Pokémon Club meeting next Thursday

The Pokémon Club is again meeting weekly in the Children’s Activities Room at the Holyoke Public Library. Whether a fan of collecting cards, watching the show, playing the games or loving the app, Pokémon fans of all ages and abilities are welcome to gather every Thursday, 4-6 p.m., in the library at 250 Chestnut St., Holyoke. The first meeting is Feb. 13. There is no cost to participate, but registration is recommended at 413-420-8105.

Lax standards, staff turnover to be discussed March 9

By Michael Ballway
mballway@turley.com

It’s time for Holyoke to take back control of its schools, a group of ex-teachers told the City Council this week.

“For too long, you have remained quiet and complacent. We all have,” said Elizabeth Butler, who was born and raised in Holyoke and taught at Holyoke High School until 19 years ago. “Five years later, we are in the same place we were,” said Holyoke resident and former teacher Doug Arnold. “The test scores have not kept up. The school system has lost 600 veteran administrators, teachers, and staff.”

The solution, they said, is an end to receivership — the 2015 decision by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to take control of Holyoke’s public schools away from the locally elected School Committee and appoint a receiver-superintendent who reports directly to DESE. Councilors agreed to continue the discussion at a meeting of their Development and Governmental Relations Committee at 6 p.m. Monday, March 9, in City Hall. Arnold and Butler were among the 16 former HHS teachers who signed a letter published last month in The Holyoke Sun (“Two Sides of the Story in Holyoke School Receivership.”)

Jose Bou, from the Holyoke schools’ central office, records some of the suggestions from the school receiver search during a public forum on Feb. 3. Photo by Michael Ballway

More local input urged in search for receiver

By Michael Ballway
mballway@turley.com

Holyoke residents have plenty of thoughts about what they want in a new School Department receiver, as state officials and their consultant discovered during a community forum on Monday.

Chief among them is this one: It should be their decision. “All of this is meaningless unless Holyoke, the School Committee, is part of the decision,” said Natalie Munoz. Deb Lantagne from the state elementary and secondary education commissioner’s office, and Steve Sell from Great Schools, which is helping coordinate the job search, spoke with about 20 Holyoke residents, including a handful of each of residents, parents, students and employees of the Holyoke schools, on Feb. 3 at Enlace de Familias. The state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will host a second community forum 5:30-6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13, in the cafeteria at Holyoke High School, North Campus, 500 Beech St., Holyoke. An online community survey is also available, in both English and Spanish, through Feb. 17 at www.hps.holyoke.ma.us/about-us/receiver-search.

Through the forums and the survey, DESE and Great Schools are looking for feedback on the characteristics and qualities that Holyoke would like to see in the next receiver, a state-appointed official who serves as the city’s school

Library to look at science of ice cream

Children aged 8-12 are invited to learn about the science of ice cream, and how to make their own, at a Holyoke Public Library event this month.

Children’s Library Assistant Charlie Pope will lead this STEM Week event 1-2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 22. Participation is free but supplies are limited, so advance registration is required at cpope@holyoke.lib.ma.us or in person at the Children’s Room desk. For more information, call 413-420-8105. The library is at 250 Chestnut St., Holyoke.

Tickets available now for chili dinner

Our Lady of the Cross Church in Holyoke will host a chili dinner starting at 5 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 15.

Several different kinds of chili will be served, from mild to spicy. Tickets are $10 for adults and $5 for children under 12.

The dinner will take place in the Parish Hall on Holy Cross Avenue. To order tickets, call the parish office at 413-352-5661.

Elizabeth Butler, a Holyoke native and former Holyoke High School teacher, speaks at the City Council meeting on Tuesday. Photo by Michael Ballway

Teachers kindle love of books in young pupils

By Peter Spotts
pspotts@turley.com

Fostering a love of reading at young ages is important and Lawrence School is bringing kids together and cultivating that love in and out of school.

The debut of the Family Literacy event on Wednesday, Feb. 5, drew dozens of children and their parents to the cafeteria, where first and second grade teachers read books in English and Spanish. After each book, people could switch to another table to enjoy several books before the conclusion of the event.

“Like that there’s a lot of pictures and the pictures make the book even funner,” said Dustin Sibley, one of the students.

“The book is so fun,” added parent Sarah Clark. “My kids enjoy reading. They pretty much begged to do this.”

During and after the reading, the teachers engaged the kids with questions and discussions about what they had read. Family and Community Engagement Coordinator Yamires Rivera explained the school is evaluating its events to see in what ways kids are learning and taking those lessons beyond the classroom and applying them.

“What is the meaning? What is the link to learning? Are they taking anything they learn to put it into practice?”

See BOOKS, page 16

See SEARCH, page 13

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February 7, 2020

Local news. Local stories. Local advertisers.
Vega, fellow legislators to row for brain tumors

Teams of up to eight rowers are being organized by several local politicians, will gather at 11 a.m. this Sunday, Feb. 9, for a Row-Athon, to collectively row 42,195 meters at Nasty Habit CrossFit in Holyoke.

Organized by state Rep. Aaron Vega, D-Holyoke, who lost his father to a brain tumor eight years ago, A Nasty Row to Beat Brain Tumors aims to raise awareness about brain tumors and raise funds or research.

Vega hopes the event will raise $5,000 for the National Brain Tumor Society. Participating teams include Reps. R Us team, a team led by Democratic state Rep. John B. Lyon of Holyoke, Michael Funn of West Springfield with his son Charlie, Brian Ashe of Longmeadow, and several other teams.

Lyman St. Bridge to be closed until late 2021

Starting Wednesday, Feb. 12, the Lyman Street Bridge over the First Level Canal will be closed to traffic as the next phase of work on the removal and reconstruction of the existing bridge begins.

This much-needed project in downtown Holyoke is being completed by New England Infrastructure, working for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). In addition to full replacement of the bridge, this project includes improvements to Lyman Street from Front to Canal and Main streets. This $6.6 million project is expected to continue for another two years and will require the shutdown of Lyman Street to through traffic through at least the fall of 2021.

In addition, Chef Maria Moreno-Conteras will run three Thursday night baking classes this spring each focusing on a different dessert: “Petit Fours, Glaces and European Macaroons” on April 9, “The Decadent Ganache Torte” on May 14, and “Contemporary Chiffon Layer Cake” on May 28.

All the cooking and baking classes meet from 6 to 9 p.m. at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, 164 Race St., Holyoke. The cost for each class is $84, and space is limited.

Tracy Carter of Chicopee is a graduate of the International Culinary Schools at the Art Institute in Los Angeles, an HCC Culinary Arts program instructor and a freelance food stylist for the Food Network.

Dominho “Dino” Diaz Jr. of Springfield is a professional chef, HCC adjunct faculty member, and a 2012 graduate of HCC’s Culinary Arts program.

Maria Moreno-Conteras of Eastampton is a baking instructor in HCC’s Culinary Arts program and a professional baker who previously worked at the Blue Heron Restaurant in Sunderland and operated her own local baking business, Chilean Swees. To register, visit www.hcc.edu/bc and search for “food” or call 413-532-2123.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

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During this period, through traffic heading toward Canal and Main streets will be detoured onto Maple Street, and traffic from Canal and Main streets will be detoured onto Race and Dwight streets.

Lyman Street will remain open to local traffic at both ends and, a temporary footbridge has been installed to allow pedestrians to cross the canal. Temporary modifications to the traffic signals at the Lyman-Canal-Main intersection have been made and one-way travel only will be allowed on Lyman Street between the intersection and Bowes Street, to provide for access to the lower section of Lyman Street in the Gatehouse Road area during construction.
Culinary student-made lunches now available to public, twice a month

For the first time, beginning next week, Holyoke Community College will open its Wednesday culinary arts program lunch series to the public.

For years, the spring semester lunches, prepared by HCC culinary arts students and instructors as part of their A La Carte Cooking and Food Service Course, have been open only to HCC faculty, staff, students and invited guests. Now, members of the public are being invited to dine at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, 164 Race St., Holyoke, to indulge in a series of Wednesday lunches featuring a different culinary theme each week.

The three-course meals are offered free of charge, with a suggested donation of $10 to the President’s Student Emergency Fund, which is managed by the HCC Foundation. The fund is used for students experiencing food or housing insecurity in need of immediate assistance.

“Guests at our culinary lunch series, members of the community can take part in our students’ academic success by providing them with real-world experiences and opportunities that lead to meaningful careers,” said Amanda Sbriscia, vice president of Institutional Advancement and executive director of the HCC Foundation. “But beyond that, many of our students face real barriers, such as food insecurity and homelessness. Guests can help them overcome these barriers by simply visiting the Culinary Arts Institute for a freshly prepared, delicious meal and making a donation.”

A chocolate mouse prepared by culinary arts students shows Holyoke Community College pride at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute.

Library to look into old burial grounds

Local historian Bob Comeau will present “Burial Grounds of Holyoke” at 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 8, in the Community Room of the Holyoke Public Library.

Comeau will draw on his extensive research into local burial ground, cemetery and church history to explore the many factors that determined burial places at different points in Holyoke’s history. The talk is free and open to the public. The library is at 250 Chestnut St., Holyoke. For more information, call 413-420-8107.

For more information, visit GBFB.org.

In the News

Food bank honors Vega for advocacy on school breakfast

The Greater Boston Food Bank, the largest hunger-relief organization in New England, recently honored state Rep. Andres Vargas, D-Holyoke, with its House of Representatives Public Advocate of the Year Award for his unwavering support as a co-sponsor of Breakfast After the Bell legislation.

“We work on and we advocate for many important issues as state reps. and state senators, but I believe that feeding our children is one of the most important issues we work on,” said Vega. “I want to thank my colleagues, especially Rep. Andy Vargas, who shares the passion and understanding for this and so many other issues we work on together. I want to thank the Rise & Shine Coalition, with an extra thanks to the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts and their amazing team that do so much to bring food to our residents.”

The Public Advocate of the Year Award recognizes officials who have shown a strong commitment to the provision and protection of emergency food assistance, food policy in Massachusetts, and ensuring those struggling with hunger have enough to eat every day.

“Representative Vega has been deeply engaged with the Greater Boston Food Bank and Rise and Shine Coalition for many years,” said Catherine D’Amato, GBFB’s president and CEO. “As a co-sponsor of the Breakfast After the Bell legislation in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, his work will ensure that all students have access to a healthy breakfast as they start their school day.”

The Breakfast After the Bell bill will require all high-poverty K-12 public schools to offer breakfast after the instructional day begins. Expanding the window for school breakfast would increase food access and decrease food insecurity for approximately 150,000 children across the state.

“Let’s use every tool we have to remove obstacles and ensure our kids get the best education they can without worrying about where their next meal is coming from,” said Vega. The Public Advocate of the Year Awards were presented at GBFB’s Partner Appreciation Day event on Jan. 24. Other awardees included state Rep. Andres Vargas, D-Haverhill, and state Sen. Michael Rodrigues, D-Westport. For more information, visit GBFB.org.
PVPAs student concert benefits earthquake relief in Puerto Rico

Students of Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School will perform a concert in Holyoke next Thursday as part of a long-distance collaboration with Alcides Figueroa School in Puerto Rico — and to raise money for earthquake relief in Puerto Rico.

The PVPA students were originally scheduled to travel to the island as part of next week’s performance, while Puerto Rican students record a video of themselves reading their poems.

The concert is at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 13, at Gateway City Arts, 92 Race St., Holyoke. The students will be joined in their concert by PVPA student and performance poet, playwright and performer Magdalena Gomez.

All are welcome to attend this concert, with a suggested $15 donation in lieu of admission. Funds raised will be given to organizations supporting the hardest-hit earthquake victims.

Drinks are available at the concert, as well as Street Race Tacos. Jason’s, a new Czech-American restaurant at Gateway City Arts, will be open 5-10 p.m. Reservations are recommended; call 413-650-0786.

Valentine dance to aid Harmony House

Harmony House of Western Massachusetts will benefit from next weekend’s “Sweetheart Dance” sponsored by the Pioneer Valley Harley Owners’ Group and Knights of Columbus Council 4044 of Chicopee.

The dinner and dance will be held Saturday, Feb. 15, at the Castle of Knights, 1599 Memorial Drive, Chicopee. It begins at 5 p.m. with cocktails and dinner will be served at 6, followed by dancing and fun. The cost is $40 per person or $75 per couple, and includes dinner, dancing and music by DJ Stephan. There will be fun and raffle prizes. Dress is casual — Valentine’s Day attire optional — for the open seating.

Proceeds from this event will benefit Harmony House of Western Massachusetts, a home for the terminally ill, along with the Thanksgiving dinner provided annually by the Knights of Columbus, Council 4044. Tickets are available at the K of C’s ‘Member Lounge on Tuesday and Thursday nights 6-7:30 p.m., or by calling Steve Dubreuil of the K of C at 413-250-1677, Libby Martel of Pioneer Valley HOG at 413-530-1389, or Amy Corcoran of Harmony House at 954-405-236.

Staffed mainly by volunteers of all kinds — nurses, CNAs, caregivers, companions — Harmony House is totally privately funded through the generosity of individuals, businesses, and foundations. Contributions are gratefully accepted at all times. For more information, visit www.harmonyyouse.org or call Amy at 413-530-1389. Donations by check are accepted at Harmony House, 375 Western Massachusetts, P.O. Box 6315, Holyoke, MA 01041. Harmony House is a 501c3 nonprofit corporation.
In The News

City Councilor Joseph McGiverin examines his new badge after the tradition was revived at a December 19 council meeting.

By Michael Ballway
mballway@turley.com

Volunteers needed for city boards

The city is seeking to fill vacancies on three city commissions, the mayor’s office announced last week.

The Conservation Commission is the environmental agency in Holyoke responsible for protecting the land, water, and biological resources of the city. Commissioners are appointed by the mayor and work to achieve Holyoke’s conservation goals.

The Parks and Recreation Commission is made up of three members of the community appointed by the mayor. The purpose of the commission is to set policies and advise the department head, mayor and City Council on needed parks and recreation programs: plan, acquire, and open recreation facilities, parks, and open space areas to meet current and future needs as the city grows.

The Historical Commission was established to preserve and develop the historical and archeological assets of the city. The commission maintains an inventory of buildings, areas, and sites of architectural or historical importance in Holyoke. It collects reference information and can assist those seeking National Register nominations for their buildings or neighborhoods.

Any resident who wishes to apply to serve on any of these three commissions should submit a letter of interest along with a resume to the mayor’s office at mayorsoffice@hololyoke.org or in person at City Hall, 536 Dwight St., Holyoke.

Holyoke high school in collaboration with GEAR UP, will host a Financial Aid Completion Day for families of high school seniors interested in attending college.

Two sessions will be held on Thursday, Feb. 13: a morning session from 8:30 to 10:30, and an evening session from 4 to 6:30.

During each session, parents and children will have an opportunity to complete the Financial Aid Form for Student Application, or FAFSA, with the help of a financial aid expert. Financial aid is available to help students pay for college and the first step to accessing these funds is to complete the FAFSA application.

Advance registration is required by Tuesday, Feb. 10, by contacting Mary Colón at mcolon@valleyopp.com or 413-579-8351.

Library legislative breakfast next Fri.

The Holyoke Public Library will host the 2020 Western Massachusetts Libraries Legislative Breakfast next week.

The event will run 8-10 a.m. Friday, Feb. 14, at the library, 250 Chestnut St., Holyoke. All city residents are invited to show their support for adequate funding of public libraries, and speak with their elected officials. Among those scheduled to attend are Mayor Alex Morse, state Rep. Aaron Vega, D-Holyoke, and state Rep. John Velis, D-Westfield, one of two candidates for the local state Senate seat.

A continental breakfast begins at 8 a.m. in the library’s Community Room, supported by the Western Massachusetts Library Advocates and the Holyoke Library. To register for this breakfast or for more information, contact Nancy Kocmierowski, HPL Development Office, at 413-420-8109 or nancy@holyokehpl.org, or visit www.holyokehpl.org.

Read The Sun online at www.sun.turley.com

HCC president chosen for national leadership fellowship

Holyoke Community College President Christina Royal has been selected for a national fellowship for first-time college presidents administered by the Washington, D.C.-based Aspen Institute.

The Aspen New Presidents Fellowship is a new initiative designed to support community college presidents in the early years of their tenure to accelerate transformational change on behalf of students.

Royal, who lives in Northampton, was one of two community college presidents from Massachusetts to be chosen, along with Luis Pedraja of Quinsigamond Community College in Worcester. They are part of the inaugural group of 25 Aspen Fellows selected from more than 100 nominees across the country.

The leaders, all of whom are in their first five years as a college president, will engage in a seven-month fellowship beginning in June 2020.

“The Aspen Institute has a reputation for excellence, and I am honored to be selected as part of the inaugural group along with Luis Pedraja,” said Royal, who started working at HCC in January 2017 after three years as provost and vice president of academic affairs at Inver Hills Community College in Minnesota. “Higher education is experiencing a lot of disruption as the world changes. We are being challenged in greater ways to alter the ways we educate and provide support for students as demographics shift and their needs change. We know that changes in higher education are needed to prepare students for the workplace, and to ensure we are providing an education that prepares students for career and economic mobility.”

The Aspen New Presidents Fellowship is a five-year, $350,000 initiative supported by the Washington, D.C.-based Aspen Institute and the College Futures Fund.

“Mr. Pickle and Friends” will host a story hour with drag performers at the Holyoke Public Library twice a month beginning 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 11.

With a focus on inclusion and acceptance, Mr. Pickle will read relevant books to children. Juice boxes and pre-packaged snacks will be available. Other storytime activities will include dressing up, singing and dancing, and other family-friendly fun. Participation is free, but seats are limited; families should call the library to register at 413-420-8105. Story hours will continue on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

“Mr. Pickle promises a ‘safe place for all children to express themselves creatively,'” Pickle said.

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Help available applying for college aid

Holyoke High School, in collaboration with GEAR UP, will host a Financial Aid Completion Day for families of high school seniors interested in attending college.

Two sessions will be held on Thursday, Feb. 13: a morning session from 8:30 to 10:30, and an evening session from 4 to 6:30.

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Don’t get scorched during Burn Week

This week is National Burn Awareness Week, an important time to reflect on simple ways everyone can ensure injuries from burns are prevented following this year’s theme from the American Burn Association: Contact burns — hot surfaces damage skin.

“Burn Awareness Week is an opportunity for fire, health, and medical professionals to review some simple safety steps people can take to prevent burn injuries at home, at work, and outdoors,” said State Fire Marshal Peter J. Ostroskey said.

According to the Massachusetts Burn Injury Reporting System, children under 5 make up 25 percent of all reported burn injuries. Over the past decade, 45 percent of all contact burns were to children under five years old. Last November, an 11-month-year-old boy received a third-degree burn touching the glass portion of an oven while another fell on a baseboard heater, severely burning his thigh, calf, and heel.

The little explorers investigate their environments as they grow, a natural part of the learning and growth. However, it’s important to be supervising these inquisitive infants and ensure they stay out of harm’s way and the state Department of Fire Services has several suggestions on ways to do it.

When indoors, keep a careful eye on children around space heaters, woodstoves, fireplaces, and stoves and ovens in use. Use baby gates, highchairs, and playpens to keep them at least 3 feet away from anything that can get hot. When they wander outside, maintain the same 3-foot buffer from grills and campfires. Make sure there are no tripping hazards that could cause someone to fall into the fire. Keep feet protected with shoes for hot pavement and sand. It’s also advised to keep pets away from hot pavement, as well.

Make sure all heating pads, electric blankets, and space heaters are turned off before going to sleep at night. This is especially important for older adults as skin thins with age, making it more susceptible to serious burns from these devices.

When indoors, keep a busy bee in the kitchen cooking, use hot pads when available. Long oven mitts are the best when needing to reach in or over hot surfaces, such as the inside of an oven or grill. Assume all pots and pans are hot before touching. Treat items coming out of the microwave the same as you would something that is in the stove.

Ostroskey reminds everyone that hot liquids “burn like fire,” and are the leading burn problem in Massachusetts. Don’t hold or carry a child while handling a hot drink and consider using hot pads, hot pads when available.

Last week’s “Hidden in Holyoke” was a decorative pillar outside Holyoke District Court. It was correctly guessed by Don Diller and Alice and Dexter Gess.

Letters to the Editor Policy
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 thesunseturley.com. Mailed letters can be sent to The Sun, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.
Duo offers free Spanish guitar concert

The Holyoke Public Library will welcome the duo of Elizer Torres and Orlando Zapata for “Romantic Spanish Guitar,” a free concert, at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 12.

For more information or to register for this program, call the library at 413-420-8101. This concert is sponsored by Massachusetts Cultural Council, Holyoke Public Library and Puerto Rican Cultural Project. The library is at 250 Chestnut St., Holyoke.

In The News

“Every word that you said touched my heart,” he said. “We are Holyoke Strong, and together we can do this. We just have to come together.”

Frustration about the institution of state receivership was also evident at a community forum on Monday where residents who asked to share their thoughts about what skills and qualities the state should look for when hiring a new receiver to replace Stephen Zrike, who will step down in June.

Many attendees, including a few School Committee members, expressed frustration with how long the receiver-ship has lasted, and said they don’t want to stay in receivership long enough for the next receiver to stay five years.

Even if the city cannot overturn state receivership, there may be ways to increase local input — if not actual control — in the school system, suggested Councilor Rebecca Lisi.

She said the School Committee, as elected representatives of Holyoke voters, retains its moral authority and should be able to “put some pressure and oversight on the receiver. They do have a voice. They do have meetings.”

The Holyoke Sun

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Adult spelling bee aids kids’ nonprofit

It’s time to spell again for the success of Holyoke children. The fifth annual Adult Spelling Bee to benefit Homework House of Holyoke will be held at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, April 30, at Open Square in Holyoke. This annual event is one of the major fundraisers for the organization, which has been providing academic tutoring and mentoring for over 12 years. The event is a friendly adult competition between teams, each made up of three individuals who are asked to spell challenging words accurately. There are elimination rounds, knock-out rounds and audience participants who also get their chance to win a prize. Team names are spirited and their dress creative. The contest is lively amongst the competitors and audience.

People’sBank is the Bee’s Knees Sponsor of the event. Pennyfarthing Investment Management is a Bee-Keepers Sponsor. Additional sponsorship opportunities and team registration are now available.

Homework House serves children, ages 6-12, from Holyoke public schools. Since its beginning, it has offered free tutoring and mentoring. Today, it offers services from three different locations in Holyoke. Tutors, many of whom are volunteers from local colleges and the community, provide individualized instruction to strengthen children’s educational learning and retention.

At the April 30 event, hearty hors d’oeuvres by Seth Mais Catering and a cash bar will be available. To register for a sponsorship, register a team or buy tickets, visit HomeWorkHouseHolyoke.org, email Suzanne Boniface at sboniface@workhouseholyoke.org, or call her at 413-265-1017. For more information on Homework House, visit HomeWorkHouseHolyoke.org.

The event of the season the tradition getting better

The Ancient Order of Hibernians-James A. Curran, Division I And The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians Invite the public to the Annual

IRISH NIGHT IN HOLYOKE
IN MEMORY OF DANIEL P CURRAN
TO BENEFIT THE MAURICE A DONAHUE SCHOLARSHIP
 Featuring:
BOSTON’S NOEL HENRY IRISH SHOWBAND

Saturday, February 22nd
1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
DAY BROOK VILLAGE SENIOR LIVING
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**Sports**

**Knights still in running for playoff spot**

While they have suffered a pair of setbacks during the past week, the Holyoke High School girls basketball team is still in the driver’s seat to make a run at the playoffs. The Knights are 9-7, despite a recent 63-51 loss against Hampshire Regional High School. Hampshire, which has had some great runs recently in Division 3, is strong again this year. Holyoke was able to keep up with Hampshire in the first half, but really fell behind in the third quarter as the Red Raiders were able to keep up their hot shooting. Holyoke adjusted, but was outscored late. Bianca Ortiz had 14 points to lead Holyoke while Ashley Vazquez had 11 points.

**Western Mass. sectional tourney could be lost in statewide playoff**

Editor’s note: This is the second of a four-part series to break down the statewide tournament proposal, what it is, its effect on the Western Mass. region, the challenges, and how your athletic directors and coaches feel about it.

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

With the impending vote on a statewide tournament sponsored by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association, one of the biggest things being talked about in our region are the long-term effects it will have.

Agawam High School Athletic Director David Stratton has repeatedly said during the past few months that “Western Mass. loves its tournament.”

Under the MIAA proposal, that would be the biggest impact on the region. There would no longer be a “Western Mass. Champion.”

The vote to pass the statewide tournament is likely to be successful, many athletic directors feel. This has led the Pioneer Valley Interscholastic Athletic Conference, which is the governing body of high school sports locally, to consider holding its own tournament prior to whenever the state tournament is held.

Stratton said the PVIAA is working on a proposal to hold some type of tournament. He did not say how it would be structured and how the competition would be separated. However, in order to have time for the tournament, it could cut into the regular season for certain sports. For example, the soccer season, now 18 games, could be lowered to 16 games to make time for a tournament.

One of the many reasons besides the love for the regional tournament, is because of the risk of so many Western Mass. teams having to travel long distances for the state tournament.

The current proposal of a 32-team tournament by the MIAA states the higher seed would host games in the first round. In addition to two tough days at home, the Knights were forced to play an “empty arena” game on Saturday, Jan. 25.

After the Jan. 23 varsity matchup between Holyoke and Central was cancelled due to a major brawl during the JV game, the two teams made up the game on the following Saturday morning, with no one allowed in the Holyoke High School gymnasium.

The result was an 88-72 loss, which was unsurprising considering Central’s recent dominance over Holyoke. Following the defeat, Holyoke went on a three-game losing streak, but has since rebounded with a win against Hampshire.

The Holyoke High School boys basketball team has gone through quite a bit during recent weeks, including a home stretch that included a brawl, metal detectors and massive police presence, and the cancellation of a game.

But a recent winning streak has the Knights back in tournament contention with an 8-6 record. The Knights still have challenging games on their Valley Wheel schedule, and will need to earn their final two wins in order to qualify for the Western Massachusetts Division 1 tournament.

**Tumultuous season for Knights takes positive turn**

See TOURNAMENTS, page 10

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**MIAA holds diversity summit for schools**

The Summit provided two keynote speakers, Muji Karim, a Paralympic Track and Field Athlete, and Briana Mastel, a member of Boston Pride of the National Women’s Hockey League. Mr. Karim’s message to “see the silver lining” when dealing with obstacles and Ms. Mastel’s encouragement to pose a “strong ask” and “to hold others” are in alignment with the MIAA Wellness Pillar and Inclusion message.

“Two keynote speakers and eight amazing presenters shared information, celebrated differences, and engaged attendees to think critically about the totality of Inclusion!”

Summit attendees included Student Leaders, Group Leaders, Coaches, Teachers, Team Captains, Counselors and Administrators.

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**How to contact the Sports Editor**

Have the scoop on a local sports story? Want to submit a team photo, pass along a potential story? Want to submit a team press releases and information story? Want to submit a team photo? Please send all sports-related information to Sports Editor Greg Scibelli at sports@turley.com or call, 1-413-283-8393.

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**Bay State Games begins partnership with Gentle Giant**

We’re very excited to be able to support the Bay State Games and connect with their network of athletes,” says Craig Avreter, Gentle Giant Recruiting Manager and 1995 Bay State Games competitor.

Of the budding relationship, Bay State Games Executive Director Kevin Cummings says, “since 1982, Bay State Games has produced programs that develops directly aligns with the future leaders of tomorrow. Gentle Giant shares many of these same values and we look forward to our partnership which will focus on providing opportunities for student-athletes.”

Gentle Giant has a 40-year history of providing high-quality services to athletes at their offices across New England and in several other regional locations. If you are looking for paid work out, a flexible schedule, and competitive benefits please visit www.gentilegiant.com. The inaugural partnership is not yet fully fleshed out to fill the preliminary application for questions, email info@baystategames.org or call 781-932-6555.

**Knights, from page 9**

game winning streak, defeating Amherst, Pope Francis, and Northampton in consecutive games.

The wins should give the Knights some confidence heading into the final two weeks of the season, as Holyoke will see all three of those teams, along with Agawam High School, a team they have already defeated once this season.

Holyoke High School officials are still re-evaluating their system for fan seating and security at home games. They have had extra security and police presence at recent games, and there have been no further incidents reported.

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**Tournaments, from page 9**

three rounds with the semifinals and finals at neutral sites.

While it is the expression of skepti- cism that Eastern Mass. would host most of the games, some projections of how seeds would be drawn were tried with the most recent soccer tournaments. According to those projects, teams like Burlington boys and Ludlow boys soccer, and Minnechaug girls soccer, would all have very high seeds and host a number of games in the tournament. However, it is still unclear if Western Mass. would get an opportunity to host state semifinal and final games. Hosting the state finals was attempted for basketball, and failed due to gate receipts.

Some of the questions that are still lingering state wide are the increased travel costs for smaller schools. No mat- ter how the schedule changes, there are still re-evaluating their system for fan seating and security at home games. They have had extra security and police presence at recent games, and there have been no further incidents reported. The lingering effects could be seen for years to come, and it will tell if a statewide tournament has long-term negative effects on Western Massachusetts.
Scholarships given for cannabis class

The Cannabis Education Center, a collaboration between Holyoke Community College and the Cannabis Community Care & Research Network (C3RN), awarded scholarships to six students enrolled in its entry-level cannabis culinary assistant training program, which began Jan. 25.

These initial scholarships were provided by cannabis businesses Curaleaf, Great Northern, Mill Town Agriculture, and Cultivate and awarded to students who either live in the Holyoke area, are unemployed or underemployed, or were disproportionately impacted by drug enforcement laws before the legalization of marijuana in Massachusetts, among other criteria.

“The goal of the scholarship program is to provide high-quality cannabis training to those who might otherwise not have the financial opportunity,” said Marion McNabb, chief executive officer of C3RN and the 501c3 nonprofit that provided the scholarships.

“Curaleaf Massachusetts is proud to partner with C3RN and Holyoke Community College by sponsoring scholarships at the Cannabis Education Center,” said Patrik Jonsson, president of Curaleaf Massachusetts. “We greatly value the opportunity to provide support for individuals from areas of disproportionate impact, and we are looking forward to getting involved in the onsite culinary-assistant training aspect as well.”

Additional scholarships are envisioned for future cannabis training programs. The Cannabis Education Center will begin a program to train workers for jobs as patient advocates and budtenders, March 2 at HCC’s Kittredge Center for Business and Workforce Development.

“The goal is to offer these training programs to as many people as possible,” said HCC President Marion McNabb, chief executive officer of C3RN and one of the program’s instructors.

“Curaleaf Massachusetts is the fastest growing sectors, it is imperative that programs like the Cannabis Education Center provide quality education while establishing industry standards and best practices,” said Jonsson.

“For more information or to apply for a scholarship, visit cannabiseducationcenterc.org and click on a program of interest.”

Holyoke Community College offering children’s safety program

Holyoke Community College is running a two-day program next month designed to teach children how to protect themselves from violence and harm in their daily lives.

“RadKIDS” is for children 6 to 12 years old and will run over two consecutive Saturdays, Feb. 15 and 22, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at HCC’s Bartlett Center for Arts, Media and Recreation, on the main campus at 303 Homestead Ave., Holyoke.

The sessions will be led by Katrina Cournoyer-Cronk and Maggie Brown, two area law enforcement veterans and trainers certified by the radKIDS national nonprofit network.

According to its website, radKIDS is a “fun, activity-based program” whose curriculum includes home, school and vehicle safety; bullying prevention; abduction defense; and personal space and personal touch safety, with a goal of “replacing fear with knowledge, skills and power, by enhancing a child’s critical thinking abilities and physical resistance skills.”

The $75 program fee includes snacks, water and a T-shirt.

To register, visit hcc.edu/rad and search for “radKIDS,” or call HCC Community Services at 413-552-2123.

Poetry Corner

The Gossiping Aspen

By Patricia Counter

Do these leaves make me look fat? Tell me the truth but be kind

Look at her, she thinks she’s so straight and slim, but she’s actually spindly, if it wasn’t for the bushes around her; she would fall over. She isn’t even decent firewood.

What about that oak with its branches sticking out everywhere and then there’s the one up there. I think they’re just attention getters especially when they fall on someone’s head.

Look at that maple over there in the corner just swaying away. Does she think this is some kind of dance contest? I will say her leaves are very pretty, I wonder who does them.

Then there’s that poor apple tree, everything there is the slightest breeze he starts throwing his apples everywhere. Someone should tell him he’s not in the land of Oz.

And you Dearie, you still look pretty good. A little rough around the trunk perhaps and maybe a little trim here and there would be nice. But now no.

Do you think these leaves make me look fat?
**HOLYOKE & BEYOND**

The Pulse is a community calendar for Holyoke and neighboring communities. Free listings are available for non-commercial, non-political entertainment or educational events that are free to attend, or fundraisers that also charge with participation.

Only events in Holyoke or one of its immediate bordering towns, or events that benefit an organization based in Holyoke, will be listed. Submitted items should be brief, with only time, date, location, activity explanation, and contact information, and may be edited for length and style. Items may be sent to theholyketsun@gmail.com, fax to 413-283-7107 or mail to The Holyoke Sun, c/o Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069. The deadline for calendar listings is noon Monday for that Friday's newspaper.

**ONGOING**

**WINTER MARKET** from the Holyoke Farmers Market will be held every other Sunday on the first floor at the Holyoke Mall near Macy’s, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. through March 8. The next market day is Feb. 9. The market offers a variety of fruits, vegetables, dairy products and crafts from local farms and vendors. HIP and EBT are accepted.

**OVEREATERS ANONYMOUS**; a 12-step, non-profit organization, meets Tuesdays at 5:15 p.m. at First Baptist Church, 605 South St., Holyoke. Enter the door off the driveway. More info: 413-783-4198 or www.oa.org.

**POKEMON FAN CLUB** meets at the Holyoke Public Library, 250 Chestnut St., every Tuesday from 4 to 6 p.m. in the Teen Room. The club plays Pokemon cards, games and Pokemon Go, as well as other card games like Yu-Gi-Oh and Magic. The Gathering; tourney tournaments for prizes, traditional drawing Pokemon art, and snacks. More info and registration: 413-420-8101.

**RSVP SEEKS VOLUNTEERS** for nonprofit organizations in Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden counties. Volunteers are needed to set up and clean up and help who want to share skills and experience in their spare time can contact RSVP for a great volunteer position, some travel and insurance benefits, and personal matching. Contact Patricia Sicard at psicard@hcg-ma.org or 413-387-4558, ext. 1.

**Friday, Feb. 7**

**BOOK TRANCES** talk in the Williston Library’s Stimson Room at Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, 3:30-4:30 p.m. All are invited to hear about “Hidden Histories of Reading and the Future of Library Collections” Kristin Jensen, who manages Book Trances from its base at the University of Virginia, will speak about “finding cool stuff in old books” at a time when American college libraries are turning towards mass digitization, shared print consortia, and efforts to downs-size their print collections.

**Saturday, Feb. 8**

**BURIAL GROUNDS OF HOLYOKE** historical talk at the Holyoke Public Library, 250 Chestnut St., Holyoke. 11 a.m. Bob Comeau will take us into the history of cemeteries in the city. Free.

**CABIN FEVER** fundraiser for the South Hadley Lions Club at The Wherehouse? banquet hall in Holyoke, 5-11 p.m. Tickets at $25 per person with an evening of food and excitement including Italian-style buffet, 50-50 raffle, and performance from local musicians Midlife Crisis. Tickets: Chris, 413-658-8929, or Tina, 413-244-2063. Limited tickets may be available.

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**Holyoke Arrests**

The Holyoke Police Department recorded the following arrests from Jan. 27 to Feb. 2. No arrests in the public log have been omitted. All suspects are innocent until proven guilty.

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**Monday, Jan. 27**

A 16-year-old was arrested at 5:26 p.m. on West Street on two warrants, and also charged with receiving a stolen motor vehicle. Also arrested carrying a dangerous weapon and possession of a class B drug. Angel L. Gonzalez, 32, of 6 Worcester Place, Apt. 3L, Holyoke, was arrested at 5:11 p.m. at the Holyoke Mall on a warrant, and also charged with shoplifting, assault, and resisting arrest.

Jose Roman, 41, of 82 Pearl St., Springfield, was arrested at 5:15 p.m. at the police station on two warrants.

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**Wednesday, Jan. 28**

Anthony Lopez-Eaton, 25, of 40 Paul Revere Drive, Feeding Hills, was arrested at 10:17 a.m. on Paul Revere Drive, Feeding Hills, was arrested at 5:12 p.m. at the police station on two warrants, and also charged with receiving a stolen motor vehicle. Also arrested carrying a dangerous weapon and possession of a class B drug, and trespassing. Francis E. Bermudez, 30, of 50 West St., Apt. 4L, Holyoke, was arrested at 5:10 p.m. on Appleton Street on a warrant.

Samoaeth Som, 36, of 99 Southpoint Drive, Apt. 3L, Holyoke, was arrested at 7:03 p.m. on Clinton Avenue on a warrant, and also charged with larceny of a class B drug.

Maynor Santizo-Lopez, 33, of 46 Ringgold St., Springfield, was arrested at 10:33 p.m. on Maple Street and charged with driving without a license and a vehicle equipment violation.

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**Friday, Jan. 31**

Freddie L. Tosado Jr., 31, of 5 Adams St., Holyoke, was arrested at 12:30 p.m. on Adams Street on a warrant, and also charged with disorderly conduct, resisting arrest, and assault and battery on a police officer.

Francisco Ortiz, 37, homeless, was arrested at 11:23 p.m. on Elm Street and charged with trespassing.

A 15-year-old was arrested at 1:40 p.m. on Cabot Street and charged with driving with a license.

Ramon DeJesus, 33, of 51 View St., 3rd Floor, Holyoke, was arrested at 2:17 p.m. on View Street on a warrant.

Gregory Stobie, 37, of 10 Klondike Ave., Westfield, was arrested at 4:44 p.m. on Pinet Street and charged with driving with a suspended license and driving with no inspection sticker.

Tatyania Contreras-Tapia, 24, of 37 Clinton Ave., Holyoke, was arrested at 7:03 p.m. on Clinton Avenue on a warrant.

Ricardo Vilanchez, 34, of 82 Malden St., Apt. 1R, Springfield, was arrested at 7:27 p.m. on Crescent Street, and also charged with larceny under $1,200.

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**Sunday, Feb. 2**

Jose L. Cosme Jr., 30, of 131 Clement St., Apt. 1RL, Holyoke, was arrested at 4:47 a.m. on Maple Street on a warrant, and also charged with driving without a license and driving with no inspection sticker.

Jose M. Hernandez, 46, of 67 St. James Ave., Holyoke, was arrested at 7:10 a.m. on Walnut Street and charged with possession of a class A drug and driving with a suspended license.

Alexis Matos, 32, of 150 Crescent Drive, Chicopee, was arrested at 3:22 p.m. on Northampton Street on a warrant, and also charged with shoplifting.

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**Holyoke Events**

**WINTER MARKET** from the Holyoke Farmers Market will be held every other Sunday on the first floor at the Holyoke Mall near Macy’s, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. through March 8. The next market day is Feb. 9. The market offers a variety of fruits, vegetables, dairy products and crafts from local farms and vendors. HIP and EBT are accepted.

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**Saturday, Feb. 29**

**DREAMS AND DEFiance concert** at Wistariahurst, 238 Cabot St., Holyoke, 7-9 p.m. Songwriters and musician-activist-educators Pamela Westfield, for online tickets, visit www.wherehouse.com and proceeds to benefit Special Olympics. More info: specialolympicsma.donordrive.com/event/westfieldplunge.

**BIG BROADCAST** in the Chapin Auditorium at Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, 2-7:30 p.m. This is the 15th annual performance of the Jazz Ensembles at Mount Holyoke. Snow date is March 8. General admission tickets are $25 for premium front center seating, $20 for regular seating, $10 in advance and $15 at the door for seniors, and $10 for students. For online tickets, visit www.fineartscenter.com.

**JOHNOKE ST. PATRICK’S PARADE**

**TARTAN PARTY** at the Holyoke Merry-Go-Round, 221 Appleton St., Holyoke, 2:30-5 p.m. Children will enjoy unlimited rides on the merry-go-round, face painting, snacks, crafts and a digital photo booth. Adults can purchase beer or wine and ship for Holyoke parade tartan merchandise. Admission is $5 per person, or $10 for a family.

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**March, March 13**

**MARRSHAL MANIA CONCERT** at the Wherehouse?, 109 Lyman St., Holyoke, 8 p.m. (doors open 6:30). The Singh will headline this fundraiser for the Holyoke St. Patrick’s Day Parade, with Holyoke’s own Ed Jackowski as the opening act. Tickets are $20 per person, or $30 for couples, or 413-530-3944, or marshmallow2018brownuptickets.com.
supervised "with full managerial and operational control." The current receiver, Stephen Zrike, has announced he will step down from that role at the end of June.

At the Feb. 3 forum participants split into two groups to share their opinions. Some asked them not to divide among themselves, but to record each individual's suggestions before they came back together to discuss them.

"We don’t want to be set back," said School Committee member Rosalee Tensley Wilkins.

Among the dozens of other skills and attributes that forum participants wanted to see in their new receivers were, in no particular order:
- Empathy, enthusiasm, approachability, open-mindedness, compassion
- Preference for a bilingual candidate
- Knowledge and understanding of Holyoke
- Ability to understand the "customer’s" point of view; not a top-down administrator
- Experience with social-emotional learning and behavioral health
- Focus on root problems, not symptoms
- Understanding that different students learn differently
- Commitment to end repercussion activity and to local control as soon as possible
- Classroom teaching experience with special children and those who are challenging
- Trust building principals and enforce accountability without micro-managing
- Experience as a resident for a designated community
- Someone from outside Holyoke, independent of local political influence
- Ability to articulate success; also, ability to listen to the community and convey these concerns to him. She also suggested that the new receiver be willing to build community support
- Proponent of social justice and equity; responsiveness to Holyoke’s cultural diversity
- Demonstrated success as a receiver in the past

City Councilor Terence Murphy also suggested that the new receiver commit to staying for the entire length of the receivership, so that Holyoke is not forced to undergo another transition while under state control. The city’s current turnaround plan expires in 2021, but the end of receivership is tied to meeting educational and financial standards.

Some attendees of the Feb. 3 forum criticized DESE for holding only two public forums in the city, and for not involving local voices in later stages of the selection process.

“The reason we’re only having two forums, in a two-week period, is that DESE wants to have this information as soon as possible,” said Sell.

School Committee member Mindy Lefebvre, however, noted there are other ways to incorporate Holyoke voices in the search. She said that a Holyoke School Committee member should be part of the panel that interviews prospective candidates. Even if the final decision rests solely with the state education commissioner, she said, at least there would be someone from Holyoke asking questions to the candidates while the commissioner is listening.

Deb Lantaigne, who hosted Monday’s forum, is a member of the commissioner’s staff and said she will convey these concerns to him. She also said there will be other forums and conversations involving specific groups with whom DESE is engaging, such as faculty and student groups.

At the very least, she said, the issue of local voices during local forums and in the online survey will be consulted by Great Schools and state officials as they craft their final decision.

“Ultimately, the decision is the commissioner’s,” she said.

Up to the job posting, the state is looking for an experienced superintendent, principal, head of school or director of an educational nonprofit with at least a master’s degree and a Massachusetts superintendent or assistant superintendent license, with Spanish language skills strongly preferred. The salary range is listed at $185,000 to $220,000 per year.

The state describes the Holyoke reception as “a unique opportunity for a courageous, committed individual.” Under the terms of state control over the Holyoke School Department, the receiver has all the powers of both a superintendent and a School Committee, and reports directly to the state education commissioner.

**Public Notices**

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Please RSVP to our Receptionist by Friday, February 7th at 413.593.0088

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BOOKS, from page 1

Krera said. “They’re asking questions and getting their family [involved].” Following the conclusion of the event, the kids got to pick out books from boxes packed to the brim to take home. “The school has dozens and dozens of extra books waiting for a new home and the literacy event was the perfect chance to get them into the hands of eager young readers.

“I’m really excited. They’re all loving it. Their faces, you can tell they’re having fun,” said first grade teacher Sue Leary. “[The books] are sitting around when they could be in kids’ hands. We said the extra books we’ll give to the kids so they can have a library in their own house.”

First grader Sophia Guzman said she loves reading with her big sister at home and enjoyed the chance to read with her out loud in the groups at the school.

“My favorite was the ‘School Stinks’ [book],” Guzman said. “I liked when the boy was on the monkey bars then he said ‘I love first grade.’ Then she said she wants to punch him.”

Leary worked with fellow teachers Amy Drohan and Julia Campbell to organize the event. They were joined by Korri Flynn, Laura Battles, Molly Cooksy and Haley McCormick to read to the kids. Leary said every couple months the school tries to hold some form of education event where parents can come in and have fun with their kids. She said the current plan for the next family event is a math games night.

“[The books] are sitting around when they could be in kids’ hands. We said the extra books we’ll give to the kids so they can have a library in their own house.”

Sue Leary

Second grade teacher Molly Cooksy reads to a table of kids and their parents during the Family Literacy event at Lawrence School on Wednesday.

Tameiko Hines, left, talks about the current book with Darcelle Clark at the Lawrence School Literacy Night held Feb. 5. (Photos by Peter Spotts)

Sarah Clark, right, watches her daughter Ashleigh Windoloski answer a question about the book.

English language learner teacher Laura Battles and Laniyah Hines look at a book.

Boxes of free books were available for kids to choose books to take home.

Dustin Sibley is all smiles when it comes to reading a good book.

Kanila Rodriguez enjoys her hot chocolate while listening to a book.

Sarah Clark, right, watches her daughter Ashleigh Windoloski answer a question about the book.

Tameiko Hines, left, talks about the current book with Darcelle Clark at the Lawrence School Literacy Night held Feb. 5. (Photos by Peter Spotts)

Second grade teacher Molly Cooksy reads to a table of kids and their parents during the Family Literacy event at Lawrence School on Wednesday.

Tameiko Hines, left, talks about the current book with Darcelle Clark at the Lawrence School Literacy Night held Feb. 5. (Photos by Peter Spotts)