

# the HOLYOKE Sun

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## Arrests made in fatal shooting

HOLYOKE – Hampden District Attorney Anthony D. Gulluni has announced that Melquiades Cabrera, 36, of Holyoke, and Melissa Rosado, 39, of Holyoke, have been arrested and charged with murder, in connection with the May 6 fatal shooting of Caleb Rodriguez in Holyoke.

At approximately 9:26 p.m. on Wednesday, May 6, Holyoke Police responded to a ShotSpotter activation in the area of 99 Suffolk St. Responding officers located Rodriguez, 42, of Easthampton, suffering from a gunshot wound inside a vehicle near the intersection of Suffolk Street and Elm Street. Officers gained entry into the vehicle and immediately began life-saving measures before Rodriguez was transported to Baystate Medical Center and later pronounced deceased.

Preliminary investigation indicates the victim was seated.

See **ARRESTS**, page 10

## Seniors invited to check out open house

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Council on Aging & Senior Center will host a week-long Open House from June 1 to June 6 highlighting existing classes (all of which are free to attend), plus new activities and opportunities.

On Monday, the Center will offer free coffee all day, an informational table from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on the services that COA social workers can assist with, and play Chair Volleyball at 1 p.m. Tuesday invites you to check out staff-led exercise classes, Balance & Agility at 8:15 a.m. and 10 a.m., and Osteo Exercise at 9 a.m., as well as Cornhole and Mah Jongg, both at 12:30 p.m. On the same day will be a talk about the Camino de Santiago by Flavio Riesch at 10am. There will also be an informational table about volunteering at the Senior Center from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. Visit on Wednesday at 9 a.m. for Coffee with the Chief of Police, or to join the brand-new Somatic Movement class at 2 p.m.

The Rainbow Supper Club, which meets on the first Wednesday of the month will host Drag Broadway Karaoke (please



Submitted photo

Members of the Holyoke Senior Center will be holding a weeklong open house next week. The goal is to expose the public to what the senior center has to offer.

make sure to register for this event) from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday features Musings on Mortality from 10 a.m. to 12 noon and a demonstration by the Model Train Club at

12:30 p.m. We end the week with the first weekly visit from the Nuestras Raices Mobile Market on Friday from 10 to 11am, and the Garden Club's Plant Sale on

Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Don't forget that from Monday through Friday the YMCA Fitness Room will be open 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., and lunch is served between

11:30 a.m. and 12 noon (be sure to sign up at least a day before). The Holyoke Council on Aging & Senior

See **SENIORS**, page 10

## Ellie Wilson resigns from Ward 7 post on school committee

By **Brendan Rooney**  
Correspondent

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke School Committee said Ellie Wilson is stepping down from her role as the Ward 7 representative on the School Committee, creating a vacancy in her position. The announcement came earlier this week, late Wednesday night.

In the meantime, City Officials, including Mayor Joshua Garcia, shared that they are extending the invitation for interested Ward 7 residents to apply for an interim appointment to complete Wilson's term, which runs

through 2027.

Reflecting on Wilson's legacy was Garcia, who thanked Wilson for her service in a statement, citing her contributions during what he classified as an "important period" for Holyoke Public Schools, as the district continues to exit state receivership and revert back to local control.

"Her leadership and commitment supported our students and families during an important time for the district," Garcia shared.

In addition, the mayor also shared the vision he has for the district, post-receivership, citing, "The work ahead

will require strong leadership, collaboration, and a deep commitment to the responsibilities of School Committee service," he said. "As the district moves through this historic transition, engaged and consistent leadership will be critical to ensuring stability, accountability, and continued progress for students and families.

He then noted the qualifications and criteria the district is seeking in the next candidate for Ward 7.

"It is essential that the individual appointed to fill this vacancy is prepared to

See **WILSON**, page 10

## Mayor sends FY2027 budget to council

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

HOLYOKE – It is one of the most contentious times of the year in the city, as Mayor Joshua Garcia has officially sent his latest budget proposal to the city council.

This will be the first year that Garcia and the school committee have full control of the public schools portion of the budget, which recently funded the newest contract for the Holyoke Teachers Association following a lengthy negotiation.

According to information provided on the city website, the total operating budget is projected at approximately \$213.0 mil-

lion, an increase of approximately \$8.97 million, or 4.40%, over FY2026. The increase is primarily driven by rising education costs, health insurance, retirement contributions, transportation, and other operational expenditures, while continuing to support core municipal and school services amid ongoing inflationary and contractual cost pressures.

The FY27 budget continues the City's commitment to maintaining structural balance without reliance on one-time revenues, free cash, or reserves to support recurring operating expenditures. While the City continues to experience moderate growth in revenues, Holyoke—

like all municipalities in Massachusetts—remains constrained by Proposition 2 1/2 limitations, which restrict the City's ability to increase property tax revenues regardless of inflationary pressures and increasing service demands.

The City's largest local revenue source continues to be the property tax levy. The FY27 budget anticipates growth in the tax levy supported by allowable Proposition 2 1/2 increases, ongoing new growth, and continued investment within the City's tax base. Estimated tax levy revenues are projected at approximately \$73.0 million in

See **BUDGET**, page 10

## NATURE BACK IN ACTION



Submitted photos

The deer are out in full force as photographer Dennis Lee captured this pair during an out last week. Lee also captured what he believes is a juvenile barred owl. Lee said he was able to get close to the creature without upsetting it.

## HCC CELEBRATES CLASS OF 2026 NURSING GRADUATES



Submitted photo

Holyoke Community College celebrated the graduation of 43 students from its Associate in Science in Nursing degree program on Thursday, May 21. The students were recognized during a pinning ceremony in HCC's Leslie Phillips Theater, during which they were formally inducted into the healthcare field as soon-to-be registered nursing professionals. During a traditional pinning ceremony, new nursing graduates light candles, receive their nursing pin, and recite the Nightingale Pledge. The graduates, many of whom are already working, will sit for their exams before becoming licensed as registered nurses. Graduates from Holyoke include Liushka Borrero Ramos, Erin F. O'Donnell, Nicole Ouimet, Judeliz Rodriguez, Melissa Sepulveda and Aidan Stark.

## Plant Sale at senior center on June 6

**HOLYOKE** – The Holyoke Senior Center Garden Club will hold its second annual plant sale on Saturday, June 6, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Senior Center, 291 Pine St., Holyoke.

Shoppers will find a selection of sun or shade loving perennials, plus herbs and annuals that do well in our local gardens.

Members will be available to answer questions about the plants they enjoy.

The sale will be held rain or shine.

Proceeds from the sale are used for projects that beautify and support the Senior Center's gardens. Come and visit our beautiful life-enhancing gardens.

## Holyoke Arts League to be featured at Wistariahurst Museum in June

**HOLYOKE** – During the month of June, the Wistariahurst Museum at 238 Cabot St. in Holyoke will host an exhibition of artwork by members of the Holyoke Arts League (HAL). The museum and gardens are the historic home of the Skinner Family that owned and operated the Skinner Silk Mill, the world's premier silk fabric production facility in the city's Canal District.

We hope you will attend our opening reception and meet the artists who live in Western Massachusetts and Northern Connecticut on Monday, June 1, from 5-7 p.m. This event is free and open

to the public. Throughout the month of June, the exhibition may be viewed free of charge during the museum's open hours, Mondays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and Tuesdays from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

This juried show will include entries in oil and pastel, watercolor, acrylic, tempera, gouache and other non-oil wet media, graphite, charcoal, printmaking and other graphic media, sculpture and ceramics. Light refreshments will be served.

The arts league was founded in 1923 and is now celebrating its 102nd year in Holyoke. The League holds artist demonstrations and

weekly adult figure drawing sessions. For more information about HAL, visit <https://www.holyoke-arts-league.org> online. You may also address inquiries to [holyokeartsleague@gmail.com](mailto:holyokeartsleague@gmail.com)

For more information about Wistariahurst, call (413) 322-5660 or online at [info@wistariahurst.org](mailto:info@wistariahurst.org). You may direct inquiries about Wistariahurst by emailing [munselle@holyoke.org](mailto:munselle@holyoke.org).

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.

## Celebrate Juneteenth event

**HOLYOKE** – On June 19, Wistariahurst Museum and Genuine Culture welcome guests to the Wistariahurst gardens for our annual Juneteenth event, Celebrate Juneteenth! This event commemorates freedom and the country's second Independence Day through community and celebration. Wistariahurst and Genuine Culture are collaborating for the fourth year to bring back this celebration for the Holyoke community and beyond. Enjoy activities throughout Wistariahurst's grounds. Play games in the gardens, get creative with hands-on art projects, and more. There's something for everyone, with activities for

people of all ages.

This event will feature performances including Voices of Praise, storyteller Eshu Bumpus, and DJ Pzo Pete! Local food vendors will also be selling food and drinks for guests to enjoy, including Souper Sweet, White Lion Brewery, and Thai Chili Street Food. Other performers and food vendors are to be announced.

Black-owned businesses, makers, and artists will be selling a variety of locally made items. Local organizations will also have tables at the event, sharing information on their initiatives and what work they're doing in the community.

Juneteenth serves as

a poignant reminder of the remarkable resilience of Black lives, symbolizing the challenges and victories of formerly enslaved individuals striving for unity, education, and political engagement during the Reconstruction period. So mark your calendars and bring your friends and family to Wistariahurst Museum on June 19 from 12 to 3 p.m. It's going to be a day of joy, making memories, honoring history, and uplifting the voices of the Black community in Holyoke. Best of all, admission to this celebration is completely free and open to the public.

This event is sponsored by the Adam's Foundation of South Hadley.

## Electric vehicle chargers added through Mass. Clean Energy Center grant

By Gregory A. Scibelli  
[gscibelli@turley.com](mailto:gscibelli@turley.com)

**HOLYOKE** – Last week, the city announced it was the recipient of funding from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center to install on-street electric vehicle chargers

through the On-Street Charging Solutions Program.

At no cost to the community, pedestal-mounted, on-street Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations have been installed to expand EV charging access across our community, particularly to

renters and residents without private parking.

As a direct result of this program, EV charging stations were installed at the following locations:

- Cubit Building (171 Race Street); 2 ports
- South Holyoke Homes

- (650 S. East Street); 4 ports
- YMCA (161 Pine Street); 4 ports

If you got to the city's website, [www.holyoke.org](http://www.holyoke.org), there are links with user guides to assist EV users on how to use the new charging stations that have been

installed.

There is also a link available for residents to provide feedback on the new charging stations that have gone up.

For additional resources related to electric vehicles, types of charging, and current

rebates available to you to assist with making informed purchasing decisions, please visit our Clean Energy Lives Here Electric Vehicle webpage for details or ask our team of EV experts directly:

Call 888-391-4959 or email [EV@masscec.com](mailto:EV@masscec.com)

## Friends of the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery to hold meeting

**A G A W A M** – The Friends of the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Agawam invite the public to attend their upcoming meeting.

Community members and supporters are encouraged to attend to learn more about the organization and receive updates on The

Friends' ongoing activities and projects. Community input is encouraged. We also welcome memories of veterans you have known or reflections on your own military service. If you prefer not to speak publicly, we will gladly read your written comments.

Event Details: The meeting will be held on

Wednesday, June 17, at the Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., the meeting begins at 6 p.m. For easier access, please use the back entrance to the lower level.

For questions, please contact us via our website at <https://www.agawamfriends.org/> or email us at [agawamfriends@gmail.com](mailto:agawamfriends@gmail.com).

## Dakin names Novak assoc. director of marketing

**SPRINGFIELD** – Dakin Humane Society has named Samantha Novak associate director of marketing, according to Director of Development and Marketing Molly Biechele.

Novak will provide overall marketing, communications, and public relations strategy for the organization, with a specific emphasis on fostering and stewarding corporate and local partnerships. She will implement vision, priorities, and standards for all marketing activity, ensuring alignment across content, digital, design, public relations, and development efforts. In addition, she will be responsible

for translating organizational goals into integrated, measurable marketing strategies that elevate brand awareness, community engagement, partnerships, and revenue.

"Sam brings an exceptional combination of strategic marketing expertise, relationship-building skills and passion for mission-driven work to Dakin Humane Society," noted Biechele. "We are thrilled to welcome her to the Dakin team."

Prior to joining Dakin, Novak was a senior marketing automation manager for Blackbaud, where she developed targeted nurture engagement programs for

fundraising, grantmaking, and data intelligence product audiences, shaped marketing strategy, and executed campaigns.

She also served as a marketing specialist for Performance Food Group of Springfield, MA, where she led negotiations with broker/vendor representatives and managed the end-to-end fulfillment process and implemented campaigns.

Novak has a certificate of Nonprofit Board Education for Corporate Employees and is a Root Cause Analysis Practitioner. She earned a Bachelor of Science (BS) in Marketing from Bay Path College.

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# Mount Holyoke College Summer Theatre to return

SOUTH HADLEY – After a hiatus of 25 years, the curtain is rising once again on an ambitious and exhilarating new chapter of summer theatre at Mount Holyoke College. Mount Holyoke College Summer Theatre will open this summer with two exciting productions, “Agatha Christie’s Murder on the Orient Express” adapted by Ken Ludwig and “The 39 Steps,” adapted by Patrick Barlow. More than a summer stock

company, this initiative is designed as a professional launching pad, bridging the gap between academic theatre training and the realities of the professional industry. “It’s deeply exciting to bring summer performances back to Mount Holyoke College,” said Noah Tuleja, associate professor of Film Media Theater and chair of the Film Media Theater department at the College, and former participant of the original Summer Theatre

at Mount Holyoke College. “Mount Holyoke students will be collaborating with alums, faculty, staff and local theatre professionals as they hone their craft by working on professional theatrical productions.” The Summer Theatre at Mount Holyoke College was founded by James T. Cavanaugh, professor emeritus of theatre arts, at Mount Holyoke College in 1970. Cavanaugh founded the theatre for students who want-

ed more practical experience in acting and technical skills during a summer internship in the department. A usual summer season would consist of eight plays for adults and two or three plays for children. Former patrons will remember that the plays were performed in the round in a large orange and white striped tent. Reviving the spirit of a once-thriving summer theatre tradition, thanks to the support of a generous anon-

ymous donor, this new company will now be staged in the Kendall Sports & Dance Complex. Even though this reimagined theatre will look and feel different from the company under Cavanaugh, it still focuses on being a training ground for the next generation of theatre artists. Students from various colleges and universities will work alongside professional theatre artists, fostering a collaborative atmosphere rich with mentorship and creative

exchange. This company also aims to become a cultural destination for the city of South Hadley, bringing audiences together with a renewed commitment to live theatrical performances during the summer season. With a legacy reborn and a new generation ready to take the stage, Mount Holyoke College is once again poised to become a summer home for community engagement and entertainment.

## Ramos named Vega Fund award recipient

HOLYOKE – Given since 2015, the Carlos Vega Social Justice Award honors outstanding people who, like Carlos, embody a commitment to working on the front lines and making the greater Holyoke community a better place for everyone. The Carlos Vega Fund for Social Justice is proud to name Manuel Frau Ramos as the 2026 award recipient. A professor and scholar with degrees from the University of Puerto Rico and UMass Amherst, Manuel is a long-time educator, co-author on

Puerto Rican youth education, co-founder of El Sol Latino (the only Latinx-owned media outlet in Western Massachusetts), and founder of the Puerto Rican Cultural Project, which helped formalize a landmark partnership between the Holyoke Public Library and CENTRO at Hunter College. His decades of service in education, cultural institutions, and community advocacy have strengthened and amplified Puerto Rican and Latinx voices. This recognition will be part of the 2026 Grant

Announcement, which was held on Thursday, May 28. The Carlos Vega Fund for Social Justice defines the concept as the creation and maintenance of a society and its institutions based on equity, fairness, respect and inclusion of all people. CVFSJ focuses on working with minority communities that align with these values. At its core, social justice means people have simple basics: a decent home, food, and clothing. They also have quality, affordable health care, access to arts and cul-

tural activities, the best education possible to pursue their dreams, and opportunities without barriers. It means having a job that helps them be financially secure and able to plan for the future. Social justice means being able to live without fear, to feel safe and secure in your home and community. The CVFSJ works to maintain the legacy of Carlos while supporting current efforts in the Greater Holyoke area around social justice, youth empowerment and supporting the arts.

## HCC honors students for 2025-2026 achievements

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College is proud to celebrate the students who earned honors and awards for their outstanding achievements during the 2025-2026 academic year. Awardees were honored Wednesday, May 20, during a ceremony in the Bartley Center for Athletics and Recreation. Below is a list of HCC honorees and award recipients for the 2025-2026 academic year. Some students

received multiple awards. A full list of students along with their specific honors and awards can be found at [hcc.edu/awards-2026](http://hcc.edu/awards-2026). Holyoke: Dayshel Allen, Jemima Kitsa, Mishie Serrano, Ivy Wrenne Demetriou, Zoe Bickford, LeJon Gonzalez, Nicole Henchey, Victor Herlemont, Jose Perez, Nicole Rivera, Dylan Rohan, Keilymar Vazquez Negron.

## Ethnic Studies block party to celebrate

HOLYOKE – Students in Holyoke High School’s “Ethnic Studies: Leadership and Action” class will host a vibrant end of the year community celebration on Friday, May 29, from 5 to 7 p.m. at Holyoke High School North. This event is designed to bring together HPS families with children of all ages, as well as community members who are not affiliated with HPS. The event will feature free food, music, inflatable rides, art activities, and a community thrift store offering free clothing and household items donated by staff

and students. Organized primarily by 11th grade students, along with several seniors, the event will reflect what the students have learned throughout the year about community organizing, systems of power, structural racism, and ways to challenge injustice through collective action and care. This year’s celebration will embrace a tropical atmosphere inspired by Haitian, Puerto Rican, and Dominican cultural experiences, with organizers describing the event as having a “Bad Bunny Super Bowl” energy. Decorations and activities will

highlight themes of unity, culture and creativity, including flag-inspired art displays and tie-dye tote bag stations. In addition to entertainment and activities for all ages, organizers hope the event will create a welcoming environment where students, families, and community members can connect, celebrate diversity and support one another.

## Library loaning out tablets to patrons

HOLYOKE – The library is offering tablets for loan to patrons with a Holyoke address and a valid CW MARS library card. The devices are provided through funding from the Massachusetts Broadband Institute. The goal of the program is to expand access to education, workforce training, and telehealth by establishing public device lending

programs. Devices are fully loaded with software. Please call or stop by the library for more details. Tablets should be used to support activity in one of three categories: **Workforce Development:** Allow for jobseekers to build skills that support them in crafting résumés, complete online training, apply for jobs and pursue remote work.

**Education:** Strengthen participation of individuals to complete virtual coursework, homework help, adult education and digital literacy training. **Health Monitoring & Access:** Provide devices for telehealth visits, patient portal navigation, accessing health information and supporting remote patient monitoring programs.

## Golf Tournament to support Wreaths Across America

AGAWAM – The Friends of the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery at Agawam and the Friends of the Agawam Veterans Council proudly announce their Second Annual Golf Tournament in support of Wreaths Across America, a national effort to honor and remember our fallen veterans during the holiday season. This exciting event promises a day of camaraderie, remembrance, and community support. Golfers, sponsors, and community members are invited to participate and help lay wreaths at the graves of veterans resting at the Agawam Veterans Memorial Cemetery this

December. The Tournament will be held on June 28. Registration begins at 10:30 a.m. and golfing starts at 12 noon at Agawam Municipal Golf Course. The costs are \$135 for an individual golfer, \$540 for a team of four, \$30 for dinner only, and \$100 to sponsor a tee. Other sponsorships are also available. To Register or Sponsor, contact Marline Claremont at 413-221-9548 or email [wreathfriends@gmail.com](mailto:wreathfriends@gmail.com). Registration forms are available upon request. Join us in honoring those who served with a round of golf, good food, and great company—all for a noble cause.

## Freedom Credit Union launches Summer Food Drive

SPRINGFIELD – Freedom Credit Union is once again stepping up to support local families by hosting a summer-long food and donation drive to benefit the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. From June 1 through August 31, community members are invited to visit any Freedom Credit Union branch to contribute nonperishable food items or monetary donations. The drive is open to everyone, and donations can be made at all Freedom Credit Union branch locations across the region. The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts has been serving Berkshire,

Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire counties for more than 40 years. The organization distributes more than 17 million pounds of food each year, which equates to more than 14 million meals. Through a network of nearly 200 partner pantries, meal sites and shelters, the Food Bank works to ensure individuals and families have access to nutritious food while also addressing the root causes of hunger. The need is especially acute in the communities served by Freedom Credit Union. According to the most recent Food Access Report from the Greater Boston Food Bank and Mass

General Brigham, the number of households experiencing food insecurity has gone up by as much as 54% in some counties since 2019. The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts also reports that pantry usage has tripled since then, underscoring the growing demand in the region. “Access to nutritious food is a basic need, yet a growing number of individuals and families in our region continue to face food insecurity,” said Glenn Welch, president of Freedom Credit Union. “We are proud to partner with the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts to support their critical work.

This annual initiative gives our members and the broader community a simple way to make a meaningful impact this summer.” In addition to distributing food, the Food Bank provides services such as SNAP enrollment assistance, nutrition education and advocacy efforts aimed at creating long-term solutions to hunger. Freedom Credit Union encourages individuals, families and local businesses to participate by donating what they can throughout the summer months. Even small contributions can help make a difference for neighbors in need.

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

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

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

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Guest Column



## Help, Social Security Administration says I'm not eligible for benefits

Dear Rusty:

Help, the Social Security Administration says I didn't pay enough into my Social Security account, despite being a business owner and paying taxes.

What can I do?

Signed: Self-employed American

Dear Self-employed:

For all potential SS beneficiaries, it is very important to know how Social Security determines if you are eligible for retirement benefits: Everyone including the self-employed must have earned at least 40 "quarter credits" contributing to the SS program, which is usually about 10 years' worth of earnings.

You can earn up to four "quarter credits" per year, depending on your earnings including your net earnings from self-employment. For example, this year (2026) you will get one "quarter credit" for each \$1,890 of earnings, up to four credits maximum for the year.

As a self-employed business owner, only your net earnings are counted, e.g., after all your reported business deductions are taken. The SSA gets your earnings information from the IRS, so SSA goes by whatever information you submitted in the self-employment income tax returns you submitted to the IRS over the years.

If you don't have at least 40 "quarter credits" over your lifetime, you won't be eligible for Social Security retirement benefits.

The best way to further investigate this is to create your personal "my Social Security" online account at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount). When you have done that, you will be able to see how many quarter credits you currently have (apparently less than 40) and determine how much more you must earn to be eligible for SS retirement benefits.

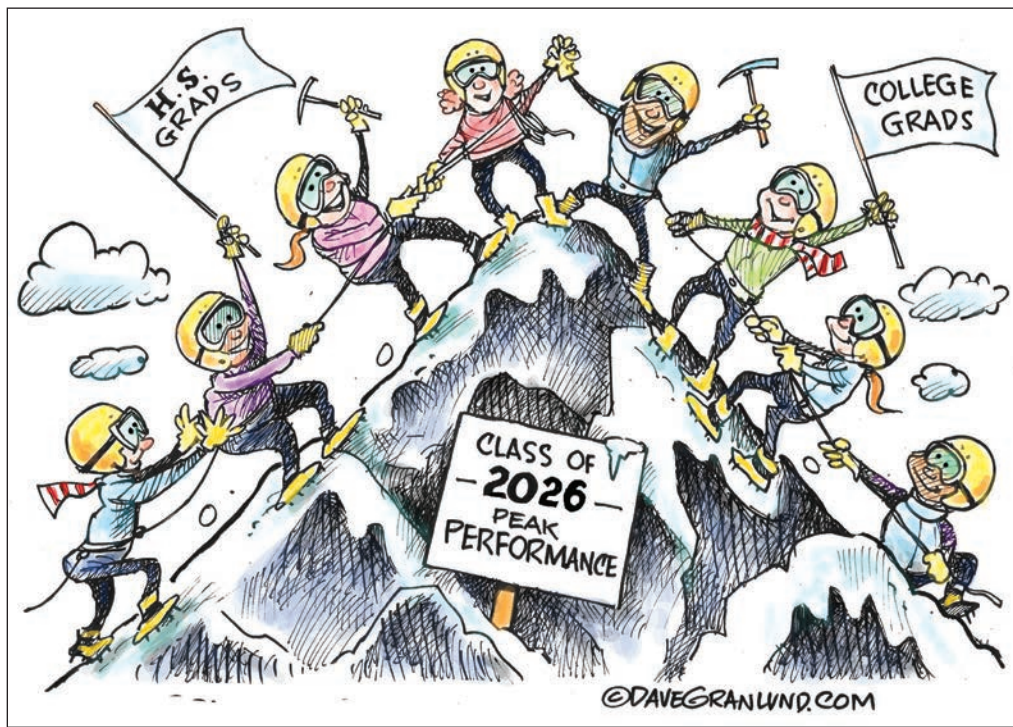
For example, if you have 36 or more credits now, you could likely work just another year or part of a year, to be eligible for SS benefits next year. Knowing how many "credits" you now have will tell you how much more in annual net earnings from self-employment you must have to become eligible for SS benefits.

When you create your online SS account, you will also be able to see your entire lifetime record of your earnings reported to Social Security and you should review that record to make sure that your life-

time earnings have been correctly reported to Social Security.

If there are any discrepancies in your lifetime earnings record, they can be corrected by using form SSA-7008. You can find additional guidance on this at the following SSA web link: [www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10081.pdf](http://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10081.pdf).

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



Guest Column

## The fragrant five

I have fond memories of the patterned herb garden I created at my old house. Gone are the days of having an entire garden devoted to "useful plants."

Now I tuck them in here and there among the veggies in my raised beds. While I harvest some herbs for culinary purposes, most are grown for the olfactory experience.

Here are my favorite fragrant five.

Lemon Balm is a member of the mint family (Labiatae). Look closely at the plant and you will see the characteristic four-sided stems.



by Roberta McQuaid

be remedied with a hair cut, nearly to the ground, after flowering. Not long afterwards it will rebound and once again look respectable in the border.

Speaking of flowering, bees love the white, tubular flowers that appear in early summer.

Botanists of old must have recognized this centuries ago, since its genus name "Melissa" actually means bee!

Lemon balm's claim to fame is not its appearance, or its flowers, but its scent—best described as lemony with a hint of mint. Crush a leaf between your fingertips to get full effect.

See GARDEN, page 5



By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN  
Guest Column

## your health

Approximately 22 million adults age 55 or over live alone in America, with an estimated 28 percent of them being childless. While specific numbers for Massachusetts are not available, this national statistic gives a general idea of the breadth of the solo-ager population.

When Senior Living News interviewed a selection of solo agers in 2025, it found that more than half hadn't designated a health-care advocate or intended to do so. As solo agers are a growing senior demographic, this could leave a lot of people without a safety net should they become unable to advocate for themselves.

Health-care advocates go by a variety of terms: HCPOA (healthcare power of attorney), POAH (power of attorney for healthcare), health-care proxy or surrogate decision-maker, but

they all mean the same thing: It's a person you legally designate to make medical decisions for you if you become unable to make them for yourself. For my purposes today, I'll use POAH.

For people with spouses, children or close-by family, this decision usually isn't that difficult. For people who are aging alone, miles from family or with no family at all, it becomes a decision that shouldn't be made on a fly-by-night basis.

Without a POAH, hospitals and doctors lack clear guidance. This often leads to doctors making treatment decisions based on medical standards alone, which may not align with what you actually want. Choosing a POAH in advance makes it more likely that your wishes, values and medical preferences will be respected.

Before I get into how a solo ager can identify a

## Solo-agers need advocates

POAH, I want to explain the differences between that and a living will, known in some states as an "advance directive." Essentially, the POAH designates the "who" and the living will details the "what": You can say "yes" or "no" to, for example, CPR, resuscitation, intubation or other life-sustaining treatments. You can also designate how long you'd want those treatments to go on before you want them discontinued.

The role of your POAH is not to make the decision they think is best for you, but rather to make the decision you would make for yourself if you could.

That means you want someone you trust, who's willing to advocate for you, can handle stressful medical situations and can be easily reached. So, your POAH doesn't necessarily have to be geographically nearby, but they need to be within a phone call.

What that person looks like for a solo ager varies.

- A private patient advocate: This is usually a board-certified professional with a medical background who understands the situation and whom you trust to act appropriately on your behalf.

- A non-family POAH: You can legally appoint someone who is not related to you. Many peo-

ple choose close friends or neighbors, someone who knows you well and understands your values, or former colleagues who can remain objective in a crisis.

- Professional fiduciary: Under a durable power of attorney, a professional fiduciary is an individual entrusted to act as your proxy for either financial matters, health-care matters, or both, if you become incapacitated.

Because each of these lacks "next-of-kin" status, it's important to make your documentation bullet-proof, and I suggest working with an elder law attorney to develop them.

Your advance directive should be detailed and specific in your treatment goals. Your POAH should be durable under your state's requirements. If your health-care providers use patient portals, make sure your records are complete in order to avoid fragmented care.

What happens if you don't choose?

If you become incapacitated without a designated POAH and have no next of kin, you are considered "unbefriended" or "unrepresented." In these cases, decisions are often made by a hospital ethics committee, public guardian or independent physician, who can only act on what they perceive as

See HEALTH, page 5

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think OUTSIDE of the BIG BOX SUPPORT COMMUNITY BUSINESSES

## 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](mailto:thesun@turley.com). Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered for that Friday's

newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election.

For more information, call 413-283-8393.

### Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the 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*.

# Joslyn Fox to headline Holyoke PrideFest 2026

## More Pride Month events are scheduled

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Pride is proud to announce that Massachusetts drag performer Joslyn Fox will headline Holyoke PrideFest 2026, taking place on Saturday, June 27, 2026, at Veterans Park in downtown Holyoke.

Known for her humor, heart, and unforgettable personality from Season 6 of RuPaul's Drag Race, Joslyn Fox brings hometown New England energy to what organizers say will be the biggest Holyoke Pride celebration yet.

Holyoke Pride has grown from a grassroots

community gathering into a month-long citywide celebration of LGBTQIA+ visibility, culture, and joy, drawing thousands of attendees from across Western Massachusetts and beyond. PrideFest itself has become one of the region's fastest-growing Pride events, featuring live performances, local artists, food vendors, community organizations, family activities, and nightlife events throughout the city.

The 2026 celebration begins with the annual Pride Flag Raising Ceremony at Holyoke City Hall on Monday, June 1, followed by a full calendar of events throughout the month,

including:

- **June 1** – Pride Flag Raising 5 p.m. at Holyoke City Hall
- **June 5** – House of Colors Youth Queer Prom
- **June 7** – Buen Provecho Drag Brunch
- **June 13** – Holyoke Pride Rainbow Run 5K & 1-Mile Walk at Ashley Reservoir
- **June 25** – Drag Story Hour at Holyoke Public Library
- **June 27** – Holyoke PrideFest 12 to 6 p.m. at Veterans Park
- **June 27** – Holyoke Pride After Party 6 to 11 p.m. at The Wauregan

Organizers say the expanded lineup reflects

Holyoke's continued commitment to building visible, welcoming, and inclusive spaces for LGBTQIA+ residents and visitors alike.

"Now more than at any point in recent memory, it is important that LGBTQIA+ people know they are not alone," said Holyoke City Councilor and longtime Holyoke Pride organizer Juan Anderson-Burgos. "Pride is more than a celebration — it is visibility, solidarity, and a public declaration that every person deserves the right to exist openly, safely, and without fear. When communities come together in support and love, especially during difficult moments in our country's history, that

visibility becomes powerful. Holyoke continues to show that our city stands proudly with the LGBTQIA+ community."

Holyoke Pride organizers are also inviting local businesses, organizations, and community members to become sponsors, volunteers, and partners for the 2026 season. According to organizers, sponsorship support helps keep many Pride events free and accessible to the public.

"What began as a one-day event has become a city-wide movement centered on community, creativity, and connection. Every sponsor, volunteer, performer, and attendee helps make

Holyoke Pride possible," said Anderson-Burgos.

Additional announcements regarding performers, entertainment, vendors, and special guests will be released throughout the spring. Holyoke Pride organizers also wish to thank lead sponsor Holyoke Community College and the Holyoke Local Cultural Council for their continued support over the years, helping expand LGBTQIA+ programming, visibility, and community celebration throughout the City of Holyoke.

For event information, sponsorship opportunities, volunteer signups, and updates, visit [www.holyokepride.org](http://www.holyokepride.org).

## GARDEN, from page 4

Another favorite fragrant herb is Anise Hyssop, again a well-behaved member of the mint family. This plant can grow quite tall, upwards of three-four feet, and has lilac-purple flowers from midsummer on.

The individual flowers are borne in whorls that can grow as long as six inches if left to mature on the plant. Bees, butterflies and hummingbirds all love them!

For years I carefully picked the young flower heads and dried them for use in everlasting wreaths and arrangements, now I simply enjoy rubbing the foliage between my fingers for an amazing rush of licorice scent.

If you have ever grown Anise Hyssop you will likely agree that this herb is showy enough for the flower garden. It self-sows a bit, but never becomes a pest. Simply pull up unwanted seedlings.

What would an article on fragrant herbs be without mentioning Lavender? Its early summer flowers are a claim to fame, but honestly, the foliage smells great too.

Probably the biggest drawback to this plant is how it looks (dead!) after the winter has run its course. Don't expect the gray foliage to show signs of new growth until mid-May or even later, and you may have to cut deep within the plant to find it.

An application of fertilizer and lime as well as some extra water for a time will result in spry plants once more. And in the event you are wondering, Lavender is also technically a mint, but it differs from the others in that it is more shrub-like and generally does not die completely to the ground over the winter.

The last two herbs I will mention are annuals. The first is Sweet Marjoram.

I have a hard time explaining what this low growing, small leaved plant smells like. A fine cologne? A pizza topping? A nice smelling bug spray?

As the Latin name of *Origanum Majorana*, suggests, oregano is a close relative, so pizza topping may be a good guess, but it also has undertones of balsam and spice...Hmmm.

To keep the plant pro-

ducing its wonderfully scented leaves, pinch off the flowers as they form. It is a great candidate for growing in mixed herb planters or individually in small pots.

Last but not least is my all-time favorite fragrant herb: Cinnamon Basil. Like its pesto-producing cousin, this variety can be used in cooking, mainly where its cinnamon scent would complement the cuisine, such as fruit salads or vinegars.

I have honestly never grown it for culinary use, but when some herbal renewal is needed it sure serves a purpose. One sniff will give me a burst of energy, enough to tackle that last garden chore. See for yourself!

*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](mailto:pouimette@turley.com) with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.*

## HEALTH, from page 4

your wants and values.

In Massachusetts, the Health Care Proxy is a simple document, legally valid in Massachusetts, which allows you to name someone (an "agent") to make health care decisions on your behalf if you are unable to make or communicate those decisions. You can find it on the Massachusetts Medical Society website, [massmed.org](http://massmed.org).

By proactively naming a proxy – whether a professional patient advocate, friend or other trusted individual – and carefully documenting your wishes, you maintain control over your health care and ensure your dignity is respected.

*Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, R.N., a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of [www.NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com](http://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](mailto:Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com) to set up a free phone consultation.*

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| 16. Indicates position                             | 42. Slang for cigarette           | 6. Protects from weather                     | 39. Consume  |
| 18. Dishonorable man                               | 44. Most cars still need it       | 7. Spanish municipality                      | 40. Swiss river                                      |
| 19. Singer King Cole                               | 45. Political war chest           | 8. Supermarket chain                         | 43. A part of a river where the current is very fast |
| 20. Short-tailed marten                            | 48. Cools down                    | 9. Domain name                               | 44. Categories                                       |
| 22. One point east (clockwise) of due north        | 50. Diminish toward one end       | 10. Semitic peoples                          | 46. Expressed amazement                              |
| 23. The god of the underworld in ancient mythology | 52. Indigenous person of Thailand | 11. Designs anew                             | 47. It's important in respiration (abbr.)            |
| 25. Dirt   | 53. Combined                      | 13. City associated with Jesus               | 49. Greek war dance                                  |
| 26. Superconducting super collider                 | 55. Container                     | 15. Cool!                                    | 51. Bland, semi-liquid food                          |
| 27. Not good                                       | 56. Expression of satisfaction    | 17. Bank employee                            | 54. Regard in a specified way                        |
| 28. A way to sink                                  | 57. Thou                          | 18. Central nervous system                   | 59. Taxi   |
| 30. Unwell   | 58. Return a favor                | 21. Standardized piece of text               | 60. Naturally occurring solid material               |
| 31. Follow orders                                  | 63. Go over once more             | 23. A type of fever                          | 61. Feline   |
| 33. Deep ravine                                    | 65. Removed                       | 24. Baglike structure in a plant or animal   | 62. Post-burning residue                             |
|  | 66. "Silence of the __"           |  | 64. Elevated railroad                                |
|  | 67. Comedian Rogen                |  |  |

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 8

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 Every Sunday at 9 a.m.

# Local photographer featured in Quabbin Mentorship presentation

By Ben Hernandez  
Correspondent

BELCHERTOWN – The Quabbin Photo Group hosted a presentation from local landscape photographer Jamie Malcolm-Brown on May 18 at the Belchertown Recreation Department. The presentation, entitled “Weather, Light and Luck: The Reality Behind the Shot,” described the photographer’s thought process for scouting locations, shot compositions and lessons learned in the field.

“My other job is for an indigenous rights organization called Cultural Survival,” said Malcolm-Brown when asked what got him into photography. “And with the work I did for them, I did a lot of traveling around the world and getting to know different cultures. And that was what got me into photography; documenting those travels.”

Malcolm-Brown stated that his draw to photography was borne out of a love for the outdoors and being outside. He focused further on landscape photography “around 2015,” where he gravitated towards capturing the central and western Massachusetts area.

“I really love photographing the weather with the landscapes, so trying to find lightning or the aurora,” said Malcolm-Brown. “I especially love chasing fog in the Pioneer Valley because we get it a lot and it really opens up the opportunities.”

Mountains are a special point of interest for the photographer. Malcolm-Brown stated that mountains of the Holy Oak range are the best in the region, which offer picturesque opportunities that he described as serene.



Fog rolls over a picturesque tapestry of red-green forest.

“It’s really beautiful in the different ways that it kind of undulates,” Malcolm-Brown said. “Especially when there’s a low fog so that you don’t see Route 9.”

The presentation covered Malcolm-Brown’s methods in getting the right shot, a process that he described as an “arduous journey” that requires an extensive amount of preparation work. Much of his process involves planning the site before the shot, using technology in conjunction with his experience to predict variables, such as the Sun’s positioning over a horizon.

“I use digital tools to figure out when the best time would be to capture a compelling image,” said Malcolm-Brown. He cited that programs such as

PhotoPills are important to his process, as they allow him to track weather patterns and plan shots in advance. “So it’s important to be able to kind of marry those two things together. The technology assists me in creating the images that I want to create.”

Patience was the hardest lesson he learned while growing as a photographer. One of his hardest shots was his photo of lightning strikes down at the Quabbin, which he stated took over five trips to capture. Dedication was another identified key aspect for success. The last bit of advice that the photographer gave was to be familiar with the area and to be open with the possibilities it offers.

“The one thing is to always look behind you,” Malcolm-Brown said. “Look



A sunrise captured over a glistening lake.

Photos courtesy of Jamie Malcolm-Brown Photography

around because sometimes there’s something happening behind you that is more compelling than what is in front of you. Really get to know your area because almost any place can look beautiful and magical given the right conditions.”



A lone lush green tree stands on top of a hill.



The sun rises over a scenic forest.



The use of fog is a common theme in the photographer’s framing.

## Registration is open for Kids’ Fun Week, June 22-26

AMHERST – Kids’ Fun Week is coming to Amherst South Church on June 22 to 26. This weeklong fun-packed summer experience is for kids completing K-5 this spring. It happens from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. daily. Local children, from all faiths and backgrounds, are welcome to attend. The \$150 per child cost includes lunch each day.

Activities will be centered around a “connection” theme, such as “connect with family or community” for example, and will include plenty of art, music, and outside play time. Each child will have the opportunity to learn and have fun, while growing in faith, and learning about our shared humanity.

According to Rev. Dr. Susan Cartmell, who is Amherst South Church’s Pastor, “We are so grateful to

be able to offer this program to our community.”

South Church is an open and affirming, immigrant welcoming, green congregation of the United Church of Christ. This curriculum will have a strong peace emphasis, with experienced local teachers leading the program. Each age group also will have high-school age counselors. In addition, Rev. Cartmell is an experienced bible leader who enjoys working with kids and excels at delivering her weekly children’s message.

Amherst South Church, with both a remarkable church building and meadow behind it, is located on the historic South Amherst Common. For more details on this program, our teachers and staff, or to register, please visit our website: <https://amherstsouthchurch.org/kids-fun-week/>.

## Lions Club seeks sponsorship for car show event

BELCHERTOWN – In an effort to defray the costs (trophies, permits, entertainment, flyer printing, and distribution, etc.), the Belchertown Lions Club is appealing to our local businesses to have an 18” x 24” weather-resistant sign with ground stake custom-printed and prominently displayed on the Town Common during the event on Aug. 8. We will handle the set-up design and printing for a donation of \$100. All proceeds from this year’s car show will stay locally as we sup-

port our Senior Center, Fuel Assistance Programs, Veterans’ Organizations, Scouting America, Girl Scouts, Relay For Life, Aaron’s Day, local Food Pantries, Belchertown Little League, College and Continuing Ed. Scholarships for seniors at BHS and Pathfinder, as well as emergency requests regarding sight and hearing concerns.

Alternately, or in addition to the sponsor sign, businesses can opt to submit an item or gift certificate in any amount to be dis-

played for a Pick-A-Prize raffle -- where attendees can purchase a sheet of 25 tickets...and place as many of their tickets into whichever gift bags they desire.

If you are the owner or representative of a local business and would like to sponsor a ground sign, kindly email Lion Mike Mathras at [mmathras@charter.net](mailto:mmathras@charter.net), and you will promptly receive the necessary information to do so.

If you would like to donate a gift certificate or prize for our raffle table, please get in touch with

Barb Greene at [br123199@charter.net](mailto:br123199@charter.net)

As you consider your donation, please keep in mind that all profits from the sale of food, raffle tickets, and sponsor signage at this event will go directly to the local charities mentioned above.

Stay tuned for upcoming information regarding the “Cruisin’ the Common” Car Show in the Sentinel, by visiting our website at [www.belchertownlionsclub.com](http://www.belchertownlionsclub.com), or by checking out our Facebook page: Belchertown Lions Club.

## Crafters wanted for St. Nicholas Craft Fair

LUDLOW – Crafters Wanted for the Rosary Sodality’s St. Nicholas Craft Fair and Raffle on Saturday, Nov. 14, 2026, at Christ the King Church located at 41

Warsaw Avenue in Ludlow from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The cost is a non-refundable \$40. fee for an 8-ft table, which will be provided by the church. To reserve a

table or for more information contact Debbie Martell at 413-547-8739 or Lorraine Bernier at 413-519-7658. Light refreshments will be available.

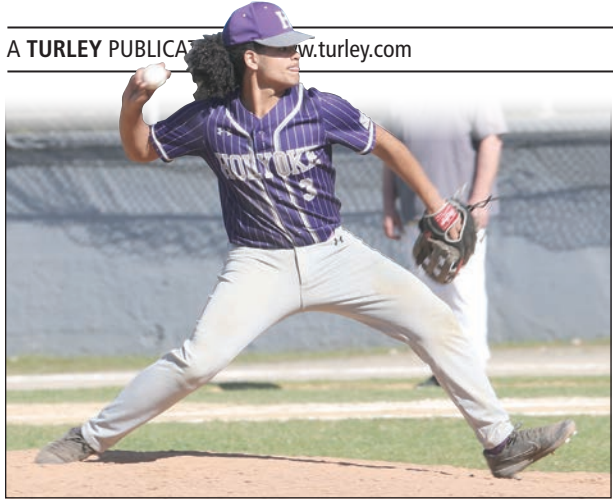
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# SPORTS

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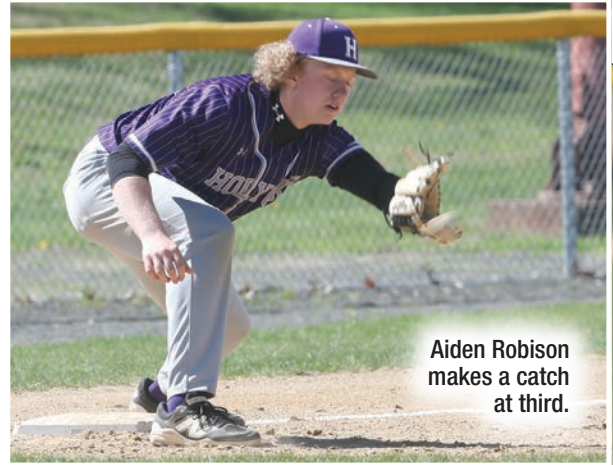
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Joseph Rios pitches for the Knights.



Michael Medina fields a grounder to second base.



Aiden Robison makes a catch at third.



Jeremy Francisco takes a solid swing.



Nolan Judd makes a headfirst slide.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

## Holyoke heads for state tournament

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke High School baseball team is state tournament-bound. Despite not making the Western Mass. tournament, Holyoke did finish the regular season with a 13-7 overall

record. Though strength-of-schedule hurt Holyoke, and they are the No. 43 seed in Division 3. Holyoke was set to face No. 22 Danvers on the road in the preliminary round of the tournament.

## Valley Blue Sox ready for the 2026 season

HOLYOKE – The Valley Blue Sox return for the 2026 season after finishing last season at 20-22 record. Despite narrowly missing out on the playoffs, The Blue Sox ended the season on a high note with a dominant 23-1 win against the Upper Valley Nighthawks in July. The Blue Sox will open up

their season June 4 against the Newport Gulls at home.

The Gulls are coming out of the gates as Regular Season Divisional Champions, after posting a 29-15 record in 2025. The teams last met on a rainy July day in Rhode Island, where The Blue Sox pulled off a 6-5 comeback win in

extra innings.

“Regardless of who we have out there ... [it’s] just creating that kind of sense of urgency from the beginning .. and you want to certainly make a good first impression,” head coach John Raiola said. “Play hard and compete, that’s really what I ask every day, no matter

what ... [and] that starts on June 4.”

Raiola returns as head coach of the Blue Sox after five seasons in the front office as the team’s director of baseball operations. Following the departure of former head coach Endy Morales in pursuit of the Banana Ball League, Raiola

returns to a team that he coached to back to back NECBL championships in 2017 and 2018.

Returning to the same coaching job he first stepped into 11 years ago, one of Raiola’s top priorities is to put a team on the field that is ready to compete.

“It’s not just sum-

mer ball,” Raiola said. “It’s an opportunity for you to put your best foot forward and show that you, in basically an all-star league, can compete against the best throughout all over the country, and show up and do it every single day.”

The Blue Sox offense

See SOX, page 8

## Knights softball squeezes into states

HOLYOKE – Last week, Holyoke High School softball managed to finish the regular season with a 10-10 overall record.

The .500 record automatically qualifies Holyoke to be in the state tournament. And in Division 3,

Holyoke fell in at the No. 40 seed, the lowest seed in this year’s tournament.

Holyoke was matched up with No. 25 Montachusett, also known as Monty Tech, in the preliminary round of the tournament.



Zomaris Robles fields a ground ball.



Lily Tapion winds and fires to the plate.



Alanna Bonilla slings a throw to first.



Samantha Rodriguez frames up a pitch.

Turley photos by David Henry www.sweetdogphotos.com

## HCC golfers set to tee off

HOLYOKE – The HCC golf team is ready to get the 2026 season underway, teeing off with several regular season events during the month of May. The Cougars have won the New England championship each of the past four years and have participated in the NJCAA Golf National Championships in three of those four years.

Alex Gochinski will lead the Cougars into competition, returning to play his second full season. Gochinski, who was also a member of HCC’s baseball team for two years, shot a team-best 88 in the first round of the Golf National Championships during Holyoke’s last appearance at the event. He sank six birdies during that round, five of which came on the course’s back nine. Joining Gochinski are several freshman golfers who look to gain experience throughout the 2026 campaign.

# Sports

## SOX, from page 7

ranked in the top of the NECBL last season but the pitching staff struggled, finishing with a team ERA of 4.93, the eighth best in the league. Raiola, who served as a pitching coach at Western New England University and in the Cape Cod Baseball League with the Yarmouth-Dennis Red Sox, seeks to heighten the threat of Valley's arms.

"One thing that's really important for us, and that I tell [the players] ... is that they leave better than they came," Raiola said. "... You should have something that you know that you need to do and that you don't do particularly well and we should be working towards solving ... so that when you leave, you leave better than we found you."

Raiola spent the 2015-

2019 seasons as head coach of the Blue Sox, and has been the head coach of the Elms College baseball team since 2020, where he's posted a 94-120 record.

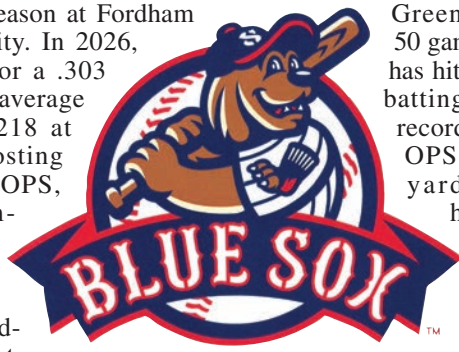
Raiola is no stranger to NECBL titles. Prior to his time in Holyoke, Raiola won a championship as a part of the Newport Gulls coaching staff in 2009, another with the Keene Swampbats in 2011, and made a championship appearance with the Sanford Mainers in 2014.

Raiola has exciting names to work with this summer from all over the country.

Returning for the Blue Sox is infielder Michael Elko. Elko suited up for Valley in 39 games last season, tallying 165 plate appearances. The Texas native earned 30 runs with 34 hits and finished the season off with a 0.252 batting average. A senior at the

University of Richmond, Elko's college season ended with 52 starts and was named the Atlantic 10 Baseball Player of the Week back in March.

Incoming Blue Sox shortstop Anthony Grabau has made headlines in his junior season at Fordham University. In 2026, he hit for a .303 batting average across 218 at bats, posting a .911 OPS, a promising



left-handed bat.

Grabau finished with nine home runs and 38 RBI and earned a spot on Baseball America's College Team of the Week on April 21 at shortstop after an 11-for-21 week where he hit for the

cycle. Grabau has been a defensive anchor at shortstop, starting all 55 games in the position and posting a .946 fielding percentage.

Behind the dish, junior Jacob Dilley has had a monster year at the University of North Carolina Greensboro. In 50 games, Dilley has hit for a .325 batting average, recorded a .960 OPS, left the yard for 10 home runs and recorded 38 RBI.

Dilley has spent less time behind the plate in 2026 but has moved around the field for UNCG, making appearances in the outfield and first base in addition to his catching duties.

Junior Gavin Degnan brings a solid bat to the Valley outfield from the University of Pennsylvania. Degnan drove in 41 over 42 games which led his team, and had a .306 batting average and a .898 OPS to go with it. Degnan went deep for seven home runs and at times was a threat on the basepaths, swiping 14 bags.

Raiola has also assembled a diverse bullpen with a wide range of arms. Coming from UMass Lowell, Jake LeFrancois posted a 2.03 ERA on a little over 11 innings pitched for the Riverhawks, emerging with potential to be a reliable arm for the Blue Sox. Right-handed pitcher Dylan Reid brings some more experience on the mound, logging nearly 60 innings pitched with a 3.77 ERA for Brown University. Averaging 4.9 innings pitched per game for

the Bears in 2026, Reid profiles as a durable arm and can compete deep into outings.

Returning to the mound for Valley is Justin Masteralexis. A Western Massachusetts native, the left-handed pitcher logged over 19 innings for UMass Amherst this past season. Masteralexis struck out 19 batters for the Minutemen and earned Atlantic 10 All-Rookie Team honors back in 2024.

"It's not just about picking the best players and the stats and all that, it's about getting the right guys," Raiola said. "[Seeing] how they mesh together, pull for each other and show up every single day.

The Blue Sox will kick off their 2026 season on June 4 at Mackenzie Stadium in Holyoke. First pitch is set for 6:30 p.m.

# Public Notices

## City of Holyoke Notice of Public Hearing

The Ordinance Committee of the Holyoke City Council and the Planning Board will hold separate public hearings to hear a zone change application from BG (business general) to DR (down-town residential) of Irfan Raheel at 172 Sargeant Street (060-06-001) to allow for second floor residential use. **Planning Board public hearing will be held on Tuesday, June 9th, 2026 at 5:30 p.m. remotely via zoom.us** with Meeting ID 836 3939 8493 or by call in at 1-646-558-8656 using same meeting ID. **Ordinance Committee public hearing will be held on Tuesday, June 30th, 2026 at 6:30 p.m.** at Holyoke City Hall 536 Dwight St and can be accessed remotely via zoom.us Meeting ID 886 8239 2822 Meeting Passcode 994415 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 Planning Board, please contact Brianna Tejada at tejadab@holyoke.org. For the Ordinance Committee, please contact City Council Admin Asst Jeffery Anderson-Burgos at anderson-burgosj@holyoke.org or by phone 413-322-5525.

Planning Board Chair  
Lauren Niles  
Ordinance Chair  
Meg Magrath-Smith  
05/22, 05/29/2026

## City of Holyoke Notice of Public Hearing

The Holyoke License Board will be holding a Public Hearing on **Wednesday, June 3, 2026, at 5:15 pm.** You can join via Zoom.com; ID **83974921923**; CALL IN: \*67 646 558 8656 or in person at **City Hall, 536 Dwight St. in the Old Tax Collector Office Room 6**, regarding the application for a **New Seasonal All Alcohol On-premises License for De Todo Un Poco Restaurant & Bakeshop LLC DBA De Todo n Poco 325 Main Street** pursuant to M.G.L. Ch.138.

Applicant:  
**Todo Un Poco Restaurant & Bakeshop**  
License Board:  
Jose Correa, Chairman.  
05/22, 5/29/2026

## INVITATION TO BID ATTENTION DCAMM PRIME & SUB BIDDERS City of Holyoke Dishwasher Replacement Project

## May, 2026 Bid #2026-57SD

### Dishwasher Replacement Schools

Sealed bids for City of Holyoke Dishwasher Replacement Project, Holyoke, MA will be received on 6/16/26 for filed subs in the following trades: Plumbing, HVAC & Electrical. Submitters MUST have a DCAMM Sub Bidder Certificate of Eligibility. & 6/23/26 for DCAMM PRIME CONTRACTORS, online at ProjectDog.com please reference Project # **874918** until 2 PM prevailing time, at which any Bids received electronically and opened through the Projectdog Platform.

Bidding procedures shall be in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. Chapter 30, Section 39 M as amended. This project may be funded in whole or part with federal funds.

A non-mandatory Pre-Bid briefing will occur on June 4, 2026 at 9:00am EST, visiting all schools and starting at Donahue Elementary School, 210 Whiting Farms Rd, Holyoke, MA 01040.

Attention is called to the minimum wage rates required to be paid for all labor on this project. Wage rates are established in schedules issued by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, in accordance with Section 26A - 27D, or Chapter 149 of the M.G.L., as amended, and the U.S. Department of Labor in accordance with the Davis-Bacon and Related Acts. Said schedule(s) are included in the bid package and the contractor will be responsible for paying the higher of the two rates.

It is the responsibility of the Contractor, before Bid opening, to request if necessary, any additional information on Minimum Wage Rates for those trades people who may be employed for the proposed Work under this Contract.

Materials, equipment and supplies to be used on this project are exempt from sales tax to the extent provided by M.G.L. Chapter 64H, Section 6 (f).

Only eligible and responsible sealed bids on this project shall be received by the Awarding Authority from qualified Bidders submitted on forms furnished by the Awarding Authority and submitted to Projectdog.

The city reserves the right to reject any and all bids.  
05/29/2026

## 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. HD23P2083EA Estate of: Marta Romero Date of Death: 08/23/2023 CITATION ON PETITION FOR ORDER OF COMPLETE SETTLEMENT

A Petition for **Order of Complete Settlement** has been filed by **Order of Complete Settlement of Westfield, MA** requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including the allowance of a final account and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE**  
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 06/11/2026.**

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

WITNESS, Hon. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.  
Date: May 01, 2026  
**Rosemary A. Saccomani**  
Register of Probate  
05/29/2026

## CITY OF HOLYOKE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS RFP 2026-38DPW Professional Design Services for Sewer System Improvements: CSO #7 Sewer Separation (Overflow Stormwater Grant Program) and Additional Sewer Rehabilitation (FY26 Community One Stop for Growth)

The City of Holyoke seeks proposals from engineering firms to assist with two sewer infrastructure improvements projects recently awarded grant funding including through both the Overflow Stormwater Grant (OSG) Program and the FY 26 Community One Stop for Growth Program (One Stop). Work under the OSG Grant Award will consist of the design development of combined sewer overflow system improvements within CSO #7. Work under the One Stop Grant Award will consist of the design development of sewer rehabilitation improvements in seven (7) different locations within the City to support planned development. Areas identified by the City will require CCTV inspections and survey such that plans may be developed to include both sewer lining where possible in conjunction with necessary spot repairs as determined by field investigations.

The selected consultant will be requested to complete field investigations, prepare design documents suitable for bidding, and assist with any permitting required for both projects.

Funding in the amount of \$250,000 is available for the CSO #7 sewer separation design funded under the OSG grant and all work shall be completed by April 30, 2027.

Funding in the amount of \$265,000 is available for the design of sewer rehabilitation work funded under the OneStop grant and all work shall be completed by December 30, 2026. Potential future funding may be funded in whole or part with Federal Funds.

Respondents will be verified for eligibility to receive Federal Funds and must comply with all Federal Requirements including CFR Part200.

Starting on May 26, 2026, RFP documents may be obtained electronically through the City of Holyoke's Purchasing Department by submitting an email request to Jaime Morrow, Chief Procurement Officer, at morrowj@holyoke.org.

A non-mandatory pre-submission meeting will be held on June 4, 2026 at 10:00 AM virtually. Participants may access the meeting using the following link: <https://meet.google.com/jss-iuou-rkx>

Proposers shall provide four (4) hard copies and one (1) digital copy in PDF format of the pro-

posal in a sealed envelope/box clearly marked: "RFP 2026-38DPW PROFESSIONAL DESIGN SERVICES FOR SEWER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS". Copies of the proposed price proposal shall be included within a separate sealed envelope clearly marked "RFP 2026-38DPW PRICE PROPOSAL". The digital copy submitted shall contain two separate PDF's with one marked "[FIRM NAME]\_RFP 2026-38DPW\_Technical Proposal" and one marked "[FIRM NAME]\_RFP 2026-38DPW\_Price Proposal".

Proposals shall be submitted by **June 25, 2026 at 2:00 PM (local time)** to: City of Holyoke - Purchasing Department City Hall, Room 3, 536 Dwight Street, Holyoke, MA 01040.

The City reserves the right to reject any and all submissions, to waive any minor informalities and technicalities, or to cancel the solicitation if it is in the public interest to do so.

The City of Holyoke is an EEO/AA/MBE employer. Women and minority owned businesses are encouraged to apply.  
05/29/2026

## 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. HD26P1112EA Estate of: Michael Soderbaum Date of Death: 03/09/2008 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 **John J Ferriter 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 **John J Ferriter 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 06/22/2026. 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: May 22, 2026  
**Rosemary A Saccomani**,  
Register of Probate  
05/29/2026

## City of Holyoke Public Hearing Notice

The Holyoke Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing on **Tuesday, June 9, 2026, at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom.com** ID: 836 3939 8493; CALL IN \*67 646 558 8656 to hear, pursuant to the Holyoke Zoning Ordinance, Section 6.4.6.4, a Special Permit for an Increase in Sign Size for **Stack- Holyoke & Main, LLC** at 679 Main Street and 689 Main & Beaulieu Street, Holyoke MA (055-00-009, -0091, -009.2).

For a complete copy of the application, contact the Planning Dept, M-F, 8:30-4:00p.m.

Applicant:  
**Stack- Holyoke & Main, LLC**  
Planning Board:  
Lauren Niles, Chairperson  
05/22, 05/29/2026



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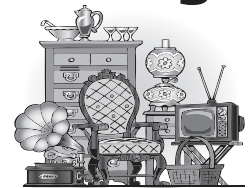
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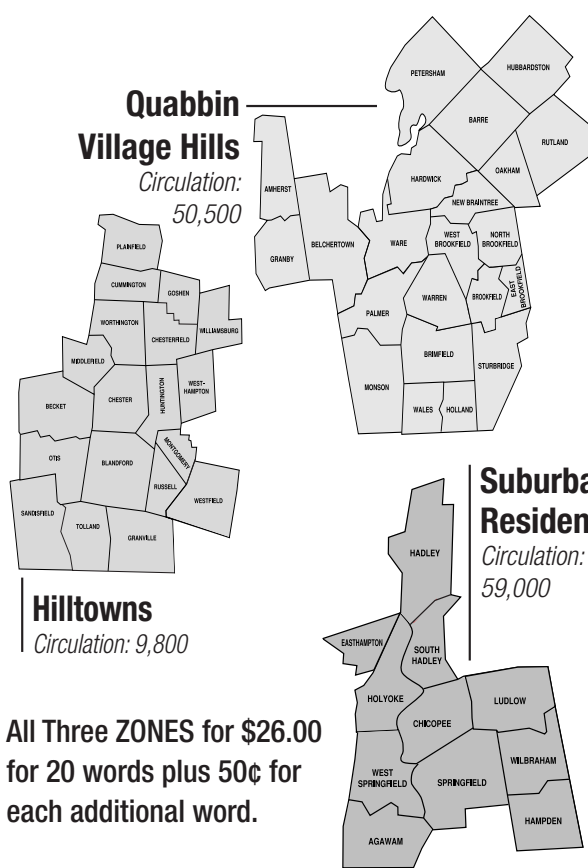
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22	Base Price \$28.50	Base Price \$29.00	Base Price \$29.50
23	Base Price \$30.50	Base Price \$31.00	Base Price \$31.50
24	Base Price \$32.50	Base Price \$33.00	Base Price \$33.50
25	Base Price \$34.50	Base Price \$35.00	Base Price \$35.50
26	Base Price \$36.50	Base Price \$37.00	Base Price \$37.50
27	Base Price \$38.50	Base Price \$39.00	Base Price \$39.50
28	Base Price \$40.50	Base Price \$41.00	Base Price \$41.50
29	Base Price \$42.50	Base Price \$43.00	Base Price \$43.50
30	Base Price \$44.50	Base Price \$45.00	Base Price \$45.50
31	Base Price \$46.50	Base Price \$47.00	Base Price \$47.50
32	Base Price \$48.50	Base Price \$49.00	Base Price \$49.50
33	Base Price \$50.50	Base Price \$51.00	Base Price \$51.50
34	Base Price \$52.50	Base Price \$53.00	Base Price \$53.50
35	Base Price \$54.50	Base Price \$55.00	Base Price \$55.50
36	Base Price \$56.50	Base Price \$57.00	Base Price \$57.50
37	Base Price \$58.50	Base Price \$59.00	Base Price \$59.50
38	Base Price \$60.50	Base Price \$61.00	Base Price \$61.50
39	Base Price \$62.50	Base Price \$63.00	Base Price \$63.50
40	Base Price \$64.50	Base Price \$65.00	Base Price \$65.50

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# Amelia Park Children's Museum announces plans for 'Farm in the Woods'

WESTFIELD – Diane Chambers, executive director of Amelia Park Children's Museum has announced plans for a unique outdoor playscape called Farm in the Woods, scheduled to open this summer.

In 2025, the museum was awarded a grant

through the Beveridge Family Foundation for concept, construction and fabrication of the outdoor play space. The funding allowed the museum to hire Panoptic Design/Build, a museum exhibit designer and fabricator, based in West Springfield to create designs.

The project was also funded in part by the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism with state funding secured by Senator John Velis and Representative Kelly Pease.

"Panoptic is so excited to be working on the Farm in the Woods exhibit for the Amelia

Park Children's Museum, with a community that has earnestly and enthusiastically supported this project. The Farm in the Woods is intended to bring out the best parts of growing up on a farm in New England: Curious observation, secret hideaways, exciting adventures, and

always something new to discover. It examines the place of farms in the broader ecosystem, exploring themes of biodiversity and connectedness with playful interactives. We look forward to visitors coming here for the classic outdoor fun of sand, slides, and garden beds, and return-

ing again and again with their friends and families to keep building curiosity and resilience," said Panoptic designer Terra Fletcher.

Sponsorships for Farm in the Woods are still available. For more information, contact [diane@ameliaparkmuseum.org](mailto:diane@ameliaparkmuseum.org), 413-572-4014.

## SENIORS, from page 1

Center is located at 291 Pine Street in Holyoke and is typ-

ically open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. To see a full listing of ongoing activities, visit the

Council on Aging page on the [www.holyoke.org](http://www.holyoke.org) website, or stop by the front desk to pick up a newsletter.

## BUDGET, from page 1

FY27, reflecting continued stability in the City's property tax base while remaining mindful of affordability concerns for residents and businesses.

New growth remains an important component of the City's overall financial strategy. Continued residential and commercial investment throughout the City has allowed Holyoke to generate additional recurring revenues outside of the standard Proposition 2 1/2 increase. These revenues help support ongoing municipal operations while reducing pressure on taxpayers. Although new growth continues to be favorable, the City remains cautious in its projections to ensure long-term fiscal sustainability and maintain flexibility should economic conditions change.

In addition to property taxes, local receipts continue to demonstrate overall stability across several revenue categories. The FY27 budget includes approximately:

- \$3.55 million in motor vehicle excise revenues;
- \$760,000 in meals tax revenues;
- \$610,000 in hotel and room occupancy excise revenues;

- \$920,000 in cannabis excise revenues;
- \$1.6 million in PILOT and related local receipt collections; and
- Continued revenues from licenses, permits, fees, fines, and departmental receipts.

These local receipts remain critical in supporting municipal operations and reducing overreliance on the property tax levy. The City continues to budget conservatively in these categories given ongoing economic uncertainty and changing consumer activity.

State aid also remains a critical component of the City's financial framework. The FY27 proposed budget anticipates approximately \$13.4 million in general municipal state aid and approximately \$113.4 million in school-related state aid. Continued state support remains essential in helping municipalities address increasing costs associated with education, public safety, infrastructure, employee benefits, and other mandated services.

On the school side, the FY27 Net School Spending (NSS) appropriation is projected at approximately \$125.4 million, an increase of approximately \$4.66

million, or 3.86%, over FY2026. The increase is primarily driven by continued implementation of the Student Opportunity Act, including an increase of approximately \$3.83 million in Chapter 70 aid and an increase of approximately \$820,709, or 5.88%, in the City's required local contribution. Despite declining enrollment, the district continues to experience rising operational, transportation, and special education costs that are contributing to the overall increase in the required appropriation.

**S c h o o l** Transportation: FY27 school transportation costs are projected at approximately \$12.5 million, an increase of approximately \$590,688, or 5.0%, over FY2026. The increase is primarily driven by contractual rate increases, special education transportation demands, fuel costs, and broader inflationary pressures impacting pupil transportation services.

The Holyoke City Council will be debating various parts of the budget proposal over the next few weeks and hope to have the votes to pass it by the end of June. The FY2027 budget must be passed before July 1.

## ARRESTS, from page 1

ed inside his vehicle when an altercation occurred involving the defendants. Evidence gathered during the investigation, including witness statements and surveillance footage, indicates the incident may have stemmed from an attempted robbery.

On Thursday, May 7, investigators from the Hampden District Attorney's State Police Detective Unit, Hampden County Narcotics Task Force, Strategic Action

and Focused Enforcement Unit, and Holyoke Police Department maintained surveillance in the area of Franklin Street and Maple Street, the last area the defendants were observed on camera after the shooting. At approximately 3:40 p.m., investigators observed the defendants traveling on foot to the area of Bristol Place and Commercial Street, where they were detained without incident.

Cabrera and Rosado were both arraigned in Holyoke District Court

on murder charges and are being held without the right to bail. The suspects are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

Cabrera's next court date is June 8, 2026, for a Pre-Trial Conference.

Rosado's next court date is June 9, 2026, for a Pre-Trial Conference.

This remains an ongoing investigation being conducted by the Hampden District Attorney's State Police Detective Unit, Murder Unit, and the Holyoke Police Department.

## WILSON, from page 1

dedicate the necessary time, effort, and focus to the role and to the long-term success of Holyoke Public Schools.

In addition to the revelation that appeared Wednesday night, it turns out that the decision from Wilson went under the radar, as back on May 17, Wilson took to social media to announce her resignation.

"After much thought, I have decided to resign from the Ward 7 School Committee position effective immediately," she shared.

"By doing so now, the School Committee and City Council can advertise and vote in a new member (Policy BBBE), hopefully before the summer, and retreats with our new Superintendent." She then continued her post by citing, "My life has signifi-

cantly changed over the past several months. I am no longer able to dedicate the time required to be effective," Wilson said. However, before she bid farewell, Wilson acknowledged that she's proud of the work she was part of among the school committee, post-receivership. She then closed by noting, "I am proud of the work the Committee does to remain student-focused and support the HPS staff. Thank you for your support over these past years!" she added.

Garcia also provided the invitation to all Ward 7 residents interested in the position, encouraging all to apply and to submit a letter of interest and a resume to the Holyoke Personnel Office, at 20 Korean Veterans Plaza, Holyoke, MA 01040, or email [personnel@holyoke.org](mailto:personnel@holyoke.org). He

then shared that applicants will be interviewed during a joint meeting of the School Committee, the City Council, and the mayor, which is scheduled for Wednesday, June 17th, and those still seeking additional information can contact the Personnel Office at 413-322-5555 or [personnel@holyoke.org](mailto:personnel@holyoke.org).

To note, the Holyoke Sun also reached out to the chair of the Holyoke Public School Committee, Dr. Yadilette Rivera Colón, who is also the Ward 3 representative, and didn't hear back in time prior to press time. We are hoping to have a comment from her by next week's edition.

As of this moment on the district's website, the position for Ward 7 has been cleared and deemed "vacant."

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