. The award, which is the highest honor bestowed by the New England chapter of NCDA, is given annually to an individual in recognition of their long-term achievements and contributions in community

development. The selection committee, consisting of former Poulos award recipients, voted to select Zoeller for this prestigious honor because of her decades-long career of dedicated service as a community development practitioner.

Zoeller is well known in the region as being a passionate practitioner who has demonstrated success in environmental protection and community development. She is well-experienced in wetlands and biodiversity regulatory work, housing development, social services support, and public facilities project management. She has overseen the administration of millions of dollars in federal funding over the years, which has benefited a number of low-income families and microenterprises across the City of

Holyoke. She was the NCDA Region 1 (New England) Chair from 2018-2020, and has served on the Region 1 board of directors for the past several years.

"Alicia knows what it looks like when someone shows up year after year, through recessions, and recoveries, through changes in federal funding and shifts in political winds," said Mayor Joshua Garcia. "She still finds a way to get families into safe, affordable homes, to turn vacant lots into places where kids can play, and to make sure that economic growth actually reaches the people who have been waiting the longest."

Garcia also credits Zoeller as being the steady hand, the strategic mind, and very often the moral compass guiding some of Holyoke's most impactful housing and revitalization initiatives. "With all the uncertainty happening in our city, the country, and the world, she still finds time to roll up her sleeves when a family needs help."

NAMI holding calendar raffle

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.

HCC opens registration for Spring 2026 noncredit classes

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College has opened registration for its Spring 2026 catalog of noncredit personal enrichment and professional development classes.

The spring calendar begins Jan. 12, with individual classes running on different schedules throughout the semester.

New next semester is a series of classes for seniors focused on basic technology. Each one-hour class is available for just \$20 and cover a wide range of sub-

jects, including Windows 11, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft PowerPoint, Canva (for graphic design), Artificial Intelligence, Zoom, smartphone use (Android or iPhone), managing and editing photos, document storage, web browsers, and computer scams.

Other classes for spring include cooking (Caribbean, charcuterie, Puerto Rican, Southern), wine tasting (winter reds, Tuscan, New Zealand, Rose, summer wines), sew-

ing (for beginners), sewing (machine), watercolor painting, acrylic painting, drawing, piano, conversational French, conversational Spanish, music technology, voiceover coaching, financial literacy, retirement planning, K-12 education (professional development), writing and publishing (fiction, nonfiction, screenwriting, short stories, query letters, mysteries, travel, blogs), ChatGPT, how to launch a pet-sitting and dog-walking business, and Quickbooks.

Most classes meet in the Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development on the main HCC campus, 303 Homestead Ave. Cooking and wine-tasting classes meet at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, 164 Race St. Some classes meet over Zoom.

To see complete spring course listings and schedules, or to register, please visit hcc.edu/bcs.

More classes will be added as spring approaches.

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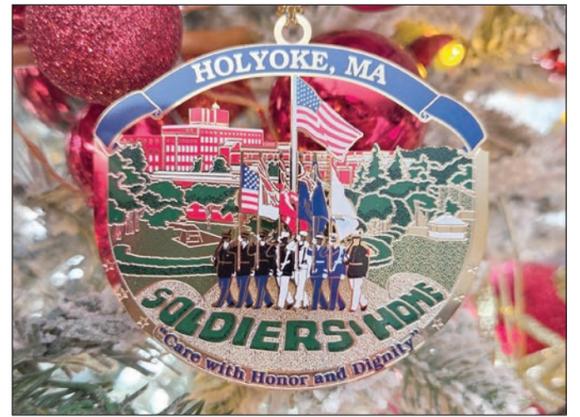
Chamber releases 'Holyoke Memories' ornaments

HOLYOKE – The Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce is proud to present a revitalization of “Holyoke Memories,” a commemorative ornament series dedicated to celebrating the city’s rich history and iconic landmarks. This meaningful collection invites residents and enthusiasts to honor Holyoke’s distinctive heritage through cherished local symbols.

The series features four intricately designed ornaments, each representing a significant piece of the city’s past. The collection includes tributes to the beloved Mountain Park, the historic Kenilworth Castle, the celebrated St. Patrick’s Day Road Race and the venerable Soldier’s Home. Please note:

inventory for both Mountain Park and St. Patrick’s Day Road Race ornaments is limited, which means availability of the overall series is limited as well. Each ornament serves as a miniature keepsake of these important local institutions.

This initiative not only offers beautiful decorations but also acts as a means of preserving and sharing the stories that have shaped the Holyoke community for generations. The “Holyoke Memories” ornament series is now available for purchase, both online and at the Holyoke Farmers’ Market, located at the Holyoke Council on Aging, Senior Center every Tuesday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Community members can choose to order



The Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce is presenting an ornament series.

Submitted photos

ornaments online for convenient pick-up at the market or opt for shipping, with an additional fee applied for delivery. This collection pres-

ents a wonderful opportunity to own a piece of local history or to share civic pride with others through a thoughtful gift.

All four ornaments can be viewed and purchased online through the Holyoke Chamber’s official shop. To explore the collection and

secure these timeless keepsakes, please visit Greater Holyoke Chamber Store <https://holyokechamber.square.site/>.

Wistariahurst Museum announces Metamorphosis mixed media exhibit

HOLYOKE – Wistariahurst Museum is excited to announce the upcoming exhibit Metamorphosis, opening Jan. 6, 2026. This exhibit features artists who have attended one or more of the artist sessions held at Wistariahurst Museum. These sessions, led by artist and volunteer Linda Devine, serve as a way for local artists to network, share their work with one another, and develop as artists. The artist sessions have been held monthly since January of 2025, and the group of artists has strengthened their skills each session. To cel-

brate the growth these artists have made over the past year, they will be exhibiting their work in Wistariahurst’s gallery. Metamorphosis has a theme of change, which each artist has interpreted their own way through several mediums, from painting and sculpture, to writing. Artists express themes of personal change, changes in nature, fashion, culture, and more.

Artists featured in this exhibit include J. Arthur Birth, Natasha Colon Ortiz, Linda Devine, Lydia E Freytes Rodriguez, Emily Munsell, Maureen Naff, Catalina Rojas, Whit

Kilpatrick Russell, Carolyn Ruzsala, Deborah Skelly, Darlene Swiszczy, Chuck Collins, and Mike Worden.

The opening reception of Metamorphosis will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 6, from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Wistariahurst is an artist-friendly space that encourages creativity and supports the growth of this region’s artists. Open Gallery Hours will be held from Jan. 6 through Feb. 24 on Mondays (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) and Tuesdays (4:30 to 6:30 p.m.), which will also be free and open to the public.

Library seeking donations

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Public Library

is seeking donations to help the facility through recent challenges, including the loss of vital federal funding. The library is asking citizen to help through making a one-time donation before Dec. 31 to count for a tax deduction. Interested citizens can go to <https://holyokelibrary.org>. The library’s goal is to raise \$15,000 to be used toward various purposes.

“Our commitment to patrons remains unwavering,” stated an

email from the library. “We continue to serve as a place

for learning, connection, and growth.”

Cradles to Crayons places local drop box

HOLYOKE – While many children head out to sled or build a snowman with friends, others face clothing insecurity and lack access to coats, warm clothing layers, gloves, and boots to stay warm during these weather extremes.

Cradles to Crayons needs winter weather gear. Can you help us by sharing an urgent plea with your audience?

Cradles to Crayons Gear Up for Winter initiative aims to provide 50,000 coats to children living in low-income and homeless situations across Massachusetts so they can stay warm and feel prepared for the winter weather.

“As winter begins, one in three children in Massachusetts don’t have the winter clothing they need,” said Alicia Kabir, Executive Director of Cradles to Crayons Massachusetts. “As families juggle the costs of housing, heat and food, their budgets

are stretched to the limits. Cradles to Crayons Gear Up for Winter will help provide warm clothing like coats, boots, and hats so local families have one less expense to worry about,” she added.

Thousands of families rely on Cradles to Crayons to keep their kids warm during New England’s harsh winter weather. This need includes clothing items, boots, hats, gloves, and coats. We need more donations to meet the growing need across Massachusetts this year.

Cradles to Crayons has donation drop box locations in your area where we accept new or gently used clothing items:

- Old Navy store in Holyoke- 50 Holyoke Street Holyoke, MA
- Old Navy store in Hadley- 335 Russell Street Hadley, MA
- Lander Grinspoon Elementary School- 257 Prospect St Northampton, MA

HG&E announces extra holiday discount for customers

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.



Nobody dreams of having multiple sclerosis

Some dreams are universal: hitting a ball over the Green Monster; winning the World Series with a grand slam in the bottom of the ninth inning. Finding out you have MS is not one of them.

Multiple sclerosis is a devastating disease of the central nervous system where the body’s immune system attacks the insulation surrounding the nerves. It strikes adults in the prime of life - and changes lives forever.

To help make the dream of ending MS come true, call 1-800-FIGHT MS or visit us online at nationalmssociety.org.



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Friday, Dec. 19th Corner Boys	Saturday, Dec. 20th The Healy's	Saturday, Dec. 27th Nine Volt Radio
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HOLIDAY HOURS: CLOSED Christmas Eve & Christmas Day
New Year's Eve CLOSING AT 6PM

Tuesday Night 6pm
Pitch Night
\$5 per person

Wednesday Night 6:30pm
Bar Bingo

Thursday Night 7-10 pm
Karaoke by New England Disc Jockeys

Friday Night starts at 7:30 pm
Trivia Night \$5 per person

Saturday Night 5-7 pm
Spaghetti Dinner

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Guest Column



Questions about remarrying and benefits from an ex-spouse

Dear Rusty:

I am almost 57, divorced after a 14-year marriage. My former spouse is 15 years older than I and made significantly more money than me. I am required to retire from my job at age 60 but expect to keep working in some capacity.

I have a girlfriend of a similar age to me. She did not earn as much as her former husband as she mainly raised their children. She is also divorced from an older spouse who made more money than she did. I am trying to figure out if we will be penalized if we marry or if it matters if we wait until after we reach 60 years of age. Can I claim my own benefits when I become eligible at 62, then claim survivor benefits later, whenever my former spouse passes? Is that affected if, or when, I remarry? I do not want to give up my potential survivor benefits from my ex-spouse. Are those affected if I remarry?

If I understand correctly, if I remarry even after 60, we would both forfeit divorced spousal benefits, is that right? Given that my girlfriend's former spouse probably made more money than I, would she be forfeiting her former spousal benefits if we were to marry, even after age 60?

Lastly, I am considering retiring abroad as an expat. Any suggestions about how that would affect our Social Security benefits?

Signed: Starting Over

Dear Starting Over:

With certain exceptions, benefits from a living ex-spouse cannot be collected if you remarry (regardless of your age when you remarry). So, from what you've shared, whenever you remarry both you and your new wife will forfeit eligibility for benefits from your respective ex-spouses while they are living (FYI, there are exceptions for those who are disabled).

However, the rules are different for a surviving ex-spouse: if you remarry before age 60, you will forfeit your surviving ex-spouse benefit. But if you remarry after age 60, you retain eligibility to collect survivor benefits from a deceased former spouse. So, if you and your girlfriend remarry after you are both age 60, you will both still be able to claim survivor benefits based on your for-

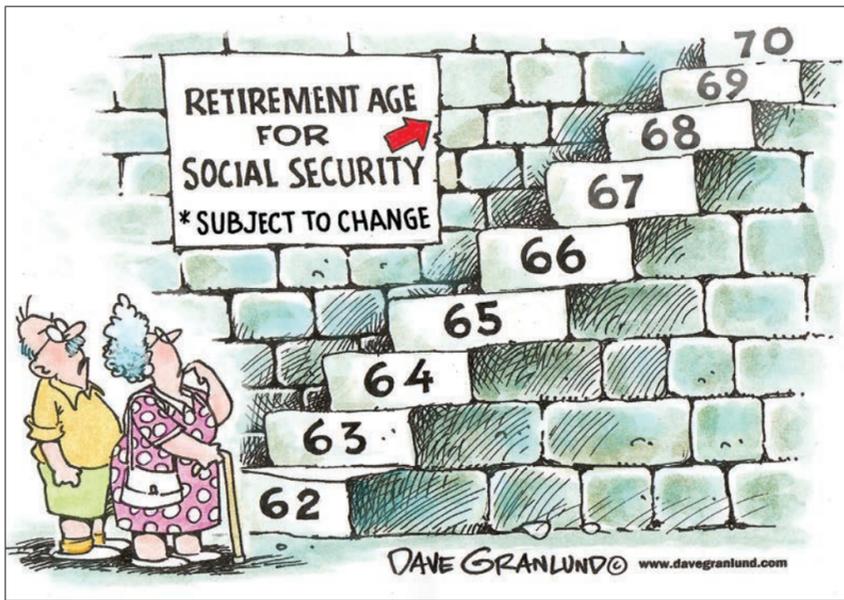
mer spouses' records.

And, yes, it is possible for you to initially claim your own SS retirement benefit at 62 and claim your surviving ex-spouse benefit later after your former spouse dies. Provided you remarry after age 60 you do not lose that option, but if you were to claim a surviving ex-spouse benefit before reaching your Full Retirement Age, the monthly payment amount would be reduced, all SS benefits taken before FRA are reduced.

Note too, that if you plan to continue working after you are first eligible for SS benefits, Social Security has an "earnings test" which limits how much you can earn from working while collecting early benefits. The limit changes yearly for 2025 it is \$23,400 and if exceeded, SS will take back \$1 in benefits for every \$2 you are over the limit. And, as you likely know, claiming at age 62 will also mean a benefit payment of about 30% less than available at your FRA of 67. So, if you plan to work after age 62 and plan to claim early SS, you should take the "earnings test" into consideration. FYI, the earning test no longer applies after you reach your Full Retirement Age.

Now, regarding retiring overseas, be aware that Social Security has limits on where you can collect U.S. Social Security benefits. I suggest you use Social Security's Payments Abroad Screening Tool to find out if benefits are payable wherever you plan to retire abroad. That SSA tool can be found here: https://www.ssa.gov/international/payments_outsideUS.html.

The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. This article is intended for information purposes and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association Mature Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association. To submit a question, visit amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory or email us at ssadvisory@amacfoundation.org. Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.



Guest Column

Two holiday plants suited for gift giving

Are you in need of a plant for a hostess gift this holiday season but poinsettias aren't your cup of tea? Look no further! I will give you my top two non-poinsettia picks, and share my experiences growing these plants.

Hopefully you will find the perfect gift for someone on your list.

Florist Cyclamen (*Cyclamen persicum*) is a delightful indoor plant that flowers during the winter months and is available at local nurseries and box stores. Its quarter-sized blooms in red, pink and white are unique in that the petals are bent back and held above pretty, heart-shaped, silver-margined leaves.



by Roberta McQuaid



There are varying types available with fancy flowers and intricately patterned foliage.



The cyclamen plant is tuberous and unfortunately is best propagated by seed or by division of its fibrous roots. Usually this task is left to the experts who are best able to deal with erratic germination and roots that are susceptible to rot.

A few years back I became the owner of my very first cyclamen (thanks, Mom!). I had a little trouble after awhile.

During the spring its leaves yellowed and fell off so I threw it out. Little did I know that leaf loss was supposed to happen! It was going dormant.

With the cyclamen's bloom time during the winter, it has a period of dormancy mid spring through the end of summer when it's

See GARDEN, page 5

An Oakham resident saw a purple finch in her yard recently.

The purple finch is about six inches long. It has a sturdy body, short tail and a conical bill designed to crack seed. The male has raspberry red covering its head, chest and back. The color fades into a lighter pink tone on the belly. The wings and tail are brown with red highlights. The female has no red coloring and is brown and white with heavy streaking. It has a white eyebrow stripe.

The purple finch and house finch are often confused. The purple finch as a more uniform raspberry color and the house finch is more orange red color. The house finches color is limited to the



By Ellenor Downer

head and upper chest. The purple finch also has notch at the base of its tail and is larger.

Purple finches breed primarily in Canada and the northeastern United States including New England and

the Great Lakes region. The purple finch is the state bird of New Hampshire.

A typical clutch consists of four or five pale blue eggs with small dark speckles. The female incubates the eggs for about 12-14 days while the male provides food. Once hatched, both parents feed the nestlings a mixture of regurgitated seeds and insects to ensure proper nutrition. The fledglings leave the nest roughly two weeks after hatching, though parents continue feeding and protecting them for another week or two.

They are fond of black oil sunflower seeds, safflower seeds, and millet offered in tube or platform feeders. In summer they supplement their diet with insects and caterpillars as well as blackberries and cherries.

See BIRDS, page 5



Purple finch

CHECK OUT ALL THE

Turley Publications

www.turley.com

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*.

the HOLYOKE Sun

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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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Kwanza 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.



BIRDS, from page 5

Birds during snow storm

A Brimfield resident emailed, "During the recent snow storm (Tuesday, Dec. 2) there were 30 plus dark-eyed juncos in the yard and one white-throated sparrow.

Bird bath visitors

The Brimfield resident said he went looking for his bird bath heater and could not find it.

He said, "Eventually I did find it, in the bird bath. It wasn't connected and grass had grown over the cord so I couldn't see it, but dug around and eventually found the cord, got it plugged in and now the bath

isn't freezing."

He has a trail camera near the bird bath. Lots of birds are using the bird bath, mostly to get a drink. Birds coming to the bird bath include blue jay, Carolina wren, cardinal, cedar waxwing (six), chickadee, goldfinch, mourning dove, robin (three), titmouse and white-throated sparrow.

He said, "Robins took a bath but when it was warmer, temperature in the upper 40s. Junco are the only cold weather bathers." Mammals seen at the bird bath are opossum, raccoon, mouse at least two and a mole.

He thinks the tub he uses for the bird bath has a leak because the water level goes

down and he has to refill it ever couple of day. He said, "The local pond are now frozen. We did a few trips around the area and never saw any migrating ducks, just mallards and Canada geese.

Helping birds

Birds are attracted to water during winter months. They do not bath when temperatures are below freezing, but they do take a drink. A source of unfrozen water will attract birds.

Providing wild birds with clean drinking water is helpful. However, providing a roomy bathing area that stays thawed even in severely-cold weather can be harmful in some cases. Before heating devices kept birdbaths

ice free, birds could bathe in naturally-melted water and be able to fly off without their feathers freezing. According to the blog Cool Green Science-Stories of The Nature Conservancy, birds bathing while air temperatures are frigid risk harm due to frozen feathers: <https://blog.nature.org/2022/01/31/should-you-provide-birds-water-in-winter/>.

The article suggests modifying heated birdbaths so that birds can safely drink, but not bathe. A metal heating element that keeps a small section of the birdbath thawed works well. People, who have bird feeders or simple feeding stations may add shallow unbreakable con-

tainer around the area. Yes, it can be labor-intensive, but they can easily pour water into them (hot water when it's below

freezing) and provide fresh water for at least a short period of time. As a source of drinking water, the containers can be filled with pebbles that will form small pockets of water where birds can get a drink of water.

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



Cardinal

GARDEN, from page 5

leaves will yellow and shed and it will demand next to no water. This time frame is opposite of what we are used to with our perennial flowers that bloom during the summer and go dormant during the winter.

In late August, we can begin watering again and leaves will sprout anew before the blooming cycle begins during the fall.

Another favorite holiday plant by the name of Paperwhites start out as a bulb. The bulbs are available now by mail and from local

nurseries and garden centers.

Sometimes you can "fill a bag" with the exact number you want, which is really neat. Upon inspection of the bulb and the picture on the label, you'll note that Paperwhites look very much like our outdoor daffodils.

Paperwhites are cousins to these spring harbingers and bloom easily inside with little more than light, something to anchor the developing roots (soil or rocks) and water to get them growing. They don't need to go through a period of cold in order to bloom like outdoor narcissus do.

In just about four

weeks after planting you'll be delighted with flowers galore!

Decide for yourself if you like the fragrance or you find it a little overpowering. Prevent leaves and stems from stretching by placing your container in a cool spot in your home during the night and enjoy the flowers in your living spaces during the day.

After flowering is done, throw the bulbs out free of guilt; they won't bloom again consistently. One year you may remember that I did try to regrow the bulbs by allowing them to dry out within the container I had first

grown them in. Of the four bulbs, two had life left in them a year later.

I watered and waited and leaves did grow, but no flowers ever came. I ended up chalking it up to an experience and starting over with new bulbs the follow-

ing winter.

Have fun experimenting with these plants or any number of beauties worthy of a good home for the holidays.

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.

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CLUES ACROSS

- American automotive titan
- Tire term
- Two-year-old sheep
- Indigenous people of Thailand
- Anti-Soviet Cold War group
- Actress de Armas
- Not moving
- Cool!
- Plants of the arum family
- Connected with touch
- Pen stain
- Monetary units
- School kids' art project
- Early Bell Canada executive
- Sword
- Hates
- Fixed in one

- place
- Pie ___ mode
- Moved swiftly on foot
- Carrier on vehicle
- A path to get through
- "Rule, Britannia" composer
- Spiritual leader
- Flowing
- Respectful compliments
- Cure
- Soft, lightweight fabric
- Building material
- Japanese delicacy
- A way to cause to be swollen
- One and only
- You might get one in summer
- Wreath

- Thus far
- They ___
- Employee reference number
- Muscular
- Police (French)
- Toy dog
- Intestinal condition
- Weaknesses
- Helps little firms
- Alphabetical lists
- Takes down
- Facilitates
- Ethnic people of Ethiopia
- Engine additive
- Explorers group
- Written account
- Consumed
- Opposite of first
- No (slang)
- Government lawyers
- NY Giants great

- Small amount
- A way to save for your future
- Fall behind
- Midway between northeast and east
- Head pain
- Wildly popular sport
- "Princess Diaries" actress Hathaway
- Boat race
- About fish
- Nursemaid
- Able to be marketed
- Not as large
- Parts per billion (abbr.)
- Paddle
- Oneness
- Bitter chemical
- Not around
- Very fast airplane
- Main tributary of the Rhine

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 8

Blessed Sacrament Parish

Rev. Duy Le
frduyle@blessedsacramentholyoke.org
 1945 Northampton St., Holyoke
 PARISH RECTORY: 413-532-0713
OFFICE HOURS:
 Monday - Thursday 8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
 Friday 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
WEEKEND MASSES:
 Saturday 4 p.m.
 Sunday 8:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
DAILY MASS AND ROSARY
 Monday - Friday: ROSARY 6:15 a.m.
 Monday - Friday: MASS 6:45 a.m.
 Legal Holidays: ROSARY 7:30 a.m.
 Legal Holidays: MASS 8 a.m.
ROSARY AND MEDITATION
 Monday Evening: 6 p.m.
www.blessedsacramentholyoke.org
 Facebook: @bspholyokema

First Baptist Church

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

Our Lady of the Cross Catholic Parish

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

CHURCH DIRECTORY



Your Community Church

St. Peter's Lutheran Church

Rev. Debora Stein
 34 Jarvis Ave., Holyoke
 Office: (413) 536-3369
 Office: stpetershollyoke@gmail.com
 Pastor: revdebma@gmail.com
 Website: www.stpetershollyoke.org
 Social media: facebook.com/stpetershollyoke
OFFICE HOURS:
 Monday and Thursday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.
 Wednesday, 8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
 Friday, 12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
WORSHIP:
 Sundays at 9:30 a.m. (also on Facebook Live) & Thursdays at 6:30 p.m.
 Other: Prayers with Pastor - Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m. - on Facebook Live.

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

The Rev. Canon Joel Martinez
 485 Appleton St., Holyoke
 413-532-5060
Office@StPaulsholyoke.org
StPaulsholyoke.org
 Instagram: stpaulsepiscopalchurch_holyoke
OFFICE HOURS:
 Tuesday - Friday 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
 Days and Hours of Services:
 Sunday: 8 a.m.
 Sunday: 10 a.m.
 Sunday: 5 p.m. (Spanish)

Museum announces return of '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!" A member of the founding board, Chambers, explains that interest in the museum is at an all-time high. "We are seeing a tremendous increase in the number of visitors we serve. Please join us as we work to enhance our facility and programs to continue serving our community's growing needs." 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.

Don't want to jump in the water? No worries! Be a spectator and cheer on the brave participants. Hot chocolate, coffee, s'mores and other refreshments will be available to keep everyone warm.

Snow 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

Tailgate Picnic Deli to close after 37 years

SOUTH HADLEY – After 37 years as a fixture in The Village Commons, Tailgate Picnic will be closing its doors, marking the end of a long-standing local deli and market that has served generations of South Hadley residents.

Founded in 1988 by Jack and Alicia Magri, Tailgate Picnic quickly became a town hub—known for its loyal customers and everyday connections. The Magris successfully operated the deli for more than three decades before Dawn Morey took ownership in 2022, carrying forward the community spirit, homemade breakfast and lunch menu, and unique

market offerings.

"I was honored to continue the Tailgate legacy," says Morey. "Tailgate has always been about people—our customers, our neighbors, and the relationships built over time. The decision to close was incredibly difficult, but I'm deeply grateful for the support and kindness shown to me over the past few years."

Like many small independent businesses, Tailgate Picnic has faced increasing challenges in today's economic climate, contributing to this unexpected and emotional decision.

"Tailgate Picnic has been an important part of

The Village Commons and the broader South Hadley community for nearly four decades," says Jeff Labrecque, President and CEO of The Village Commons. "We're thankful for the Magri family's legacy, for Dawn's dedication in continuing it, and for the role Tailgate played in shaping the character of The Commons."

Both Tailgate Picnic and The Village Commons expressed sincere gratitude to loyal patrons, neighboring businesses, and the community for their longstanding support. The deli and market will close its doors at the end of 2025.

Delaney's Market launches food drive

Offering 10% discount on meal purchases to donors

SOUTH HADLEY – Delaney's Market today announced the launch of its first holiday canned food drive, designed to rally community support for local hunger relief efforts during the crucial holiday season. In a special initiative to encourage donations, the Market will offer a 10% discount on all food purchases to any customer who contributes a canned food item. The drive will officially run from Dec. 1 through Dec. 22.

"This holiday season, the team at Delaney's Market wants to make a difference," said Peter

Rosskothien - Owner. "While we regularly donate food to our local partners, we know the need is even greater during the winter months. By offering a 10% discount, we hope to make it easy and rewarding for our customers to pitch in and ensure that all families in our area have access to nourishing meals."

Customers are invited to bring cans of non-perishable food items to any Delaney's Market location. Upon donation, they will receive a 10% discount applicable to their total food purchase (meals only), helping them stock up on delicious entrees while supporting a critical cause.

All collected food will be distributed equally among Delaney's Market's long-standing charitable

partners including: St. Vincent De Paul Bethany Assembly of God

Lorraine's Soup Kitchen Rachel's Table

These organizations provide essential food assistance and meals to individuals and families facing food insecurity in the local community.

"This is about more than just a discount; it's about using our business as a platform for positive change," added Rosskothien. "We look forward to working with our community to come together to support the incredible work done by St. Vincent De Paul, Bethany Assembly of God, Lorraine's Soup Kitchen, and Rachel's Table."

Baystate announces Voluntary Separation Program to Support Transformation Efforts

SPRINGFIELD - Baystate Health is committed to delivering exceptional care to western Massachusetts while strengthening our long-term stability. Over the past year, our collective transformation work has strengthened Baystate Health in meaningful ways, allowing us to reinvest in our people, technology, and patient care. Thanks to these efforts, we've made important progress, and we must now sustain our momentum through continued financial transformation.

Like many health systems nationwide, we've faced significant financial pressures from rising labor costs, inflation, and reimbursement challenges. Addressing these realities is essential to continue investing in our people, services, and facilities. As we

plan for our future, we face new challenges, including external pressures such as the One Big Beautiful Bill, which is creating additional headwinds for health systems across the country.

In light of these factors, we are taking proactive steps to position Baystate Health for long-term stability and success by introducing a Voluntary Separation Program across Baystate Health and its subsidiaries, including Health New England. This program offers eligible employees in non-direct patient care areas the option to voluntarily separate with financial support, helping us responsibly manage costs and align our workforce with future needs. We continue to significantly recruit and hire physicians, Advanced

Practice Providers and bedside caregivers to support the health needs of our communities.

This voluntary program is designed to minimize the need for other workforce reductions. We recognize how personal this decision is and are approaching it with empathy, respect, and transparency. We're committed to providing clear communication and resources to support employees during this transition.

This initiative is part of Baystate Health's broader multi-year transformation to achieve operational excellence, strengthen our financial foundation, and ensure we can continue our mission: improving the health of our communities every day, with quality and compassion.

Brain Health and Dementia Prevention program available at RiverMills Center

CHICOPEE – The Council on Aging will offer the program "Brain Health and Dementia Prevention" on Monday, Jan. 5 at 10 a.m. at RiverMills Center, located at 5 W. Main Street.

Join the Arbors for the presentation on brain

health and dementia prevention. During this workshop, you will get an overview on Dementia, what it is and the different types of dementia. You will also learn if memory loss is a normal part of aging and what the difference

is between normal forgetfulness and potential Alzheimer's forgetfulness. You will also learn about brain health and how to keep your mind sharp.

You must register in advance at RiverMills or by calling 534-3698.

Polish food sales at Immaculate Conception

INDIAN ORCHARD – Immaculate Conception Church, 25 Parker St., Indian Orchard will be holding five Polish Food Sales on these Saturdays: Dec. 13 – 9 a.m. to 1

p.m. Dec. 20 – 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Golabki (3) \$1 – Kapusta (Large) \$10 – Pierogi (12) – Cabbage-Potato & Cheese \$14 –

Sweet Cheese, Blueberry \$15

Sales take place in the church cafeteria (lower section of the church) Credit cards not accepted.

PUBLIC, from page 1

in our local government," Devine says. "Be it further ordered that this order should be implemented as soon as possible, with all commissioners and board members notified to update their contact information on all relevant city websites, notices, and public-facing materials...in accordance with Massachusetts Open Meeting Law and Public Records

Law, the City Council ensures that citizens have full access to this updated contact information, in keeping with the principles of transparency and public accountability."

Devine's order was filed on Dec. 11 and will likely head for the Developmental and Government Relations while it will be evaluated and debated among that committee with a recommendation going to the full city council.

Devine is among a wave of newer government

officials who are seeking to make government more accessible to people, as well streamline timelines and communications coming from municipalities.

Currently, the names and addresses of city councilors and school committee members as well as their phone numbers are available on the city website as they are subject to that as elected officials. Many elected officials use their home phone numbers, typically a landline, on

the website or other documents. Landlines are starting to go by the wayside, and there are some officials who do give out a cellular phone number instead.

The names of board and commissions members are on the city website. There are boards for Planning, Parks and Recreation, Fire, and public works among others. There are also some advisory boards as well. The city lists the names of the members and a general email con-

tact, usually with whichever office helps oversee that board's functions. However, these board and commission members, who are volunteers and do not receive compensation like the city's two sets of elected officials (city council and school committee).

Devine's order would change that, requiring a personal means of contact for these volunteers.

In her communication with the city council, Devine says many local governments

are moving in the direction of increasing transparency and doing this would increase communication with citizens.

"Which I believe will improve civic engagement and foster greater trust between the community and its representatives," Devine states.

Citizens do have the ability to come and be heard at most board meetings, especially the city council and their many sub-committees.

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 For further information call Randall at (413) 436-5357
 or email adventuretours@att.net
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SPORTS

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Knights defeat N'Hamp

HOLYOKE – Last Thursday night, Holyoke High School boys basketball defeated Northampton at home to open the season. Holyoke got 28 points from Julian Fasoli while Georlee Aponte had 17 points. Michael Medina had 13 points. Holyoke faced Putnam on Dec. 18 and next will host Pope Francis on Monday, Dec. 22 at 7 p.m.



Gian Cora stares at his opponent while dribbling toward the arc.



Georlee Aponte takes the free throw.



Devin Velez gets plenty of air on this shot as Brian Thomas watches.



Julian Fasoli is focused on his jump shot.



Michael Medina flies for the layup.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

Knight-Hawk classic features 22 teams

HOLYOKE – It was a busy day at Holyoke High School as 21 teams visited for the Knight-Hawk Classic. Host Holyoke would place eighth in the meet. The Knights, as a team, scored 109.5 points

and had just one champion. Steven Santiago would take the win at 120 pounds, defeating Ludlow's Charles Soffen. Holyoke was scheduled to host a tri-meet with Frontier and Minnechaug earlier this week.



Yadiel Belen attempts to tackle his opponent.



Steven Santiago looks to secure the advantage on the mat.



Josiah Cedeno gets the takedown.



Johann Lopez Santana holds the leverage over his opponent.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Swim teams open with losses

HOLYOKE – Last Friday, the Holyoke High School swim teams were defeated by West Springfield.

The boys were defeated 125-47 while the girls lost 114-31. Holyoke continues to co-op with South Hadley and Granby.



Jared Lapite heads toward the finish.



Katie Caron swims a leg of a race.



Kierstin St. Lawrence competes last Friday against West Springfield.

► Sports

HCC wraps up first part of schedule with win

HOLYOKE – Women’s basketball wrapped up the fall semester portion of their season on Saturday afternoon, winning a third straight game. The Lady Cougars racked up a season-high in points, thrashing local rival Springfield Technical CC 98-40. The home win extends Holyoke’s perfect home record to 4-0.

Vivian Timmons (West Springfield, MA / Guilderland HS) and Annastacia Dixon (Keene, NH / Keene HS) led the charge for the Cougars, each registering a double-double in the contest while scoring a season-high in points. Timmons led Holyoke in points for the third straight game, scor-

ing 36 in the win to go along with ten rebounds. Dixon tallied 29 points and grabbed 15 rebounds for her double-double while also leading the Lady Cougars in steals with seven. Tatiyana Zuniga (Westfield, MA / Westfield HS) led the way in assists with ten and had six steals.

Women’s basketball finishes the fall half of their campaign with a 6-2 regional record and a 7-4 overall record. Their scheduled Sunday, December 14th game has been postponed. Holyoke will enjoy some time off during the season hiatus, resuming with games on Jan. 10. They play their next home game on Thursday, Jan. 15 at 5:30 p.m.

Worcester Railers score win over Pirates

PORTLAND, ME – The Portland Pirates ruined a lot of nights for the Worcester IceCats and Sharks through the decades.

The Railers got some revenge here Saturday evening by beating the Pirates, 4-2, in front of 4,803 fans as the Maine Mariners did a nostalgia game playing as the old AHL team.

The game went down to the final minutes with Worcester clinching it on Drew Callin’s empty net goal with 26 seconds left in the third period. It was a 2-2 game with less than 10 minutes to go in the third, then Ryan Miotto broke the tie with a great wrist shot from the left circle at 10:25.

Cole Donhauser and Matt DeMelis had the other Railers goals. Max Andreev and Robert Cronin scored for the Pirates. Once again Worcester got splendid

goaltending from Parker Gahagen who stopped 32 of 34 shots.

It was an outcome that could easily have been reversed except that Worcester refused to give in.

“I think we stuck with a lot of our game plan,” coach Nick Tuzzolino said. “We got put back on our heels a little bit at the start of the second period after a pretty good first period but I thought we responded well.”

The victory allowed the Railers to finish a seven-game road trip with a 4-2-1 record. They earned nine of a possible 14 points, a .643 pace. Worcester is 9-3-1 in its last 13 games.

The first period was played at a yellow light pace and ended 0-0 although Worcester out-shot the home team, 13-7. Things quickened in the second and intensified just

before the clock hit the game’s midway point.

The Railers were a man short when they developed a 3 on 1. They crashed the Maine zone but probably got in too deep. Ross Mitton was the last man to touch the puck but had no room to beat goalie Brad Arvanitis.

On cue, the Mariners came back with an odd-man rush of their own. They finished this one well with Andreev firing 20-footer under the crossbar from the left circle.

Worcester did not trail for long.

Donhauser stole the puck at center ice and out-skated a pair of defenders. He made a little move between the circles and as Arvanitis reacted, Donhauser put a short shot between his pads.

DeMelis gave the Railers a 2-1 lead at 5:41 of the third period, scoring from in close. Cronin

tied it on a power play at 9:12. Once again Worcester responded quickly as Miotto hit the top far corner from the left circle at 10:25.

The home team pressed but Gahagen shut them down until the buzzer sounded.

The two Worcester AHL teams had played the Pirates many times through the years and it was a very intense rivalry. Including playoff games, they battled 206 times. Worcester’s record was 91-86-29. The IceCats were 43-45-16, the Sharks 44-37-13.

The city’s AHL teams were 36-45-18 in what is currently called Cross Arena.

The American Hockey League won’t put this one in the standings, but the Railers were very happy to issue some payback for their predecessors.

Public Notices

The Office Of Purchasing
536 Dwight Street, Room 3
Holyoke, MA 01040

Notice to
DCAMM CONTRACTORS
INVITATION TO BID
No. 2026-29DEMO

The City of Holyoke Purchasing Department as the Awarding Authority, invites sealed bids from Demolition Contractors for Bid No. 2026-29DEMO– Building Demolition and disposal of the 115 Newton Street, Holyoke MA 01040 General Demolition Bids will be received by the City of Holyoke Purchasing Department, City Hall, 536 Dwight Street, Holyoke, MA 01040.

A pre-bid walk-through has been scheduled on 12/22/2025 at 3:00 PM at the Site.

The deadline for receiving sealed demolition bids is before 2:00 PM local time on 1/6/2026, at which time they will be opened and read publicly. DCAMM certificates of Eligibility and Update Statements must be submitted separately but with the bids. Specifications will be available on 12/17/2025 @ 10AM by requesting electronically from morrowj@holyoke.org.



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Attention is called to the minimum wage rates to be paid on the work as determined by the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development and the Federal Labor Standards Provisions, where applicable. Bids and contracts are subject to the provisions of MGL c. 149 sec. 44A-J, inclusive as amended, and MGL c. 30, sec. 39M, and Chapter 193 of the Acts of 2004.

All bids for each project must be accompanied by a bid deposit in an amount equal to five percent (5%) of the bid amount and in the form of a bid bond, or certified check, or a treasurer’s check or cashier’s check issued by a responsible bank or trust company.

The City of Holyoke reserves the right to reject any or all bids. No electronic submissions allowed.

Purchasing Department
City of Holyoke, MA 01040
12/19/2025

Community Outreach Meeting

Exceptional Grow LLC, a product manufacturer 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 January 2nd, 2026. There will be an opportunity for the public to ask questions or, email ed@rmdev.pro 12/19/2025

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD24P1346EA
Estate of:
Janice C McHugh
Date of Death: 05/07/2024
CITATION ON PETITION FOR ORDER OF COMPLETE SETTLEMENT

A Petition for Order of Complete Settlement has been filed by Edward McHugh of Holyoke, MA and Michael McHugh of Littleton, MA requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including the allow-

ance of a final account, a determination of heirs at law and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition..

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 01/13/2026.

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.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M. Hyland, First Justice of this Court.
Date: December 10, 2025

Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
12/19/2025

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

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

Filed sub trades must be certified by DCAMM in the categories of MASONRY, MISC METALS, TILE, PLUMBING, HVAC and ELECTRIC. All Bidders must include a current DCAMM Certificate of Eligibility and a signed DCAMM Update Statement. Filed Sub Bids will be received until January 6,

2026, at 2:00 PM and publicly opened, forthwith online. Prime Contractors must be certified by DCAMM in the category of Roofing. Bidders must include a current DCAM Certificate of Eligibility and a signed DCAM Update Statement.

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

Request for Quotes
2026-28DPW
Quotes to repair and or replace Roll up Curtain Bay Door DPW

The City of Holyoke is seeking quotes to either repair or replace a Roll up Curtain Bay Door at DPW Headquarters. The door is a power operated roll up curtain door on a 22’ 0” wide by 12’ 3” tall with an existing roll up curtain door. The city is looking for 2 prices:

1. to replace the existing curtain door with a new one ZERO existing slats to be reused.
2. Furnish and install an entire new apparatus including all labor and materials and electrical.

Documents will be available starting on December 17, 2025 @ 10am by requesting electronically from morrowj@holyoke.org. Quotes are DUE NO LATER THAN 2PM on January 8th, 2026, electronically to morrowj@holyoke.org.

The electronic timestamp will be the recorded time of submission. Quotes are to be submitted to morrowj@holyoke.org with “Quote Submission Curtain Door DPW” in the subject line. PREVAILING WAGES MUST BE PAID.

A Non-Mandatory highly recommended site visit will be

held on Monday, December 22, 2025 @ 10AM at DPW Headquarters 63 Canal Street, Holyoke, MA 01040.

The city reserves the right to reject any and all quotes if in the city’s best interest. The City of Holyoke follows CH.30B, Ch.149 and all applicable State and Federal Procurement Laws. 12/19/2025

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD25P2567EA
Estate of:
Shawn Lee Tanner
Date of Death: 09/13/2022
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for Late and Limited Formal Testacy and/or Appointment has been filed by Cheryl Kirby of Coraopolis, PA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

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 01/13/2026. 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 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: December 11, 2025

Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
12/19/2025

City of Holyoke
536 Dwight Street #15
Holyoke, MA 01040-5078
(413)-322-5650
Request for Proposals 2026-27
Treasurer Services

The City of Holyoke is seeking sealed proposals from qualified individuals or firms for Treasurer/Collector Services including - Cash Reconciliation; Staff Training; Office Consolidation; Tax Title Processing; FY24 and FY25 Audit Preparation.

Proposals will be received by the Chief Procurement Officer, Electronically by submitting to morrowj@holyoke.org NO LATER THAN 2:00 PM on 12/30/25 at which time submissions will be recorded into record and put forth for review. Submission should have 2 Separate PDF’s one titled “Technical Proposal”, and one titled “Price Proposal”. Prices should NOT BE ANYWHERE IN THE TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS. Submissions are to be emailed on or before the submission deadline and must have “Response to RFP 2026-27 Treasurer Services” in the subject line. The electronic timestamp will be the time of record for submissions.

Documents are available by email request starting on 12/15/2025 @ 10AM from: morrowj@holyoke.org

The City of Holyoke follows CH.30B and all applicable State and Federal Procurement Laws. The City of Holyoke reserves the right to reject any and/or all proposals. 12/19/2025

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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PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
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HELP WANTED

LUDLOW PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT PARA-EDUCATOR. Submit resume and letter of intent to: www.schoolspring.com

NEIGHBORLY CLEANING & CARE is looking for mature, responsible adults with own transportation, experience and references for a housekeeping position. Hours 7:30- 2:30. Call Nancy today (413)267-4297 or (413) 544-0864.

VETERAN'S SERVICE OFFICER POSITION

The Town of Sturbridge is accepting applications to fill the part-time, 10 hours per week, Veteran Service Officer position. The position will act as a Veterans' Agent and thus requires all appropriate State and Federal certification.

Applications are available on-line on the Town of Sturbridge website under job opportunities. https://www.sturbridge.gov/your-government/pages/job-opportunities

The position is non-union and reports to the Town Administrator. The Town is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE).

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

QUAINT WEST BROOKFIELD BROOKHAVEN LAKE by babbling brook, l-shaped 2bdm. ranch, 2/full baths, finished basement, walkout slider, enclosed front porch. Enjoy nature trails, very quiet private area. \$2850/monthly rental fee. Bernice Stone 774-262-6667.

FOR RENT



All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1968, which makes it illegal to advertise any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (number of children and or pregnancy), national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, or any intention to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination.

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

Find archives of this local newspaper at www.newspapers.turley.com

EARLY DEADLINE

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 **Thurs., Dec. 26 at 3 p.m.**

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25 Base Price \$28.50	26 Base Price \$29.00	27 Base Price \$29.50	28 Base Price \$30.00
29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
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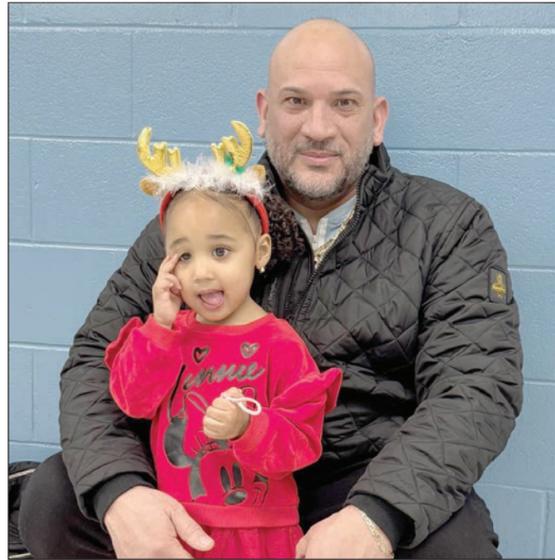
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One Holyoke Annual Community Dinner celebration



The cafeteria was full of hungry visitors.



Fernando Cerrano with his granddaughter, Kailani, 2.



This year there was a Polar Express theme.



Face painting was an extremely popular stop for the children.



Bingo was held in one of the rooms.



Viviana Rodriguez watches as her children Esther, 8, and Ethan, 2, color.



Train rides were available outside.

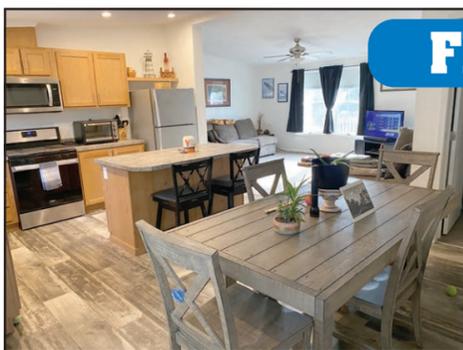


The event had a lot of decorations both inside and out.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

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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

- Quabog Current • Town Reminder • The Holyoke Sun • Chicopee Register

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