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HHS girls bring home award

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

WEST SPRINGFIELD – Throughout the 2025-26 regular season, the Holyoke girls' varsity basketball team represented their school and community in the best manner possible.

It didn't go unnoticed by the referees who officiate their games.

The Purple Knights received the Eileen Monaghan Sportsmanship Award at the Hampden County Board of Women's and Men's Officials banquet, which was held at the Dante Club in West Springfield on March 19.

"Before the start of every game, we always talk to the players about how they can represent Holyoke," said Andrea Enright, who completed her seventh season as the Holyoke girls' varsity basketball coach. "The players have an opportunity to demonstrate what Holyoke truly stands for. We just want to change the misconception of our community. Receiving this recognition from the officials is very meaningful to our basketball team."

The Sportsmanship Award honors Monaghan, who passed away unexpectedly in April of 2024. She grew up in Chicopee and played basketball for a Suburban League team. She later coached and was a referee in the Suburban League.

"I believe Eileen is the first person ever to play, coach, and be a referee in the Suburban league," said Joe Ciejka, who's the President of the Hampden County Officials Board and is also

the Suburban League Commissioner. "Eileen brought an incredible spirit to the Suburban League and the kindness of hearts. Even though her heart has been silenced, we're not going to let her spirit ever die."

The Pioneer Valley Christian Academy girls' varsity team received the Sportsmanship Award a year ago.

The Wilbraham II Suburban League girls' basketball team also received the sportsmanship award this year.

Just like Monaghan, Enright loves the game of basketball. She played basketball at Holyoke High School and at St. Joseph's College of Maine before beginning her coaching career as the junior varsity girls coach at Chicopee High School. She then coached the girls' varsity team Longmeadow High School before coming home to her alma mater. She has also been a reading and writing teacher at the McMahon Elementary school in Holyoke for the past 17 years.

"I've had the opportunity to teach a few of my players when they were in elementary school," Enright said. "It's great to watch them grow and mature into young women."

The Purple Knights, who are members of the Valley Wheel League, finished this past season with a 6-14 overall record. They closed out the regular season by winning three of their final four games against Amherst (60-29), Sci-Tech (58-48), and



Kyra Lippman hustles into the paint during the girls basketball season.

Smith Vocational (54-28). All three of those victories took place at John "Jinx" O'Connor Gymnasium.

"We only had one returning starter, so it did take us some time to put the pieces together this year," said Enright, who has coached four 1,000 point scorers during the past seven seasons. "The girls played very hard in every game and didn't allow the results to deter them. They would just focus on our next game, and we finished the season strongly. It's a great group of kids."

One of Holyoke's rivals on the hardwood is Chicopee High School, which is a non-league opponent.

"The Chicopee High and Holyoke rivalry game is always a lot of fun," Enright said. "A lot of the girls on both teams grow up playing basketball together. The coaching staff also know each other very well. It's kind

See AWARD, page 6

Museum draws big crowd to sensory friendly egg hunt

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

HOLYOKE – This past weekend, the Wistariahurst Museum hosted its 3rd annual 'Sensory Friendly Easter Egg Hunt,' which drew more than 100 participants on Saturday, Apr. 4.

Offering insight into how the program came together was Museum Director Megan Seiler.

"So Museums aren't always the most inclusive spaces, and sometimes, parent's might be apprehensive to bring their kids to a space like this, and we understand the community already does a big egg hunt for the city, but we then came to realize that we have this space, where we can control the noise, and all the stimuli, so we opened up the Museum, to offer this type of egg hunt, which is geared towards being more inclusive, and have more kids who don't thrive in that bigger environment, and allow them to have a great time here," Seiler said.

She then pivoted to greet some families, and that's when we watched and observed the egg hunt.

Seiler explained to the parents that each child would either take the blue bunny path, which meant staying on the 1st floor, or the pink path, which led upstairs to the 2nd floor. The kids were then tasked with having to find 6 eggs, one in each room, and guiding them were the different colored bunnies. And if they ran into any trouble, they were told to reach out to a staff member or volunteer wearing bunny ears, who



Turley photo by Brendan Rooney

Zina Tissi, Event Staff, and Volunteer Marie Kulig get ready for the egg hunt to begin.

assisted the families.

"Once you gather 6 eggs, then you and your family are set to return to the lobby, where you have the chance to exchange your eggs for prizes, which include items such as candy and fidget toys, and anything you want," Seiler told the participants, as many

continued to file in, one after another.

Seiler then told us that this year, the museum switched things up and incorporated both its indoor halls and outdoor spaces to provide games and activities for participants, which,

See HUNT, page 10

YMCA and Comcast partner to expand digital opportunity

HOLYOKE – Representatives from the Greater Holyoke YMCA and Comcast were joined today by State Representative Patricia Duffy to celebrate the opening of the organization's STEAM tech center along with a recently awarded \$15,000 grant from Comcast.

Through this support, the Greater Holyoke YMCA's STEAM tech center provides access to devices, digital literacy training, coding, digital arts and online safety. YMCA programs serve over 500 youth annually and will integrate platforms such as ST Math, Cricut design and gaming embedded with healthy screentime habits and teamwork.

Additionally, the Greater Holyoke YMCA is a Comcast Lift Zone, which enables it



The Greater YMCA recently opened up a new tech center thanks to help from Comcast.

Submitted photo

See DIGITAL, page 9

Citywide clean-up planned for Apr. 22

HOLYOKE – A citywide, Earth Day clean-up of Holyoke, organized by the Hampden County Sheriff's Department, will take place on Wednesday, April 22, from 10 am to noon, followed by a thank you cookout from noon to 1 pm.

Volunteers will gather starting at 9:45 at the Heritage State Park parking area on Appleton Street across from the Holyoke Police Department. Tools, T-shirts, and instructions will be provided. There will be free parking in the Suffolk Street parking deck for the Earth Day volunteers. The cookout at noon will also be at Heritage State Park, near the carousel.

Other sponsors of the clean-up are the Holyoke Mayor's Office, OneHolyoke, Way Finders, Holyoke DPW, and MassMutual, among others.

Volunteers are encouraged to participate. A volunteer registration link can be found at: <https://forms.gle/vVXKnDdAUzASpNPY5>.

City working on changes to Comprehensive Plan, seeking public's input

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

HOLYOKE – Changes are coming to the Paper City, as Mayor Joshua A. Garcia and the City Council have announced they are working on updating the city's Comprehensive Plan, which

was last revised back in 1999. In addition to mediating the ongoing process, while allowing the public to voice their input after hundreds of citizens received notices in the mail, the Planning Board and Ordinance Subcommittee have confirmed to host public

hearings on April 14 to discuss proposed changes to the city's zoning ordinances.

Providing an update on why this was the appropriate time for this motion to be filed was At Large City Councilor and Chair of Charter and Rules Committee, Mimi Pantich,

who filed the ordinance, in an email interview with the Holyoke Sun, earlier this week.

"We introduced the zoning package when we did because it was ready, and because getting it enacted into law is going to take a very long time -- that's just

the nature of the M.G.L. 40A process that must be followed for a zoning amendment," Pantich said. She then added a bit of context to the time frame element, shedding light on the process by citing, "when I meant a very

See PLAN, page 9

HCC presents annual Student Art Show April 13-May 1

HOLYOKE – The Taber Art Gallery at Holyoke Community College and the

HCC Visual Art Department are presenting the annual Student Art Exhibition

Monday, April 13, through Friday, May 1, with a reception and awards ceremony

April 16 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the gallery. The exhibition features

artwork created by HCC students from more than 50 visual art classes during the 2025-2026 academic year, including painting, two-dimensional and three-dimensional design, basic drawing, still photography, ceramics, digital imaging and design, figure drawing, animation, digital photography, illustration, motion graphics, printmaking, and typography.

The exhibition reflects all the artwork done in studio classes during the academic year. Faculty members select the pieces and install them, giving art students the opportunity to see their work displayed in a professional gallery.

The April 16 reception also includes the Excellence in Visual Art Awards presentation, which recognizes the best student artwork of the year in various categories, as selected by the visual art faculty. Attendees are encouraged to dress creatively, as an award will also be presented

for best costume. “I’m thrilled to welcome the Holyoke community to join us for the 2026 HCC Student Art Exhibition,” said Taber Director Rachel Rushing. “In particular, the opening reception is always a highlight of the year as we celebrate the hard work of the visual art classes and announce the student award winners.”

Student artwork will be displayed in the Taber Art Gallery, as well as in the display cases outside the HCC Library, along the third-floor corridor of the Fine and Performing Arts Building, and in the Media Arts Center on the third floor of the Campus Center.

The Taber Art Gallery, located off the lobby of the HCC Library on the second floor of the HCC Donahue Building, is free and open to the public Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during regular school sessions.



HCC Student Art Exhibition in 2025.

Submitted photo

Holyoke Forum to focus on youth athletes, behavior, and connection

Free public event set for April 16 at Holyoke Media

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Media will host a free community forum on Thursday, Apr. 16 to help parents and coaches better understand young athletes whose behavior can be tough to read - whether they tune out, push back, or seem hard to connect with. The event, “Shifting the Narrative: Why Won’t They Listen? It’s Not Always What You Think,” begins at 6 p.m. at 1 Court Plaza and will include Spanish translation.

The conversation will offer simple, practical strategies for responding to strong emotions in sports or at home in ways that build confidence, skills, and stronger relationships between adults and kids, including young people who may be navigating learning differences, disabilities, or other challenges that shape how they engage with coaches and teammates.

The forum will be moderated by Patty Norris Lubold, Ward 6 member of the Holyoke School Committee, and will feature remarks from Courtney

Edman, founder, CEO, and coach of 2tametheshamE Inc., along with a panel of Holyoke coaches including Rafael Santos Jr. a coach, mentor, and member of Project Renovate, a new initiative in the Greater Holyoke area that supports coaches in becoming better mentors and leaders in the sports community.

“When we shift how we see challenging behavior not as defiance, but as a signal everything changes,” said Norris Lubold.

Edman will open the program with a discussion on why challenging behavior can signal stress, unmet needs, or underdeveloped skills. A panel discussion and Q&A will follow, with panelists sharing real-life examples of how shifting their coaching or parenting approaches helped transform relationships and outcomes at home, in school, and on the field.

“Coaches, teachers, and mentors are often chal-

lenged by behaviors that appear negative, unmotivated, or disrespectful, making it difficult to support our youth appropriately. Yet it is our responsibility to seek the tools and understanding needed to navigate these moments,” said Santos Jr. “When we empower ourselves, we empower youth by guiding them in the right direction. As a coach and mentor, I have witnessed firsthand how sports and mentorship can profoundly shape a young person’s life

and trajectory. Our greatest impact comes not from the easy moments, but from leading youth through their greatest challenges.”

This community conversation is the second in a series of forums Norris Lubold launched in December, designed to bring families, educators, and the community together around the needs of students with disabilities. The event is free and open to the public. No registration needed.



Tactical Self Rescue to host well-being event

HOLYOKE – Tactical Self Rescue, LLC, a premier safety and security education consultancy, is introducing its comprehensive Employee Well-Being Program to businesses through a hosted lunch and learn event. This proven education platform is designed to strengthen corporate workforces by delivering actionable training in risk awareness, crisis readiness, and human resilience. The program equips employees with practical skills to navigate modern threats both inside and outside the workplace, demonstrating a clear employer investment in the well-being of their staff and their families.

While many companies focus strictly on basic regulatory requirements, Tactical Self Rescue contrasts this standard approach by delivering dynamic, real-world education. “Most organizations offer compliance training, but very few offer education that prepares employees for real-world situations that affect their lives and performance,” said Matthew Moriarty, Founder and CEO of Tactical Self Rescue. “The Tactical Self Rescue Employee Well-Being Program addresses this gap. It provides employees with training in cyber awareness, personal safety, mental resilience, and understanding of traumatic events.”

The founding story of Tactical Self Rescue stems

from a vital community need for individuals and organizations to become more self-reliant and secure. Drawing from a thirty-year career as a Police Officer and retiring as a Police Captain, Matthew Moriarty founded the organization on one core principle: to educate people to be ready, not afraid. Recognizing that proper information and preparation can mitigate or entirely avoid high-stress incidents, the company focuses on proactive risk avoidance and confident decision-making. Working alongside Chief Operating Officer Michelle Moriarty, the leadership team ensures the overarching mission remains focused on empowering individuals to take control of their own safety.

What makes this consultancy truly unique is the extensive practical experience of its diverse training team. Led by seasoned law enforcement leadership, the instructor cadre includes military veterans, cyber specialists, martial arts experts, and mental health professionals. Through expert-led seminars, this team brings unmatched real-world experience into the corporate training environment. They work directly with clients to reduce fear, limit liability, and foster a workplace culture of

preparedness and clarity.

At Greater Holyoke Chamber we recognize that we are in a world where crises can strike unexpectedly, being prepared is the ultimate defense. Investing in Your Workforce: Training, Safety & Retention means prioritizing the well-being of your team. As a small business owner, you’re often wearing the HR hat, but employee safety and training are easy to overlook.

We are providing some great opportunities to access steps towards enhanced employee well-being and training! Join us for practical sessions on how investing in your team can improve retention, strengthen skills, and support day-to-day operations. Tactical Self Rescue, LLC and Greater Holyoke Chamber welcome you to meet them in person for these sessions. Register Here.

Organizations seeking to enhance employee safety, strengthen response capability, and support organizational continuity are encouraged to integrate this vital training into their corporate wellness initiatives. To learn more about the Employee Well-Being Program or to schedule a consultation, visit the Tactical Self Rescue website today and join the journey to self-reliance.

Holyoke Rotary Club announces ‘Eat Drink, and Be Holyoke’

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Rotary Club has announced the date of the 2026 Eat, Drink, & Be Holyoke, their premier tasting fundraiser and silent auction on Thursday, April 30, 2026. The event will take place at the Holyoke Council on Aging & Senior Center at 5:30pm and will include live music performed by The Earls & Pearls.

Eat, Drink, & Be Holyoke will feature food prepared by Amedeo’s Restaurant & Pizzeria, Day Brook Village Senior Living, Holyoke Hummus, Sweet Baby Rae’s Bakery, Rusty’s Place, Choo Choo, 110 Grill, Pic’s Pub & Pizzeria, Daruma BBQ & Sushi AYCE, and Hamel’s Creative Catering and Summit View Banquets. Beverage tastings will be provided by Quality Beverage. Tasting samples will include craft beer, seltzers, and wine.

Tickets are \$50 and can be purchased at <https://edbh2026.eventbrite.com>.

Eat, Drink & Be Holyoke is generously sponsored by Holyoke Medical Center; anonymous donors; D & S Plating Co.; Marcotte Ford; Brunault, Proulx & McGuinness; Greenfield and Northampton Cooperative Bank; Meyers Brothers

Kalicka, P.C.; The Dowd Agencies, LLC; and The Greater Holyoke YMCA.

The Holyoke Rotary Club is still identifying additional event sponsors, as well as food vendors. Local businesses interested in supporting and collaborating together with the Holyoke Rotary Club for this event are encouraged to visit www.holyokerotary.com.

Proceeds will go towards supporting Rotary projects, mostly within the Holyoke Rotary district of Holyoke, South Hadley, and Granby, Mass. Ongoing Holyoke Rotary projects include providing several annual scholarships, providing food for those in need through community collaborations, and fostering community engagement with free summer concerts, as well as funding international clean water initiatives.

Since 2008 the Holyoke Rotary Club has raised over \$150,000 to fund various projects, including the Miracle League of Western Massachusetts Inclusive Playground at Kennedy Field, the media room at the Holyoke Library, K-9 vests for the Holyoke Police Department, and literacy projects with Kelly School and Holyoke Boys’ and Girls’ Club, among others.

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Saturday, April 11th Jack & His Guitar	Saturday, April 18th Dee Reilly	Saturday, April 25th Frank Serafino
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National Day of Prayer at City Hall on May 7

HOLYOKE – Mayor Joshua A. Garcia will host the 75th annual observance of the National Day of Prayer on Thursday, May 7, at noon outside City Hall. The mayor will be joined by faith leaders, congregations, and City Officials. The public is invited.

The idea of a National Day of Prayer came up in 1775, when the Continental Congress designated a time for prayer in forming a new nation. In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln called for such a day. In 1952, Congress

established the National Day of Prayer as an annual event. It was signed into law by President Truman. The National Day of Prayer was established as the first Thursday of May each year.

The 2026 National Day of Prayer theme is “Glorify God Among the Nations — Seeking Him in All Generations,” based on 1 Chronicles 16.

This 75th annual observance will focus on uniting generations in prayer on the 250th anniversary of the nation’s founding.

Library hosting mini-golf

HOLYOKE – Come to the Holyoke Public Library on Saturday, May 2 from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. to participate in mini-golf and games. The free event is sponsored by People’s Bank

and there will be 18 holes of mini-golf on all floors of the library and more games outside. You can win prizes at the lucky ticket auction. Come have fun and support the library.

Cliff Kerr to hold book signing

HOLYOKE – On Sunday April 12 starting at 1 p.m. author Cliff Kerr will be signing copies of his memoir; *One Drop Identity: A Memoir in Black & White*, at Barnes & Noble book store located at 7 Holyoke Street. Kerr will happily answer questions about his life experiences. All are welcome.

The new memoir by author Kerr has been released and is now available.

The story, which is set in 1950s Boston, follows the story of a light-skinned boy spending his childhood in a fatherless home during a time of strong racial and social divisions. The memoir explores how racial identity in a society defines individuals by skin color and cultural background.

In this narrative, Kerr recounts his early life growing up in Roxbury, Massachusetts, where he experienced both the isolation of being racially ambiguous and the emotional weight of not fitting into a clear category. He spent his

time reading history books in isolation and learning life skills at camp during summers. The book traces his journey of personal growth shaped by exclusion and self-discovery.

Speaking about the motivations behind the memoir, Kerr shared, “My memoir is my life story about being descended from Jamaican slavery and being not white enough or black enough to fit the label assigned to me by my so-called superiors. As I reach the final years of my life, I have learned to accept myself and to appreciate the fact that no matter how difficult my life has been, there are millions of people who have been less fortunate.”

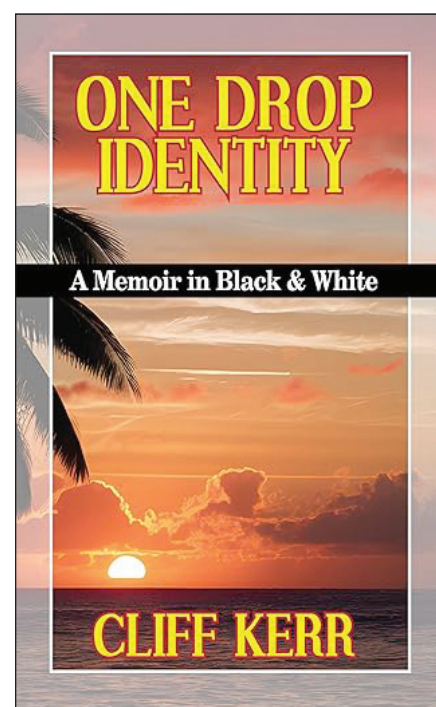
The memoir offers a candid look at the challenges of growing up between social and racial boundaries. It reflects on how identity is formed through community and family but also through solitude. The author’s story speaks about the challenges of belonging in a world that

values labels over individuals.

One Drop Identity: A Memoir in Black & White is currently available on Amazon in both print and digital formats.



Cliff Kerr



Raised in Roxbury, the author reflects on a childhood marked by isolation, racial ambiguity, and emotional survival. Growing up in a fatherless home, he found refuge in books, nature, and summer camp experiences that nurtured

resilience and self-reliance. With a quiet intensity and sharp observational eye, he shares deeply personal stories that explore identity, belonging, and the silent shaping of character in a world that often misunderstood him.

MiraVista to host family-friendly hiring event

HOLYOKE – MiraVista Behavioral Health Center (1233 Main Street, Holyoke) is inviting Registered Nurses (RNs) and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) to explore meaningful career opportunities at a family-friendly hiring event on Tuesday, Apr. 16, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Recognizing that many nurses balance both professional aspirations and family responsibilities, MiraVista is welcoming candidates to bring their children along. Activities will be available onsite to keep little ones engaged while parents connect with nursing leadership, learn more about behavioral health nursing, and explore full-time, part-time, and per diem opportunities.

This event comes at a time of continued growth for MiraVista, a 98-bed behavioral health hospital serving adolescents and adults

across New England. Since opening in 2021, MiraVista has expanded access to both inpatient psychiatric care and outpatient substance use treatment, meeting individuals where they are with timely, compassionate support. Now, as the organization marks five years of care—and a future of hope, that commitment continues to grow.

Most recently, MiraVista opened 10 additional inpatient psychiatric beds for adults, with further expansion under consideration to meet the increasing need for accessible mental health care across the region.

“We know that for many nurses, exploring a new opportunity isn’t just about updating a resume—it’s about finding the time and space to take that next step,” said Coreen Lord, Director of Talent Acquisition. “By creating a welcoming,

kid-friendly environment, we’re removing one more barrier and opening the door a little wider. We want nurses to be able to come as they are—whether that means bringing their experience, their questions, or their crew. Because when we support the whole person, we create space for great people to find their place in this work.”

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet with recruiters and nurse leaders, gain insight into MiraVista’s approach to behavioral health care, and learn about the organization’s commitment to professional growth, stability, and team support.

For those unable to attend the event, MiraVista encourages nurses to connect directly to explore current openings and future opportunities. Please reach out to Alicia Morel, Talent Acquisition Specialist at amorel@miravistabhccare.

Culinary Arts program hosting open house

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College will host an open house and free community tasting event on Wednesday, April 15, from 4 to 6 p.m. at the HCC MGM Culinary Arts Institute, 164 Race St.

Visitors will be able tour the state-of-the-art kitchens at the college’s culinary arts facility, sample dishes prepared by culinary arts students and faculty, learn about the college’s culinary arts certificate and associate degree programs, noncred-

it job training and personal enrichment classes, and play Food Bash Bingo for a chance to win prizes.

Visitors will have the opportunity to talk to representatives from HCC programs including: Admissions, Mariab Adult Learner Success Center, HCC Foundation, Alumni Relations, Thrive Center and Food Pantry, El Centro, ALANA Men in Motion, and Jumpstart, as well as personnel from area community groups, including

Tech Foundry/Tech Hub, United Way, Alzheimer’s Organization, and Holyoke Medical Center.

Staff from the HCC Admissions office will also be on hand to discuss enrollment options, including MassEducate and MassReconnect, the state programs for free community college.

For more information about HCC’s Culinary Arts program, please visit hcc.edu/culinary or send an email to CAI@hcc.edu.

‘The Victorian Lady’ presentation: Fan Language

HOLYOKE – Wistariahurst Museum is excited to welcome historic performer Kandie Carle – *The Victorian Lady* – for a presentation on fan language in the Victorian era. This performance is scheduled during the opening reception of the exhibit *Fans, Fashion, and Feminism*. This exhibit showcases Wistariahurst’s collection of hand fans and garments from the Victorian era to the early 20th century. Carle’s performance will add to the narrative of this exhibit, showing visitors the secret language of the Victorian hand fan.

Kandie Carle has been working in the theatre for over 35 years as an actress, dancer, singer, and director, throughout the US and abroad. She has experience both on stage and researching social history and fashion. Ms. Carle is based in East Haddam, CT, and serves as the Producing Artistic Director of the East Haddam Stage Company.

She also tours throughout the country as *The Victorian Lady*.

Carle created *The Victorian Lady* to share her passion for history, culture, and social reflection. She has performed at venues including historical societies throughout New England and beyond, as well as numerous house museums, universities, libraries, churches, and many other public and private organizations.

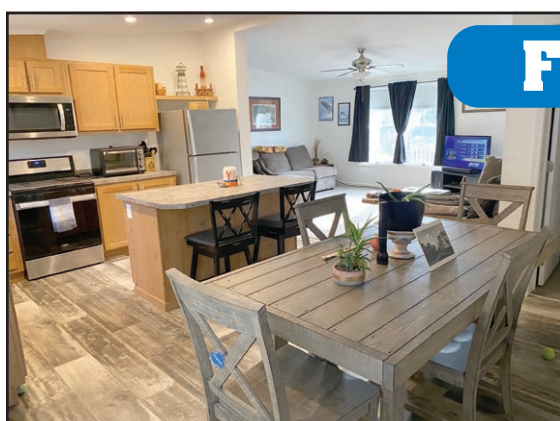
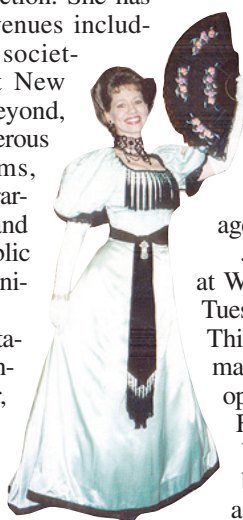
Her presentation is not a fashion show; rather, Carle dresses from corset to gloves, in authentic as well as reproduction garments she has made herself, taking her audience on a journey of discovery by using clothing and accessories as a tool to reflect the era. During her presentation

at Wistariahurst, she will be dressed in 1890s Gilded Age fashion.

Throughout the presentation, she will share insights into the fashion, lifestyle, manners, and etiquette of men, women, and children. The performance is full of audience interaction and is geared toward audience members of all ages.

Join *The Victorian Lady* at Wistariahurst Museum on Tuesday, Apr. 21 at 5:30 p.m.

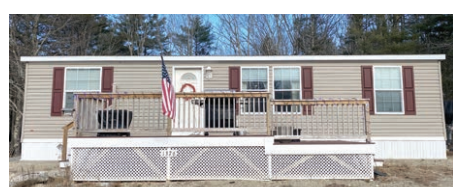
This one-hour long performance will occur during the opening reception of *Fans, Fashion, and Feminism*. Visit Wistariahurst before the performance as early as 4:30 p.m. to explore the exhibit. This program is funded in part by a grant from the Holyoke Local Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.



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Guest Column

SOCIAL SECURITY Matters

By Russell Gloor



I'll be 65 soon and working. Must I enroll in Medicare?

Dear Rusty:

I will be 65 in October and I am working full-time. My goal is to work until age 67, which is my Full Retirement Age or until age 70.

I heard I have to apply for Medicare Part A only. Is this true or will I be penalized? And do I have to go to the Social Security office to do this or can I do it online? And then will they be still giving me my Medicare through the next five years of working or do I have to pay for something? I will have my own healthcare insurance. Thank you for your help.

Signed: Confused

Dear Confused:

There are two things you should be aware of:

You do not need to claim Social Security benefits when you enroll in Medicare

You do not need to enroll in Medicare at age 65 if you have "creditable" healthcare coverage from your employer, "creditable" is a group plan with at least 20 participants.

Thus, it is perfectly okay for you to delay taking your Social Security benefits until age 67 (your SS full retirement age) or even until age 70 when you will get the maximum SS benefit you are entitled to. And if you now have "creditable" healthcare coverage from your employer, you can delay enrolling in Medicare until such time as your employer's healthcare coverage ends. When you stop working, you will enter a Medicare Special Enrollment Period, during which you can enroll in Medicare without incurring a Late Enrollment Penalty.

Whenever you decide to enroll in Medicare or Social Security, you will not need to visit your local SSA office to do so. You can enroll in Medicare either online at www.ssa.gov/medicare/sign-up or you can call SSA at 1-800-772-1213 to make an appointment to enroll in Medicare on the telephone.

Similarly, when you are ready to claim Social Security, you can do so online at www.ssa.gov/ apply or you can call 1-800-772-1213 to make an appointment to apply for SS over the phone. To apply online, however, you should first create your personal "my Social Security" online account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount. Creating your online SS account now at age 65 will facilitate later online enrollment and will also provide you with an estimate of your SS benefit amounts at various ages - e.g., now at age 65, at your FRA of 67 or at age 70. And that should help you decide when it is best for you to claim Social Security.

You should verify with

your employer's health insurance provider that they don't require you to enroll in Medicare at age 65. Most employer plans don't, but some do.

You don't need to enroll in Medicare Part A or Part B now as long as your employer's coverage is creditable. And it's okay to enroll in Medicare a couple of months prior to your employer's creditable healthcare coverage ending when you stop working, requesting that your Medicare coverage starts when your employer's healthcare ends. This will ensure that there is no gap in your healthcare coverage. If your employer coverage is creditable, you will not suffer a Medicare Late Enrollment Penalty for enrolling after age 65.

If you claim Social Security benefits at any time prior to your FRA and are still working, you will be subject to Social Security's Annual Earnings Test, which limits how much you can earn before they take away some of your benefits. The AET lasts until you reach your FRA (67), after which you can earn as much as you like without your SS benefits being affected.

Whenever you claim your Social Security benefits, you will be required to take Medicare Part A, which is coverage for inpatient hospitalization services. Medicare Part A is free because you are also eligible for Social Security. But you don't need to enroll in Part A at age 65 unless you also claim Social Security.

Medicare Part B, which is coverage for outpatient healthcare services (doctors, medical tests, etc.), is optional if you have creditable employer coverage as explained above. You do not need to enroll in Medicare Part B, for which there is a monthly premium of \$202.90 in 2026 until your employer's creditable healthcare coverage ends, even if you claim Social Security earlier.

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

HOW ASTRONAUTS WILL TRAIN FOR RETURN TO MOON...



Guest Column

The ins and outs of forsythia

Each year as forsythia burst into bloom, I am reminded of my dad.

You see, this spring harbinger always blooms right around his birthday. This year would've been a monumental one, as he would have celebrated 100 years!

Although most landscape professionals aren't all that fond of forsythia, it holds a special place in my heart. When it is in full bloom our eyes are lifted away from the still drab lawn and the bare borders to bask at its branches of yellow flowers.

If you are lucky enough to have forsythia growing in your yard, perhaps you

will find the following facts interesting, straight from the archives. Forsythia can be forced into bloom indoors. While it is a little late in the season to fully appreciate this technique, it can easily be achieved now. As long as temperatures are above freezing, you can harvest the branches. Simply prepare them as you would any other cut flower by removing side shoots that

will find the following facts interesting, straight from the archives.

Forsythia can be forced into bloom indoors. While it is a little late in the season to fully appreciate this technique, it can easily be achieved now.

As long as temperatures are above freezing, you can harvest the branches. Simply prepare them as you would any other cut flower by removing side shoots that

vase. Fill the vase with hot water and just prior to insertion recut the end of the stem on a 45 degree angle to expose as much surface area as possible.

We use hot water because it will move through the plant's vascular system quickly, hydrating it fully.

Place the vase in indirect, bright light, and change the water a couple of times a week. Expect blooms in a matter of days this time of year; if you harvest stems in

See GARDEN, page 5

In the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid



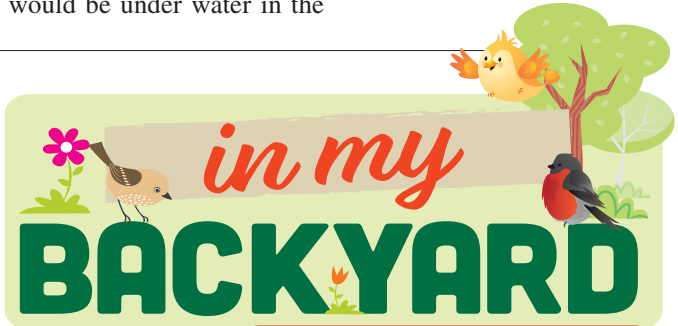
Eastern Phoebe

I saw an Eastern Phoebe on March 28, my first sighting of 2026.

The Eastern Phoebe is a plump songbird with a medium-length tail. It appears large-headed for a bird of its size. The head often appears flat on top, but phoebes sometimes raise the feathers up into a peak. Like most small flycatchers, they have short, thin bills used for catching insects. The Eastern Phoebe slightly larger than a tufted titmouse.

The Eastern Phoebe is brownish-gray above and off-white below, with a dusky wash to the sides of the breast. The head is typically the darkest part of the upper parts. Birds in fresh fall plumage show faint yellow on the belly and whitish edging on the folded wing feathers.

The Eastern Phoebe generally perches low in trees or on fence lines. Phoebes are very active,



By Ellenor Downer

making short flights to capture insects and very often returning to the same perch. They make sharp "peep" calls in addition to their familiar "Phoebe" vocalizations. When perched, Eastern Phoebes wag their tails down and up frequently.

These birds favor open woods such as yards, parks, woodlands and woodland edges. Phoebes usually breed around buildings or bridges on which they construct their nests under the protection of an eave or ledge.

Bring in bird feeders

The Allen Bird Club of Springfield reminds area residents that early spring means hungry bears. If people enjoy feeding birds during the winter, it's now time to bring feeders in at night or to put them away entirely until next December. Black bears have an excellent memory and will return to feeders where they find easy meals. When that happens, bears can become a nuisance. FYI, over 50 million Americans purchase more than one billion pounds of bird seed and suet annually.

An excellent way to feed birds year-round is by planting native fruit and seed bearing plants that provide food for wildlife. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's new citizen science initiative, Garden for Birds, offers regionally-tailored tips on the best plants to choose to help struggling wildlife to thrive. This program is free and participation can be cancelled at any time. Information on how to turn a yard into a bird-supporting habitat can be found by visiting gardenforbirds.org.

Common mergansers

My husband and I saw the male and female Common Merganser diving in cedar Lake Sturbridge in between the ice on Thursday, March 19. They were beautiful.

Brimfield birds

I received an email from a Brimfield resident. He said, "In my last email I had reported a broad-winged hawk seen in the yard. I later was looking at some photographs I had taken of the bird and discovered I

See BIRDS, page 5

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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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.

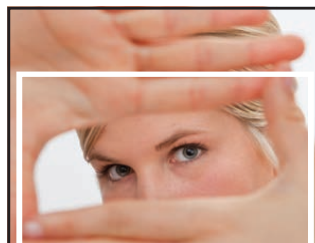
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your health

By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN
Guest Column



Simon says, 'Stand on one leg' for your health

do them on your own, keep you out of assisted living and nursing homes.

Balancing on one leg also significantly increases muscle activity in the legs and ankles compared to standing on both feet. This includes the hamstrings, which is beneficial for stabilizing our knees.

It seems counterintuitive, but standing on one leg even challenges the brain, improving its alertness and motor control, improving posture and maintaining stability.

In addition, when performed with specific instructions (such as focusing on an external object), the exercise significantly activates core muscles, including the abdominals and back muscles, which is vital for preventing and rehabilitating lower back injuries. It's also a key tool for recovering from ankle and knee injuries.

It's even good for your heart and overall cardiovascular fitness. Balancing on one leg is more physically demanding than standing on two, increasing oxygen

demand and metabolic rate.

Doctors can use the ability – or inability – to stand on one leg as a reliable indicator of future fall risks and cognitive decline. “In Alzheimer’s patients, researchers are actually finding that if they’re unable to stand on one leg for five seconds, it usually predicts a faster cognitive decline,” Espiritu McKay told the BBC.

So let’s get going – I mean standing. And we need to start slowly and safely.

If you can’t hold a one-leg stance for more than a second or two, hold on to the back of a chair. Stand upright with a slight bend in your knees and lift one foot off the ground. Lift your hands off the chair briefly, then repeat on the other side. Keep practicing several times a week until you can maintain a one-leg stance for 10 seconds without holding on and without too much wobble.

Then you can move on to other variations. Wear different kinds of shoes, have socks on or go barefoot. Stand on different types of surfaces:

carpet, wood, tile, sidewalks. Focus on an object in front of you, like a clock so you can time yourself. One minute is longer than you think.

Or try it with your eyes closed, which is especially challenging!

The nice thing about this exercise is that you can build it into your everyday routines, such as waiting for the coffee to perk or brushing your teeth before you go to bed.

What else can you do to improve your ability to stand on one leg?

- Lift your knees as high as you can, one after the other, balancing for a few seconds between lifts. Incorporating hand weights makes it more challenging – as well as helping you work on your upper body.

- Sit and stand without using your arms for 30 or so seconds. A dining chair or other straight-backed chair is good for this exercise. (Also works the upper legs and glutes.)

Older adults who work on maintaining strength,

balance and mobility have a better chance of remaining independent, being able to drive and aging in place. In addition, research is finding that older brains that are able to keep generating neurons are less subject to cognitive decline.

Do your body and brain a favor by playing a little “Simon Says” every day.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, R.N., a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. A Monson, MA resident, she is the author of “How to Be a Healthcare Advocate for Yourself & Your Loved Ones” and her new book, “Advocating Well: Strategies for Finding Strength and Understanding in Health Care,” available at Amazon.com. Contact her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com to set up a free phone consultation.

Imagine you’re 6 years old again and playing Simon Says.

“Simon says, ‘Stand on one leg.’ Now, stand on the other one.”

Oops, you’re “out,” because there wasn’t a “Simon says.” But you can be “in” better health

if you can train yourself to stand on one leg for a few seconds or as long as a minute.

A recent article posted by the BBC detailed the positive health effects of being able to balance on one leg. It can improve and maintain balance, mobility and even memory. The thing is, our ability to do it peaks at

around age 10 and then slowly declines with age.

“If you find that it’s not easy, it’s time to start training your balance,” Tracy Espiritu McKay of the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, told the BBC.

Quite a lot of research has backed this up. For example, it’s been found that for older adults, including those with dementia, regular single-leg training significantly reduces the risk of falls and helps maintain muscle strength, balance and the ability to perform those all-important activities of daily living (ADLs). These are the things that, if you can

GARDEN, from page 4

early March it will take a bit longer to enjoy the flowers.

Forsythia buds are tender. While the shrub itself is hardy to Zone 4, the buds are reliably hardy to only Zone 5.

After an especially cold winter you may see forsythia in half-bloom! The tops of the shrub may be devoid of blossoms, but the bottom chock-full. This generally happens because the lower

portion of the shrub was insulated under a snow bank or leaf mound.

Likewise, the blossoms are also tender – sometimes reduced to mush the morning after a hard freeze.

Forsythia flowers are borne on the previous year’s wood. With that in mind, prune as soon as possible after flowering.

Simply cut the oldest stems all the way down to the ground. You can safely remove up to one-third of

the bush in a single pruning session. New growth will emerge over the summer and provide blossoms for next season.

While some books recommend cutting overgrown forsythias down to the ground completely, in my experience, this advice is drastic. The plant will need a couple of years to recover from that approach.

Sometimes you see forsythia pruned into balls or stiff hedges. While some

homeowners consider this look appealing, I like to see the bush a little less tame. It’s also hard to guarantee flowers throughout such a manicured shape; sometimes part will bloom and the rest will be just foliage. Kind of a weird look.

Propagating forsythias is easy! Do you want more of a good thing? Try layering your forsythias. Take a long, pliable branch and bend it to the ground a foot or so from the main plant. Cover the

bend with soil and secure it with a brick or heavy stone. In a few months’ time it will root, and by the following spring the new plant can easily be separated from its mother.

Forsythia is easily grown. Perhaps this is why we see so many forsythias in the landscape.

While it will undoubtedly bloom best in full sun, once established, it can tolerate all but the driest of soils and adapts to a range in pH.

Also, it is bothered by few pests or diseases.

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 34 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.



BIRDS, from page 4

was wrong, the bird was a red-shouldered hawk. Also it would have been very early for a broad-wing.”

He saw crows, blue jays and a red-shouldered hawk on his trail camera as well as raccoons and an opossum.

He also has eight goldfinch visiting regularly. He said, “For most of the winter we have only seen one or two at the feeders. One was starting to show some yellow plumage.”

He puts out a coffee can of whole peanuts every day in a tray. He said, “Blue jays, titmice and an occasional red-bellied woodpecker take the peanuts that are usually gone within a couple of hours. Lately the peanuts have been lasting two or three days and I haven’t seen any blue jays.” He also noted it is “A sign of spring, the chipmunks are out and about and the daffodil leaves have started to emerge, hooray.”

Goldfinches

I received an email from a Worthington resident. He said, “Around mid-February each year my bird feeders are inundated by a flock or maybe flocks of goldfinches in their drab winter colorations. It’s amazing how many flit in and out of my feeders. And, when the goldfinches come, they are joined by an equally large flock of pine siskins. They must travel together and they look somewhat similar since the goldfinches aren’t yet sporting their bright yellow colors. They usually hang around for a month or so and then move on further North.” He said, “I enjoy watching them at the feeders, the few who decide to spend the summer in Western Massachusetts.”

Bluebirds

I received an email from a Hampden resident, who shared video from a blink camera she installed

inside her bluebird house in 2025. She placed the camera in the birdhouse to keep track of activity and this resulted in two broods of bluebirds successfully hatching and fledging a total of eight young.

She said, “The camera helped to keep the sparrows from establishing a nest and gave us close ups of the bluebird families.” She also said, “Once September rolled around, it was time to clean and sanitize the birdhouse. However, a downy woodpecker found it was a fine place to spend the night. He has continued arriving at sundown and leaving at sunrise the next day. The bluebirds sometimes stop by during the day possibly checking it out for their future nest.” She said, “Our hope is the bluebirds return this spring and don’t have issues with the woodpecker as well as the sparrows.”

People may report a bird sighting or bird related experience by emailing mybackyard88@aol.com or edowner@turley.com or mailing to Barre Gazette, P.O. Box 448, Barre, MA 01005. The Palmer office has a new phone system and I will be getting an extension where messages may be left. I will publish the number as soon as it is set up.

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HCC selects Jessica M. Nicklin as provost and VP of academic affairs

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College is pleased to announce that Jessica M. Nicklin of West Hartford, Conn., has accepted the position of HCC provost and vice president of academic affairs.

Nicklin, Ph.D., presently serves as associate provost for faculty affairs and research and a professor of psychology at the University of Hartford, where she has worked for nearly 17 years.

“Dr. Nicklin is a respected leader in higher education and an organizational psychologist, recognized for her

strategic vision, collaborative leadership, and dedication to student, faculty, and institutional success,” President George Timmons said in an announcement to the HCC community. “She is a proud, first-generation college graduate, and her extensive experience in academic and student affairs will be instrumental in advancing our strategic plan and enhancing HCC’s impact in our community.”

Nicklin earned a bachelor’s degree in psychology as well as a Ph.D. in industrial-organizational psycholo-

gy from the State University of New York (SUNY) at Albany.

Soon after completing her doctorate in 2009, she received an academic appointment at the University of Hartford as assistant professor of psychology. Since then, she has risen through the academic ranks to tenured professor, while also taking on administrative responsibilities as



Jessica M. Nicklin

program director, associate dean of student academic services, associate vice president for student success, assistant provost for graduate studies and research, and finally associate provost for faculty affairs and research, a position she assumed in 2023.

Her role at HCC begins July 1.

“This truly feels like the perfect opportunity,” Nicklin

said. “The shared commitment to both academic and student affairs is what initially drew me to the position, and as I’ve engaged with the HCC community, I’ve been continually impressed and inspired by the unwavering focus on supporting students. I’m excited to join the institution at a moment of strategic planning and forward momentum.”

A distinguished scholar in industrial-organizational psychology, Nicklin’s research focuses on workplace motivation, the work-family interface, and positive psychology.

She is a prolific writer, consultant, and frequent speaker and holds certifications in academic life coaching.

She has received numerous awards and honors recognizing her scholarship, teaching, leadership, and service. In 2018, her alma mater, SUNY Albany, recognized Nicklin with its Outstanding Young Alumni Award.

Outside of work, she enjoys spending time, particularly outdoors, with her family: husband Chris, sons Parker, 8, and Logan, 5, and their beloved pup, Sadie, 12.

Mother’s Day Plant Sale at Wistariahurst

HOLYOKE – Wistariahurst Museum welcomes spring with the second annual Mother’s Day Market being held Saturday, May 2nd, 10:00 am-1:00 pm. This event features a variety of vendors selling locally made products such as art, jewelry, and food. Vendors will be stationed indoors throughout the first floor of the museum. As guests shop and explore, the Brookline Trio will be playing live music for visitors to enjoy. Guests are also welcome inside the Carriage House as well, where they can shop our gift shop, take photos in the carriage, and view the frog circus.

During the event, visi-

tors can also participate in a free hands-on clay experience and cup exchange with Pots on Wheels. The Pots on Wheels truck will be parked in Wistariahurst’s driveway, ready for guests to come on board and get creative. Come make a cup and take a cup home! During the Mother’s Day Market from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, Wistariahurst’s gardeners will be hosting the first on-site plant sale of the season. Wistariahurst has an array of annuals and perennials to brighten up any garden. Best of all, visitors can take home one plant for free thanks to Bank ESB, who is sponsoring this event. There is a limited supply of free

plants, so make sure not to miss out.

Wistariahurst Museum’s Mother’s Day Market offers something for everyone. From plans, to textile pieces and prints, vases, and home decor- you’re bound to find something your parent will love. This event is admission-free and open to the public, so that all can celebrate their beloved maternal figures.

Registration for this event is encouraged. Register on Wistariahurst’s Eventbrite page: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2026-mothers-day-market-and-plant-sale-tickets-1985448051569?aff=oddtcreator&keep_tld=true.

Providence Places holding next concert

HOLYOKE – If you missed our Spring 2026 concert series kickoff concert last month, you do not want to miss this one. Our second concert of the Spring series is on Sunday, Apr. 12 at 2 p.m. in our Mother of Sorrows Chapel at Providence Place. Providence Place is located at 5 Gamelin Street in

Holyoke, right behind the Holyoke Mall. The April 12 concert will include a piano solo performance by Tamila Azadaliyeva featuring a program that brings together works by Glinka-Balakirev, Rachmaninov, Tchaikovsky, Debussy, and Mompou, celebrating the universal language of emotion and sto-

rytelling. This event is free and open to the public with ample parking available, no RSVP is necessary. For more information on the concert or if you are interested in learning more about our retirement community, please contact Katelyn Bacon at 413-534-9700 or email kbacon@providenceplace.org.

AWARD, from page 1

of like fighting against your sister.”

The Lady Pacers celebrated a 44-27 home win in the only meeting of the season between the two rivals.

During the National Anthem, a Chicopee High student became ill, and the start of the varsity game was delayed for about 40 minutes.

The officials assigned to officiate the Holyoke and Chicopee game were Laura Goodreau and Tom Matulewicz.

“After the student became ill, we informed the coaches and players that we weren’t going to start the game until the situation was taken care of,” Matulewicz said. “We also asked the players to show sportsmanship at the highest possible level during the game. None of the players complained about a call and it was one of the best crowds I’ve ever seen for a high school game. I nominated both teams for the sportsmanship award, and I was hoping both teams would win it this year.”

The Purple Knights co-captains this past winter were junior Genesis Rivera, who joined the varsity squad as a freshman, and sophomore Michaela Guzman, who’s a second-year varsity player.”

“In the past we would usually have a senior captain and a junior captain,” Enright said. “I spoke with both Genesis and Michaela a lot during the season, and I thought they did a very good job of leading the team.”

The two co-captains attended the banquet with Enright.

“It feels really good to be selected by the officials as this year’s sportsmanship



Genesis Rivera looks down the court as a play sets up. Holyoke girls basketball won the sportsmanship award this year.

award winner,” said Rivera, who will be a member of the girls’ outdoor track team this spring. “We started the season off slowly, but we gained some momentum at the end. It was a like roller coaster ride this season.”

Rivera, who’s a starting point guard, was the Purple Knights second leading scorer and Guzman was a starting forward.

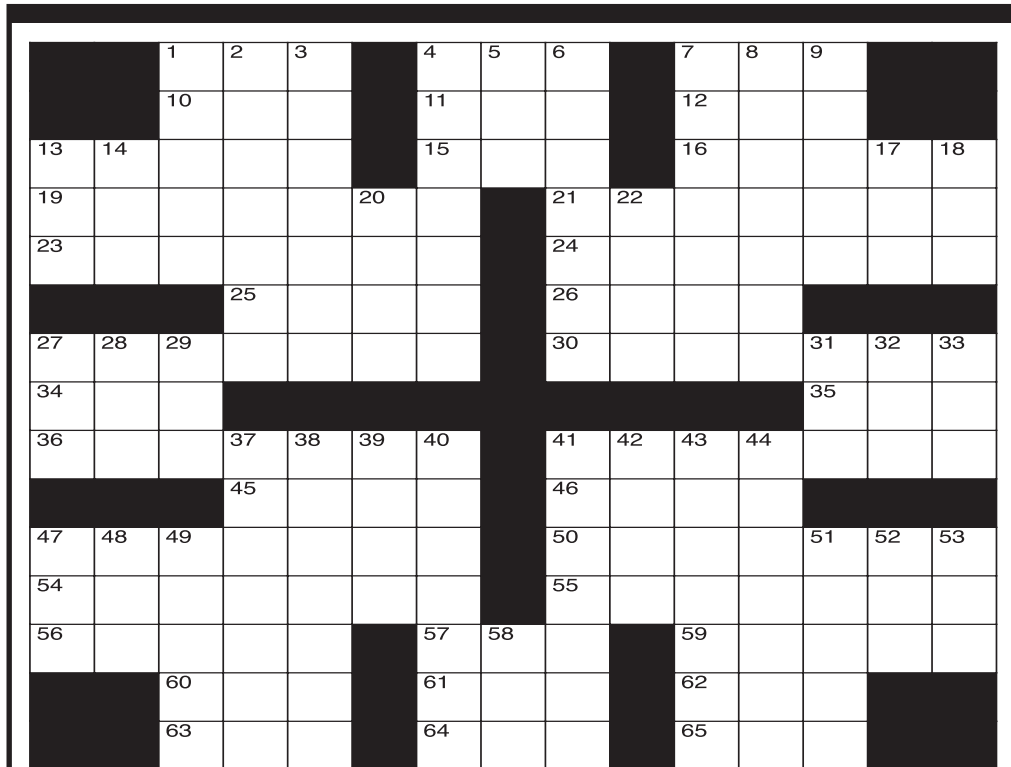
“Our basketball team grew a lot this season,” said Guzman, whose father, David, is the varsity football and baseball coach at Holyoke High School. “I was very shocked when coach Enright selected me as a captain before the start of the season. I really learned a lot about dealing with other people.”

The Purple Knights leading scorer was freshman Julianna Pirela, who finished the season with more than 200 points.

Their only senior is Kyleigh Dorman, who transferred to Holyoke High School from Easthampton High School.

The other members of the Holyoke girls’ varsity basketball team are junior Kyra Lippman, junior Janessa Torres, junior Jasani Colon, sophomore Ishanellys Rivera, sophomore Isabella Lachat, sophomore Sujelyz Peralta, freshman Mya Yates, and freshman Leah Robert.

The Purple Knights assistant coaches are Ashley Ziemba, Sheri Small, Mike Cauley, Ashley Vazquez, and Cass Snopek.



CLUES ACROSS

1. Health care pros
4. A person inhabiting Benin
7. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
10. Split pulses
11. Frozen water
12. Small constellation
13. Perennial mountain rice
15. Pick up
16. Japanese historical period
19. Suggesting the horror of death and decay
21. Unattached
23. Fishing port in SE France
24. Products for dogs
25. One point south of southeast
26. Having the skill or resources to do something
27. Involve oneself deeply

CLUES DOWN

1. A legally binding command
2. General feeling of discomfort
3. Dribble
4. Soft touch
5. South American plant
6. Clouds of gas and dust in space
7. Warm-blooded vertebrates
8. Lines created by folding
9. Strong belief
13. Senior officer
14. Adult
17. Joint entrance examination in India
18. Passports and drivers’ licenses are two
20. Those who go against an accepted authority
22. One point east of northeast
27. Journalist Tarbell
28. One’s mother (British)

CLUES DOWN

30. Immobile
34. ___ pai dong: Hong Kong food stall
35. Move quickly on foot
36. Gathered
41. A way through
45. Another name for Thor
46. Sharp dueling sword
47. The supreme commander of a fleet
50. Seasoned sausages
54. Path
55. Christian hermit
56. Ancient region of Asia
57. Where wrestlers go to work
59. Roman statesman
60. Explosive
61. Licensed for Wall Street
62. Where golfers start
63. Grow old
64. Autonomic nervous system
65. No seats available

29. Nowhere to be found
31. A way to save for old age
32. Fall behind
33. Midway between northeast and east
37. The work of a sailor
38. Mark with striae
39. Energy, style and enthusiasm
40. Sticky situation
41. Monetary units of Spain
42. Three-banded armadillo
43. Chooses
44. More disreputable
47. Defensive nuclear weapon
48. “The Partridge Family” actress Susan
49. Livestock owners assn. in Spain
51. Duplicating machine (abbr.)
52. OJ trial judge
53. Politician
58. Airborne (abbr.)

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 9



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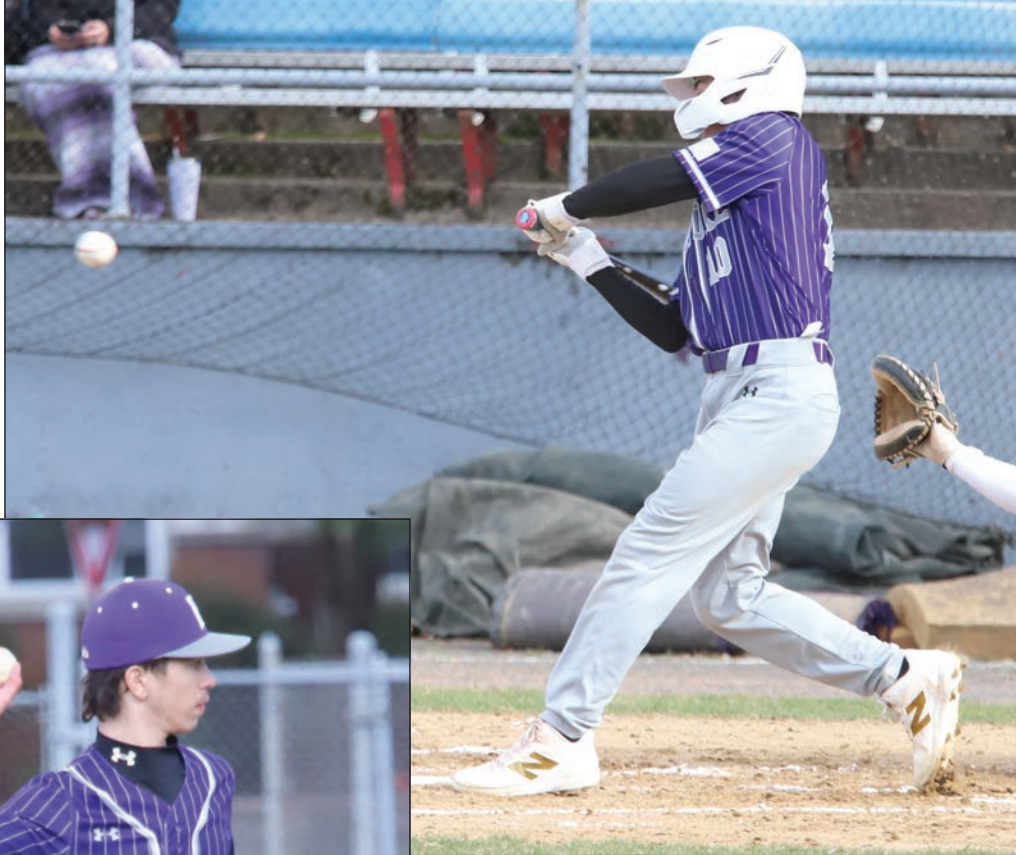
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Knights grab big win over Granby

HOLYOKE – Last Wednesday afternoon, the Holyoke High School baseball team handily defeated Granby 15-1 in a five-inning mercy-rule shortened game.

The Knights got a big game from Justin Rivera, who went 3-for-4 with two RBI. Ryan Greaney had two hits for the Knights and scored three runs.

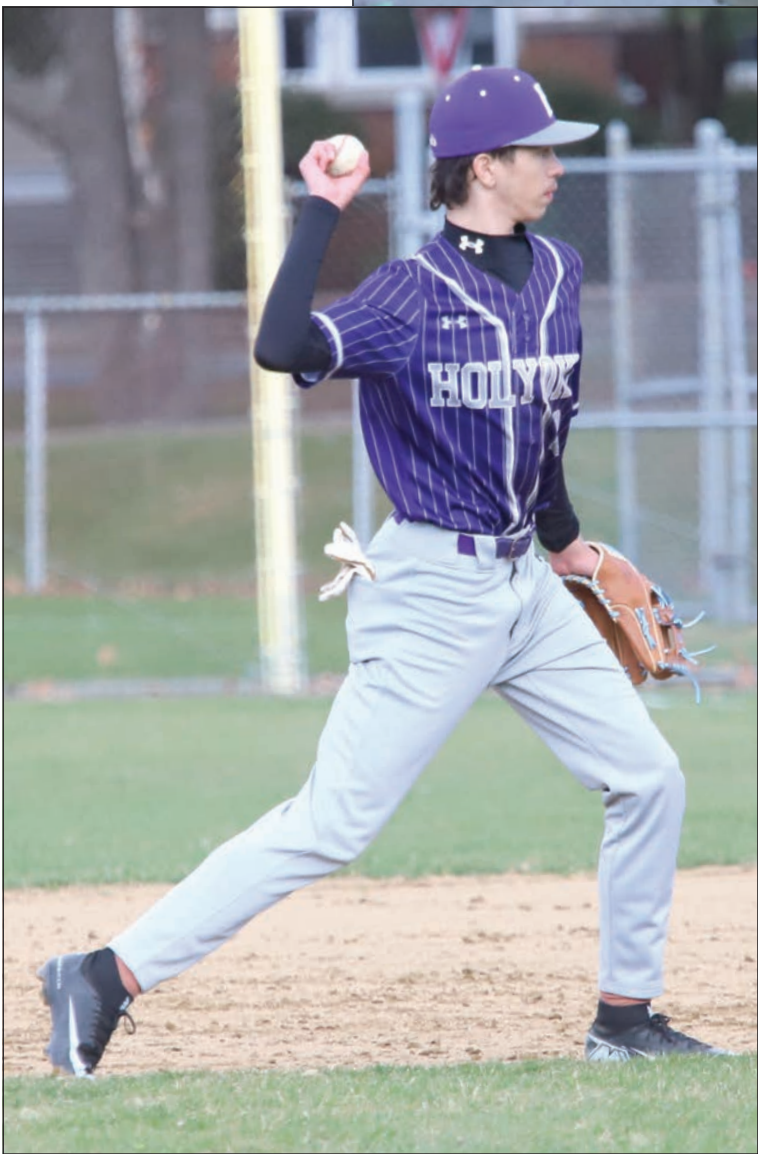
The Knights had a busy week with three games this week and next face East Longmeadow on Monday, Apr. 13 at 4 p.m.



Carter Felsentreger takes a swing.



Justin Rivera rounds second and heads for third.



Ryan Greaney makes an easy throw to first.



Aiden Robinson sends a pitch home.



Nolan Judd puts the squeeze on an out in left field.

Turley photos by Gregory A. Scibelli

Knights swept by Belchertown

HOLYOKE – Last Thursday afternoon, the Holyoke High School boys volleyball team was defeated by Belchertown 3-0 at home. The Knights are still in search of their first win.

Holyoke lost in straight sets 25-18, 25-10, and 25-16. The Knights had a tough time handling Gavin Couchon, who helped to lead Belchertown's offense in the matchup.

Holyoke is scheduled to face Southwick on Friday, Apr. 10 at 5 p.m. They will then host Pioneer Valley Christian Academy on Monday, Apr. 13 at 5 p.m.

Track star signs to compete at Bryant

HOLYOKE – When Yasani Thompson walked into her recent signing ceremony at Holyoke High School North, she did so as a two-time "Super 7" honoree, a MIAA Division 3 state champion, and one of the premier sprinters in Massachusetts. On that day, she hit another milestone in her athletics career: Yasani signed the paperwork to compete in Division I track and field at Bryant University when she begins her college studies this fall.

As a member of the class of 2026, Yasani has collected a wide range of wins: This past indoor season, Yasani won the 300-meter title at the MIAA

Division 3 Indoor Track and Field Championships with a personal best time of 40.59 seconds, entering as the fifth seed and shattering her previous season best by nearly a second and a half. She also swept the 55 meter dash PVIAC Valley Championship in both events. In addition, she earned a berth in the New Balance Indoor Nationals 2026.

During the Bryant signing ceremony in March, Yasani credited her coaches for helping shape as both an athlete and as a leader. She also thanked her parents for their unwavering support and her teammates for pushing her to be better everyday.



Yasani Thompson is headed for Bryant University

Submitted photo

Worcester Railers get in trouble early, suffer loss to Reading Royals on Sunday

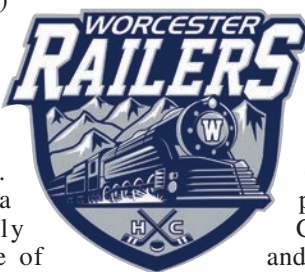
WORCESTER – The Worcester Railers HC (29-30-5-2, 65 pts) fell to the Reading Royals (35-23-7-2, 79pts) on Sunday, April 5, with a final score of 3-2 at the DCU Center, in front of a crowd of 2,788. The Railers will take on the Greensboro Gargoyles at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, April 10th at First Horizon Coliseum in Greensboro, NC.

Reading's Hunter

Johannes (1-0-1) scored 58 seconds into the first for Reading to give them an early lead. Ben Meehan (1-0-1) doubled the Royals lead with a four-on-three power-play goal ten minutes later. Worcester's Case McCarthy (1-0-1) and Reading's Yvan Mongo (1-0-1) traded goals in the second to keep it a two-goal lead for Reading entering the third.

The Royals took a

quick 1-0 lead into the pivotal Sunday game. Hunter Johannes (12th) finished a two-on-one rush down the ice off a feed from Mikael Robideaux. He placed a shot perfectly over the glove of Parker Gahagen in net for Worcester for the early



lead. The Royals wound up on a four-on-three man-advantage later in the period and capitalized to open their lead to 2-0. Ben Meehan (12th) received a perfect feed from Carson Golder and blew a one-timer past Gahagen for the power-play goal. Shots in the

first were tied at six apiece.

Worcester cut into Reading's lead early in the second. Case McCarthy (4th) scored his fourth goal of the weekend on a shot from the right circle to beat Carson Bjarnason in net for the Royals. Reading retaliated and regained their two-goal lead on a bid from Yvan Mongo (4th) that made it a 3-1 lead for Reading. The Railers kept the Royals to

just four shots in the second period while taking 12 themselves.

Worcester notched the only goal of the third period when Anthony Repaci scored with 8.9 seconds remaining to cut the deficit to 3-2. The ensuing faceoff was won into the Worcester zone and Worcester was unable to return the puck down-ice to score in time as they lost 3-2 in regulation to Reading.

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Interested candidates should email holyokewilds9@gmail.com with their contact information and brief work history.

Holyoke Wilds is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or veteran status.

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The Town of North Brookfield is looking for a **part-time Program Assistant** for the Council on Aging. Please submit a resume with a letter of interest to the **Selectmen's Office, 215 Main St., North Brookfield, MA 01535**, or by email to selectmen@northbrookfield.net.

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DIGITAL, from page 1

to provide complimentary high-capacity WiFi to its patrons throughout its community center.

“Comcast has been an incredibly generous and dedicated partner of the Greater Holyoke YMCA, and their continued support has been instrumental in helping us open the tech center,” said Conor Bevan, Chief Executive Officer of Greater Holyoke YMCA.

Comcast’s support is part of Project UP, the company’s \$1 billion initiative to connect people

to the Internet, create digital opportunity, and build a future of unlimited possibilities. This includes digital programs such as Internet Essentials, Lift Zones, and Digital Navigators.

“Comcast is proud of its longstanding commitment to Holyoke and the relationships we’ve built with local organizations like Greater Holyoke YMCA, which are opening doors to transformative digital skills building and workforce development opportunities,” said Carolynne Hannan, Senior Vice President of Comcast’s

New England Region. “We recognize the critical role that the Internet plays in achieving economic mobility and personal growth, which is why we’re investing in partnerships that empower residents to shape their own futures.”

Internet Essentials provides high-speed Internet to qualifying low-income households for as low as \$14.95/month. Since 2015, Comcast’s Internet Essentials has connected more than 801,000 low-income Massachusetts residents to broadband service at home.

Harmony House hosts April 23 All-You-Can-Eat Pizza fundraiser

CHICOPEE – Local nonprofit Harmony House of Western Massachusetts invites the community to its upcoming Pizza for a Purpose fundraiser on Thursday, April 23 from 5 to 8 p.m. at View Street Tavern, 92 View Street in Chicopee.

This family-friendly event will directly support Harmony House’s mission of providing a home with compassionate end-of-life care and companionship to hospice patients in

need. Guests can enjoy all-you-can-eat pizza, along with raffles, a cash bar with local celebrity bartenders, and a 50/50 drawing.

Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$10 for children ages 3–17, and free for children 2 and under. Tickets can be purchased at the door or online in advance. View Street Tavern is generously donating the pizza and space for this event, ensuring that funds raised directly support Harmony House and

its residents. Harmony House is seeking additional sponsors to help meet its fundraising goal. Visit HarmonyHouseWMA.org/PizzaNight to purchase tickets or become a sponsor.



PLAN, from page 1

long time I mean months, not weeks, and the proposed changes might be analogized to household repairs: the sooner you can get them fixed, the better.” Panitch also shared that a summary of the proposed changes, along with explanatory materials and parcel maps, has been posted online by the city, and revealed that Mayor Garcia and the Planning Board was fundamental in finding funding opportunities since the end of 2023, to support the project, which lines up with what the mayor has campaigned on since his first days in office, that zoning efforts has been a key step in setting a clearer direction for Holyoke’s future growth.

“I made a clear commitment to the people of Holyoke that we would update our long-overdue Comprehensive Plan — what many have traditionally known as a master plan — to

guide our city’s future with intention, clarity and community input,” Garcia said. “For too long, Holyoke has operated without an updated roadmap for growth and development. That is now changing.”

It has been reported and publicly noted that the official zoning process will be a lengthy one, set to transpire over the course of 6-9 months, in which several rounds of zoning changes will be brought forth to be reviewed by the city council. At this moment, the first phase currently includes nearly 40 proposed updates, which range and vary from technical and grammatical improvements to incorporating substantive updates that clarify definitions, align ordinance language with use tables, and modernize how the city will approach permitting.

In addition, according to the official summary, one proposal would allow the City Council to retain authority

over special permits related primarily to neighborhood character, while permits that are more technical or dimensional in nature would be reviewed by the Planning Board. Meaning, several zoning districts would also be consolidated. Pivoting to another, it was noted that parcels zoned R1A (a single-family residential designation) would be converted to R1, and then the updated R1 district would adopt the more permissive dimensional requirements of the existing R1A zone. The changes conveyed that this addition was intended to simplify the zoning map and move more parcels into compliance without altering allowed uses, according to comments gathered from the city council.

Upon looking at additional proposals, it was made public that some would eliminate the Residential Office and Limited Business districts, transferring those parcels into an updated Business

General district that incorporates the most lenient standards from the eliminated zones. A separate proposal would also rezone parcels along Dwight and Walnut streets into the Downtown Residential district, showing a sense of shifting organization potentially in the works.

Reflecting on the ongoing process was Panitch, who explained where things stood at this moment, citing the urgency for the public to offer feedback, which would allow proper amendments to be felt in the latest version of the proposed legislation.

“It made sense to get the basic proposals in front of the City Council and the public for review as soon as the drafting work was done,” Panitch said. “The proposal is much simpler than it looks at first glance, but there’s a lot of material there, and most people don’t start off with any knowledge of how the zoning ordinance works or what’s in it. Besides that, we want

and need the public’s help with this review. Because we understand that no first draft of legislation is perfect.” She then added, “With that said, there are going to be spots in the city where there’s (again, for example) a better zoning district for some parcels than what’s proposed here, or further changes that should be considered, allowing public review to bring these moments of awareness to the Council’s attention. Meaning changes to the proposal will almost certainly be made as part of this process, or as part of new zoning proposals,” Panitch said. She then continued her thoughts by admitting, “This is a positive thing; democratic self-government is supposed to give the public a voice, and anyway you can’t make decent public policy without as much information as you can collect. But it is going to be time-consuming, and as I started out saying, the best time to make repairs is as soon as you can.”

Panitch said. Lastly, to quell any lingering questions, that could arise the city’s website shared, “Property owners within 300 feet of any of the parcels proposed to be changes should have or will receive letters informing them of the proposed change(s), the date, time, location, and Zoom credentials of the hearings, the addresses proposed to be changed, and contact information for where they can send their questions or concerns to be added into the public record for these hearings.”

Looking ahead, the date to keep in mind going forward is April 14th, which is when the Planning Department looks to hold public hearings to allow residents to voice their concerns, ask questions, and offer additional feedback for the public record while standing witness to hearing further information from relevant city departments.

Public Notices

CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED PERSON PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, Section 5-304 Docket No. HD26P0659GD Commonwealth of Massachusetts, The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 In the matter of: Nakeyshaliz Colon-Ruiz of Holyoke, MA RESPONDENT

Alleged Incapacitated Person To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by DCF of Holyoke, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that Nakeyshaliz Colon-Ruiz is in need of a Guardian and requesting that DCF of Holyoke, MA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve Without Surety on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate.

The petition is on file with this court and may contain a request for certain specific authority.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 AM on the return date of 04/24/2026. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you

have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person’s right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.

WITNESS, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court

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Financial Services Treasurer
Rebid

The City of Holyoke seeks proposals from qualified financial management and/or accounting firms to provide professional municipal financial reconciliation and governmental accounting services.

These services will assist the Treasurer’s Office in resolving outstanding account reconciliations for Fiscal Years 2023, 2024, 2025, and 2026; completing Schedule A and Balance Sheet submissions for Fiscal Years 2024, 2025, and 2026; preparing documentation required for the City’s Single Audits; supporting the completion of the FY2024 audited financial statements; and training staff in the offices of the Treasurer, Collector, and Comptroller on best practices in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws, the City’s Financial Policies and Procedures Ordinance, and the Massachusetts Treasurer and Collector’s Manual.

Starting on 3/30/2026 documents will be available from morrowj@holyoke.org by requesting electronically. SUBMISSIONS ARE DUE NO LATER THAN 4/21/2026 @ 2PM where they will be received electronically to morrowj@holyoke.org with <Submission for RFQ 2026-40> in the subject line.

This project is funded with interest earned on Federal Funds. Respondents will be verified for eligibility and must be registered with SAM.GOV

The city reserves the right to reject any and all proposals if it is in the city’s best interest. 04/10/2026

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. HD26P0726EA Estate of: John Alan Kelleher Date of Death: 02/21/2026 CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons: A Petition for Formal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Laura Kelleher of Holyoke, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.

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

IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 05/04/2026. 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 CODE (MUPC)

A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administration is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.

WITNESS, Hon. Claudine T. Stoudemire, First Justice of this Court.

Date: April 03, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani, Register of Probate 04/10/2026

City of Holyoke Notice of Public Hearing

The Ordinance Committee of the Holyoke City Council will hold a public hearing to hear a special permit application of Riverside Cannabis for a cultivation facility at 1 Cabot Street (048-01-010). Public hearing will be held on **Tuesday, April 28th, 2026 at 6:30pm** at Holyoke City Hall 536 Dwight St and can be accessed remotely via zoom.us Meeting ID 814 2916 9049 Meeting Passcode 749060 or by call in at 1-646-558-8656 with same Meeting ID and Passcode. For a copy of the application or to provide comments to the Ordinance Committee, please contact City Council Admin Asst Jeffery Anderson-Burgos at An-

derson-BurgosJ@holyoke.org or by phone 413-322-5525.

Ordinance Chair, Meg Magrath-Smith 04/10, 04/17/2026

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION

Swinging Bridges Auction Company Lic #2755 A Public Auction will be held **04/25/2026**. Unclaimed items to be sold at **9 A.M.** Pawn Depot Inc., 448 Appleton St., Holyoke, MA 01040. 20% buyers fee, 6.25% MA Sales Tax. 04/10, 04/17/2026

City of Holyoke Notice of Public Hearing

The DGR Committee of the Holyoke City Council will hold a public hearing to hear a Special permit application of Wrights Block LLC at 106-120 High St (013-01-006) to reconstruct a non-conforming structure to built two egress staircases at the rear for the commercial storefront units into the rear alleyway in footprint of existing staircases per 4.7.3. Hearing will take place on **Monday, April 27, 2026 at 6:30 pm** at Holyoke City Hall 536 Dwight St and can be accessed remotely via www.zoom.us Meeting ID 864 2739 0225 Meeting Passcode 652755 or by call in at 1-646-558-8656 with same Meeting ID and Passcode. For a copy of the application or to provide comments, please contact City Council Admin Asst Jeffery Anderson-Burgos at Anderson-BurgosJ@holyoke.org or by phone 413-322-5525.

DGR Chair, Richard Purcell 04/10, 04/17/2026

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.



PUBLIC NOTICES ARE NOW ONLINE

- 1 Email all notices to notices@turley.com
- 2 Access archives and digital tear sheets by newspaper title.
- 3 Find a quick link to the state of Massachusetts’ public notice web site to search all notices in Massachusetts newspapers.

Public notice deadlines are Mondays at noon, Fridays noon for Monday holidays.

visit www.publicnotices.turley.com

Sensory friendly EGG HUNT

HUNT, from page 1

as a result, directed focus on gentle exploration and comfort to ensure all visitors felt welcomed.

It was also noted that

the museum continues to offer its accessibility efforts, as Seiler passed along that the Museum hosts 'Sensory-Friendly Sunday Funday' events once a month, which are open to all.



Volunteer Matthew Sindell holding the bucket of eggs that were collected after prize redemption,



A group photo of all the event staff and volunteers.



Follow the Pink Bunny trail on the 2nd floor.



Judith Koretz, Volunteer, and Megan Seiler, Director of Wistariahurst Museum, at the front desk, greeting guests.

JUNE 2026

SUMMERfest

Deadline is May 8

Call to advertise 413-283-8393

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Place your ad in New England's #1 Summer Activity Guide

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO

Holyoke Pride to host screening of doc

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Pride Committee is proud to present a special screening of the acclaimed documentary *1946: The Mistranslation That Shifted Culture*, followed by a live Q&A with the film's composer, multi-platinum artist and LGBTQIA+ advocate Mary Lambert. The event will take place on April 16, 7 p.m. at the Holyoke Senior Center.

1946 explores how the word "homosexual" was first introduced into the Revised Standard Version of the Bible in 1946—a translation decision that helped shape decades of misunderstanding, stigma, and harm toward LGBTQIA+ people. Through the work of researchers, historians, and faith leaders, the film traces the origins of this mistranslation and its lasting cultural impact.

The screening is part of Holyoke Pride's ongoing

commitment to fostering inclusive, community-centered programming that encourages dialogue, education, and connection across diverse audiences.

Following the screening, attendees will have the opportunity to engage directly with the film's composer, Mary Lambert during a live Q&A, offering deeper insight into the film's themes of faith, identity, and resilience.

"Bad theology has been used as a justification for discriminating against queer people for generations", says Lambert, "and the religious trauma for so many of us in the queer community is incredibly painful. I loved composing this music. It was life-changing from the beginning—just learning about this documentary that actually found concrete evidence for what so many of us already knew—that God's love is uni-

versal and is not restricted to straight people, and anything that contradicts that truth is the work of human error and bigotry. Can't wait to share it with you all!"

The event also serves as a fundraiser supporting Holyoke Pride's year-round programming, which continues to grow in scope and impact each year.

Tickets are available on a sliding scale with a \$25 minimum. Senior and Student tickets are available at a reduced cost. Get tickets: <https://www.holyokepride.org/1946>

This program is supported in part by the Holyoke Local Cultural Council, a local agency supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency. The Holyoke Pride Committee also extends its thanks to the Holyoke Senior Center for hosting this event.

NOTICE

ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.

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You must be a self-starter with excellent communication and organizational skills. Basic computer skills are required. Previous print sales experience is preferred but we will train the right candidate.

We are a locally owned family business, offers a competitive commission structure, 401k, and health plan.



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 24 Water Street
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 Email: jamie@turley.com

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