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Chester 'Chet' Szetela passes away

Elected officials remember colleague and friend

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

CHICOPEE - Former School Committee At-Large Representative Chester "Chet" Szetela, a beloved community member and dedicated public servant to education, passed away at the age of 88 on Jan. 12.

Szetela served on the School Committee for more than two decades from 2002 to 2024 and was passionate about education, having worked for 40 years as a teacher, counselor and administrator, with 34 of those years at the Chicopee Public Schools. His inspiration to pursue education came from his late wife, Susan, who was a schoolteacher.

During his time on the School Committee, Szetela advocated for school safety,

including training programs to prevent bullying and promote safety preparedness and bringing the presence of school resource officers to the schools.

In October 2023, Szetela received the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, recognizing and honoring him for his impact on and commitment to students, educators and public education. October 18, 2023—the day Szetela received the award—was also declared Chet Szetela Appreciation Day in the city.

Szetela was also a long-time board member of the Chicopee Housing Authority.

Szetela was a father to seven children, grandfather to 16 grandchildren and great-grandfather to four great-grandchildren.

His daughter, Susan

Lopes, has also served as an At-Large Representative on the School Committee, having been on the board since the late 1990s.



Chester "Chet" Szetela

The Tributes
Mayor John Vieau, who's also chair of the School Committee, led the School Committee in a moment of silence on Jan. 21, sharing these words with the members.

"The beloved, really, the epitome of what it means to be a member of the Chicopee School Committee and to care and to have so much passion about the school district and what we stand for, and we're taking that moment of silence in the name of Chester Szetela," Vieau said. "Rest in peace, my friend."

In a post on the Mayor's Office Facebook page on Jan. 16, Vieau also noted Szetela's love for children and impact also helped strengthen student achievement, expanded

Advanced Placement opportunities, promoted curriculum innovation and his work "was never just a responsibility; it was a calling rooted in the belief that education shapes not only minds but also futures."

"As an educator for decades, Chet believed in children. He understood that students are our future, and he devoted his life's work to ensuring they were safe and always supported. His decisions were guided by what was best for students, and his legacy lives on in the countless lives he touched through his service," Vieau said. "Chet Szetela embodied what it truly means to be an educator, role model, and community leader. May he rest in peace. Our deepest condolences and prayers are with the entire Szetela family during this difficult time."

Superintendent Dr. Marcus Ware also paid tribute, recalling Szetela's celebration in 2023 for his lifetime

See **SZETELA** page 3

City Council to meet on SeeClickFix

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

CHICOPEE - The City Council unanimously approved on Jan. 20 for the Public Works, Utilities, Water Resource Committee to meet with DPW Superintendent Elizabeth Batista about SeeClickFix.

Ward 7 Councilor William Courchesne, who presented the order, explained how there's "a lot of issues with the way SeeClickFix is being used and operated by the city."

"So, I want to get some answers and give some clarification on its use," Courchesne said.

Councilor-at-Large Jessica Avery shared how SeeClickFix came up the past weekend during recent snow.

"I had some folks reach out to me with issues and directed them towards that.

I think it's a great tool and resource that the city can use. Not only is it publicly available data, but it's also data that we can track and also keeps communication open and, again, that's a reoccurring theme," Avery said. "So, grateful to Councilor Courchesne for putting this forward and looking forward to having deeper discussion on this."

Ward 9 Councilor Mary Beth Costello agreed with Avery and applauded Courchesne for introducing the order.

"What I've discovered is many people don't even know about SeeClickFix, and as a matter of fact, there was an employee at City Hall today that called me and asked, 'What is SeeClickFix and how do I get on it?' So, this is a great tool. I agree with Council-

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Richard Neal announces federal funding for wastewater project

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

CHICOPEE - Congressman Richard Neal (D-MA) visited the city on Jan. 28 to announce \$1,092,000 in secured federal funding to support phase two of the city's Nitrogen Removal Project at the wastewater treatment plant.

This will continue the city's process of meeting modern nitrogen standards and help maintain the discharge permit and protect water quality in the Connecticut River and downstream waters.

Each summer, elevated levels of nitrogen enter the Connecticut River and excess nitrogen, originating from wastewater, contributes to a process called eutrophication, when excess nutrients stimulate excess algae growth.

From there, as algae breaks down, bacteria consumes the oxygen in the water, creating hypoxia, a condition displacing or killing essential aquatic species including fish and crustaceans. Besides Chicopee, the environmental impact also affects other downstream communities including West Springfield, Agawam, Springfield and Longmeadow.

Phase one of this project was completed in 2022, which focused on upgrading biological reactors, improving liquid treatment systems and enhancing solids processing. For phase two, the focus will be on the primary nitrogen reduction component.

The final phase, phase three, will include comprehensive upgrades and repairs to the water pollution control plant.

The funding was made available through the Massachusetts Clean Water State Revolving Fund and will be administered by MassDEP. It was supported by the FY26 Interior and Environment Appropriations Bill that was signed into law on Jan. 23.

Mayor John Vieau explained one of the biggest problems with the wastewater treatment plant is the nitrogen, expressing gratitude for the funding.

"There's unfunded man-



TURLEY PHOTOS BY KRISTIN RIVERS

Congressman Richard Neal (D-MA) announced on Jan. 28 that the city of Chicopee will receive \$1,092,000 in federal funding to support phase two of the Nitrogen Removal Project at the wastewater treatment plant.

dates to remove that nitrogen level from the aquent that leaves the plant and we've been really focused on that, I would say, more so in the last five years," Vieau said. "This will help us move forward with phase two of removing that nitrogen, and I'll just share, the impact of having nitrogen aquent levels leaving the plant at these high levels impacts the aquatic life not only in the river, but all the way down into Long Island Sound."

Vieau said what it does is "actually remove the D.O., which is the dissolved oxygen," and that not only affects the aquatic life, "but also the passive use of that space of the recreational waters is impacted as well."

"This is a plant that was built in the '50s and it certainly isn't meeting current needs because there were no concerns around the sewers and, I believe, raw sewage going into the river, which impacts the tributary all the way down to Long Island Sound and the goal now is to get into compliance with EPA and it's about removing nitrogen, which is about retention time at the plant," Vieau said. "Holding that graywater longer allows you to get those

levels to where they need to be before we were able to send them off. So, this will help us with those components that we need to operate at the wastewater treatment plant and also to help with meeting those aquent discharge levels."

Neal emphasized "the commitment that we made to clean air and clean water should never be dismissed."

"If you were asked a question, rhetorically, about what singularly had done more to increase life expectancy across the globe, the answer's simple. It's clean water. It transformed the world and these efforts that we've made," Neal said.

Neal also noted the other federal dollars that have come to Chicopee, which were \$39.5 million in ARPA money, \$34.7 million for public schools in ARPA money from the CARES Act and, now, there's almost \$12 million that has supported the wastewater treatment facilities.

"A reminder always—it's almost a civic's mission—that this is a congressional-directed spending appropriation. It's an earmark and earmarks are usually transmitted from a local jurisdiction, like the city of Chicopee. The mayor asked for this," Neal said. "The requests for earmarking, overwhelmingly, come from local government, colleges and universities and our hospitals. That's where the money overwhelmingly goes. Is there a public purpose here? You bet your life. Clean air, clean water."

Neal was happy to support the funding.

"A lot of these issues are pretty technical in nature, and I thought that the mayor's request was right on target," Neal said.

State Rep. Shirley Arriaga (D-Chicopee) noted the city's state legislators list priorities, but also need to be mindful of the burden on taxpayers.

"This is something that is needed," Arriaga said. "Clean water and clean air are vital and, yeah, it costs us millions and millions of dollars.

See **WASTEWATER** page 5



Snow blankets Chicopee in major snowstorm

PHOTO COURTESY OF BARTHELEMY LOUA

It wouldn't be the first snowstorm of 2026 without the traditional making of the snowman.

Community shares photos

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

CHICOPEE - Earlier this week, the first official blizzard of 2026 came as the city of Chicopee experienced close to 20 inches of snow.

The major storm brought power outages, school closures and first responders coming together to assist, and through it all, the community looks to turn the page as the month draws to a close.



Barley and Echo enjoying the snow. PHOTO COURTESY OF KRISTEN L

The Nor'easter was due to a traveling storm that affected a majority of the country, which started early Sunday morning, and carried well into Monday, culminating in a two-day blizzard that stretched cleanup and restoration efforts into Tuesday.

Throughout this, parking bans were also enforced after recent criticism and complaints from residents, with the City Council also approving at their Jan. 20 meeting for the Public Works, Utilities and Water Resource Committee to meet with De-

partment of Public Works Superintendent Elizabeth Batista to talk about the lack of parking ban enforcement.

Assisting throughout the snowy conditions was the DPW, who, despite staffing shortages, put forth a valiant effort that warranted praise from Mayor John Vieau and countless others.

City Council Vice President/Ward 6 Councilor Samuel Shumsky, who posted a comment on Facebook this past Monday centered around offering a sense of everlasting gratitude to the swift response put forth by all first responders and all departments:

"I want to extend my sincere thanks to the hard-working crews at the Chicopee Department of Public Works for their tireless efforts keeping our roads safe and passable, and to Chicopee Electric Light for working around the clock to keep the lights on and power flowing during challenging conditions," Shumsky said. "I also want to recognize our first responders—police, fire, and EMS—who are

See **SNOWSTORM** page 6

IN THE CITY

Labor Secretary visits Western Mass

Also, a visit in Chicopee

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

CHICOPEE - Secretary of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development Lauren Jones visited Western Massachusetts on Jan. 13 for a roundtable discussion on higher education and workforce development and business site tours.

The business site tours were with State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow) and other elected officials at Microtek in Chicopee and TechFoundry in Springfield.

The roundtable, meanwhile, took place at the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts and featured Jones, Oliveira, Western Massachusetts legislators, college presidents, career center and workforce development leaders and higher education and workforce partners discussing how to strengthen career pathways for college students, expanding paid internships, apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities and ensuring equitable access, policy action opportuni-

ties and funding and creating stronger partnerships among higher education institutions, employers and workforce agencies.

Jones explained she had "a wonderful day" in Western Mass, praising the Microtek team for their mission, hiring people with disabilities and their work on an inclusive workplace. Also, crediting Oliveira for the roundtable to learn "how, we collaboratively, can support two-year and four-year institutions and their students who are enrolled," and studying in the state and keep them in Massachusetts.

"And more, in particular, in this region, knowing the needs of employers and linking those needs for the industries and business community to the opportunities that students can unlock while they're studying in the region," Jones said.

Jones said the tours and roundtable emphasized how "workforce is so critical for this region and, most certainly, for our state."

"We have to make sure that we understand the needs employers have and how we can work collaboratively to close those workforce skills and build a strong labor market. We know that we want

to grow the labor force participation in this region, keep talent right here and have that talent live here and be part of the workforce right here," Jones said. "I think this was a great visit for me to be able to take home and make sure that we find more opportunities exactly like this in Pioneer Valley, in Chicopee, in the Greater Springfield area, to recognize what works really well, but also, more of what we can continue to do."

Oliveira noted the importance of Jones having the opportunity to "hear directly from leaders in the workforce training sector," industry partners like Microtek and the higher-ed community.

"When you look at major industries in Western Massachusetts, we've kind of touched on the three major industries. When you look at higher education, which provides many jobs for our region, the healthcare sector that we touched on in all of our meetings and what the workforce development community is doing here. But, also, manufacturing," Oliveira said. "We have manufacturing that is still a vibrant part, a fabric, of the Western Mass employment sector and Microtek is part of it."

Oliveira's takeaways were the partnerships, noting how there aren't many bills on the workforce development side presented on Beacon Hill, so the work involves going out into the communities and meeting with employers and higher education leaders.

"They don't view Western Mass as this distant land that's far outside Boston. They're here regularly and we want to make sure that they know, the people of Western Mass know, that they have a partner in their state government in secretaries like Lauren Jones but also in the Governor's Office. That they understand the challenges that we face out here, but also



TURLEY PHOTOS BY KRISTIN RIVERS

A group photo of State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow), Secretary of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development Lauren Jones, State Rep. Shirley Arriaga (D-Chicopee) and Mayor John Vieau after their business site tour of Microtek in Chicopee.

the great opportunities that exist to grow our economy," Oliveira said.

Oliveira said during the tour of TechFoundry, AI was discussed, including how to incorporate it, along with policy-making.

"Other states in the country are beginning to talk about regulating AI technology, which includes pricing that is impacting the consumer," Oliveira said. "So, now, the state of New York is regulating that type of industry. In Massachusetts, we're looking to do the same thing and so, I think that there are ways that we can incorporate AI into our workforce, but there are also ways in which we need to regulate better so we protect the consumers."

Jones's message was this.

"The Healey-Driscoll administration really values our people and connecting our people to workforce opportunities and we want to make sure that we continue to attract, retain and develop our people for workforce opportunities right here in this region. One of the ways that we can do that is lifting up partnerships with the legislature, partnerships with academia, partnerships with employers and workforce training providers," Jones said. "And to-



An action shot during the Microtek business site tour, with Erin Weinman, executive vice president of Microtek, Secretary of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development Lauren Jones, State Rep. Shirley Arriaga (D-Chicopee), State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow), City Councilor-at-Large Jessica Avery and Mayor John Vieau watched a Microtek employee at work.

day was a great way for me to see how we can do that and how we continue to do that moving forward."

Oliveira stressed the goal of Western Mass legislators is to "always bring Boston closer to Western Massachusetts and know that Massachusetts just doesn't stop at Worcester."

"Our legislators look through everything that we vote on and we look at how does it benefit Western Mas-

sachusetts," Oliveira said. "There are people that live right here that are involved in their state government. Part of the roles that we have as legislators is making that connection with those that are in the governor's administration and in executive office and connecting them with employers, connecting them with higher education, connecting with the nonprofit world, and that's exactly what we did today."



A close-up shot of a Microtek employee at work on the manufacturing floor.

St. Stanislaus School hosting annual auction

CHICOPEE - The St. Stanislaus School is hosting its Annual Auction in March 2026 as an online virtual event.

The Auction begins on March 7 and ends on March 14.

The Auction is to raise funds for a new stage and Performing Arts Fund. During these challenging times in our world, it is more important than ever to have current and relevant curriculum available

in all areas of learning. Our goal is to raise \$15,000 to \$20,000 for our school.

The cost of providing a quality, safe and health environment is higher than ever at this time. Your contribution will help us to continue to provide for the 300 students in our school each day.

In order to reach this goal, we need donations from businesses, parents and individual benefactors. Please consider supporting our event

by donating a gift certificate, monetary donation, merchandise or services. Your company will be listed in the bidding brochure, and your donation will be displayed in the online catalogue for bidding.

We hope you will donate an item or make a contribution to help support St. Stanislaus School where we believe that we should "Strive to be Servant Leaders for Today and Tomorrow."

Please contact Katherine

Rorrio at 413-592-5135 or email ststanis@saintstansschool.org if you are able to donate. We will gladly have someone pick up your contribution.

All donations will be tax deductible and will be given a receipt worth the value of the donation.

Thank you, Auction Committee Katherine Rorrio, Principal

Holyoke Community College scholarship season open

HOLYOKE - The Holyoke Community College Foundation is now accepting scholarship applications for the 2026-2027 academic year.

The application deadline is Friday, March 13, 2026.

Last year, the HCC Foundation awarded 410 scholarships worth about \$364,000 to 379 incoming, current, and transferring HCC students. Some students received multiple scholarship awards. The average scholarship award is typically around \$900.

"The scholarship program is the flagship initiative of the HCC Foundation, and it reflects the incredible generosity of our donor community," said Amanda Sbriscia, vice president of Institutional Advancement and executive director of the HCC Foundation. "Every scholarship tells two stories - one of a donor who believes in the power of education, and one of a student whose path forward is made possible by that belief."

Students must be currently enrolled at HCC or have been accepted for the upcoming academic year to be eligible for scholarships.

Applicants only need to fill out a single online form to be automatically matched with the scholarships they are most qualified to receive. There are scholarships for new students, current students and students transferring to other institutions, scholarships based on financial need, scholarships

for students in specific majors, scholarships for residents of certain communities, and scholarships that recognize academic achievement.

"Last year's 410 scholarship awards represent 410 opportunities for students to focus on their studies rather than financial stress," said Sbriscia. "We're proud to continue this tradition of supporting HCC students as they work toward their goals."

To view scholarship opportunities and begin the application process, please go to: www.hcc.edu/scholarships.

The HCC Scholarship Resource Center, on the first floor of the Donahue Building (Room 158), is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., to help current and incoming students navigate the process of applying for scholarships.

The HCC Foundation is a 501(c)(3) that works to advance the college's mission, vision, and values. Founded in 1968 as the Friends of Holyoke Community College, in response to a devastating fire that forced the college to rebuild on a new campus, the Foundation now manages assets of more than \$20 million, the largest community college foundation endowment in Massachusetts.

Questions should be directed to the HCC Foundation office at 413-552-2182, or by email to scholarships@hcc.edu.

City of Chicopee data collection program begins Jan. 27

CHICOPEE - The Chicopee Board of Assessors is notifying businesses that data collectors from the assessors' office will be visiting all businesses starting January 27, 2026 to collect personal

property information. Each data collector will carry an official photo identification card issued by Real Estate Research Consultants, Inc. and a letter from the Chicopee Board of Assessors.

The Department of Revenue requires the Assessors to visit businesses every five years to re-list the taxable personal property that is used by the business. The data collectors will also confirm

the legal owner, business name and mailing address for each location.

Data collectors will have identification and any questions can be directed to the Assessors' office at 594-1430.

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IN THE CITY



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Members of the Hampden District Attorney's Youth Advisory Board delivered the office's NetSmartz and Social Media & Gaming Safety presentations to students at Litwin Elementary School on Jan. 12.

DA's Office speaks with students at Litwin Elementary School

CHICOPEE - Staff from Hampden District Attorney Anthony D. Gulluni's Community Safety & Outreach (CSO) Unit visited Chicopee's Litwin Elementary School on Monday, Jan. 12, to deliver the office's NetSmartz and Social Media & Gaming Safety presentations, emphasizing the importance of safe online use.

CSO was joined by four members of the Hampden District Attorney's Youth Advisory Board (YAB) - high school students from across Hampden County dedicated to leadership and community engagement - to lead the presentations, while engaging and encouraging students to participate through helpful hints and discussion questions.

The YAB members included Cadence Lukasik, a Chicopee High School senior and former Litwin Elementary School student; Cecilia Torres, Chicopee High School senior; Maliha Awan, East Longmeadow High School senior; and Samia Awan, East Longmeadow High School senior.

The first presentation of the day, NetSmartz, was an interactive presentation targeted for grades 2 and 3, consisting of internet and real-world safety concepts.

The second presentation, Social Media & Gaming Safety, was targeted toward grades 4 and 5.

During the Social Media & Gaming Safety presentation, the YAB members took turns sharing information and videos ranging from password safety to cyberbullying. Then, they provided different scenarios for students, asking questions such as what to do if a person on the videogame Fortnite, for instance, asks what grade or school the student goes to. The answer repeated throughout was to tell a trusted adult, and do not give out any personal information to someone you meet online.

At the end of the presentation, the YAB members left the group of more than 150 students with some advice on playing sports in middle and high school, making new

friends, and leading with kindness.

"Be kind to everyone," Lukasik shared.

Deputy Director of Community Safety & Outreach Gina Anselmo echoed this point, noting that kindness is one of - if not the most important - rule of social media use.

The NetSmartz and Social Media & Gaming Safety presentations are two of many free programs the Hampden District Attorney's Office offers to promote education, prevention, and youth empowerment across the county. The office regularly collaborates with schools and community partners to support the health and safety of young people.

For more information about NetSmartz or the Social Media & Gaming Safety presentations, or to request a presentation at your school, contact Hampden District Attorney's Office Deputy Director of Community Safety & Outreach Gina Anselmo at gina.anselmo@mass.gov.



SZETELA from page 1

achievement award; he also shared words of comfort to Lopes.

"I was happy to be a part of the celebration they did," Ware said. "He will be sadly missed. My condolences to you and your family."

City Council Vice President/Ward 6 Councilor Samuel Shumsky—who previously served on the School Committee—said Szetela was "not just a colleague and a friend, but a mentor."

"When I first ran for School Committee, he was one of the very first people to offer his support, guidance and encouragement. He believed in people, and he never hesitated to share his experience and wisdom with those willing to listen," Shumsky said. "Beyond public service, I will always cherish the many conversations we shared about sports, especially the Red Sox, Patriots and Celtics. Those moments of laughter, debate and camaraderie are memories I will carry with me forever."

Shumsky added he was "a legend in our community."

"I am incredibly grateful for the two years I had the privilege of sitting beside him on the School Committee. As

a longtime resident of Ward 6, his dedication to Chicopee and to public service was unwavering, and his impact will be felt for generations," Shumsky said. "My heartfelt condolences go out to his family, loved ones and all who had the honor of knowing him. You will be truly missed, my friend."

Councilor-at-Large Joel McAuliffe also reflected on Szetela's legacy, sharing condolences on behalf of himself and Ward 1 School Committee Representative Deanna Rousseau.

"Deanna and I extend our deepest and most heartfelt condolences to the Szetela family on the passing of Chester 'Chet' Szetela—a devoted educator, public servant and one of the kindest men our community has known," McAuliffe said. "For decades, Chet served the people of Chicopee with quiet integrity, humility and an unwavering commitment to our schools and families. His life's work in education and on the School Committee reflected a belief that public service is, at its core, an act of compassion. He led not with volume, but with grace, and in doing so, earned the respect of colleagues, students, and residents alike."

McAuliffe also noted Szetela's spirit, kindness and generosity throughout his life.

"Chet was especially generous to those who followed in his footsteps. He was a steady presence and a source of kindness to Deanna during their brief time together on the School Committee, and I will always be grateful for the respect and courtesy he showed me in every interaction we shared," McAuliffe said. "I first met Chet as a young and idealistic candidate who once challenged him for his seat. Even then, he embodied the best of public life—gracious in disagreement, thoughtful in conversation and unfailingly kind. When I called to concede that election, Chet and his wife thanked me for the call. That simple moment captured the measure of the man."

McAuliffe emphasized that Szetela's legacy will live on through the community he served.

"Chicopee is stronger because Chester Szetela served. His legacy lives on through the countless lives he touched, the students he championed, and the example he set for all who believe in service above self," McAuliffe said. "May his memory be a blessing."

Chicopee Public Library hosts programs for kids and families

CHICOPEE - Each month the Chicopee Public Library hosts a variety of free programs for children, teens, and families. The Youth Services Department seeks to provide opportunities for entertainment and enrichment that promote literacy and explore creativity. Here is the slate of events for February 2026.

Terrific Twos will be held on Tuesdays, Feb. 3 and 17 at 10:30 a.m. Terrific Twos is for two-year-olds and their caregivers. This program features about 25 minutes of structured circle time, followed by about half an hour of semi-structured playtime. During circle time, we will sing songs, do rhymes, do some big movements, and read 1 book. The book choice rotates between either a read aloud picture book or a group read of a board book. Playtime involves a choice of craft, activity, or play.

Storytime will be held on Thursday, Feb. 5 at 10:30 a.m. Storytime is for children ages 3-5. This program features about 30 minutes of structured circle time, followed by 15-30 minutes of a craft or activity. Circle time will include 2-3 read aloud books, rhymes, songs, and felt boards. Children will be encouraged to ask and answer simple questions and recognize things like shapes, colors, letters, and numbers. There will be a puppet show in lieu of storytime on February 19, see below.

Build with LEGO on Thursday, Feb. 5 at 4 p.m. Unstructured building time for kids ages 6 and up.

Sensory Play Saturday will be held on Saturday, Feb. 7 at 9:30 a.m. Come let your babies socialize and explore sensory play! We will have our play area set up with some sensory activities and other play opportunities. For babies 0-24 months and their caregivers.

Saturday Playgroup will be held on Saturdays at 1 p.m. in February. We'll put out some extra toys in the playspace. It's a great time for families with kids of all ages to meet up and play.

Little Kid Dance Party will be on Wednesdays,

Feb. 11 and 25 at 10:30 a.m. Moving and grooving for kids and their caregivers. Geared toward ages 0-5, but all are welcome!

45 minutes to one hour of energetic activity including singing and dancing, action rhymes, and playing with props like scarves and shakers.

The Kids Room Sewing Club will meet on Wednesday, Feb. 11, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Learn basic stitches and practice skills by making fun projects. Recommended for ages six and up. Kids who are not familiar with using a needle and thread should attend with an adult. Teens are welcome.

The library Homeschool Meetup will be on Friday, Feb. 13 at Noon. This group meets once a month September - June for homeschooling families with kids of all ages to hang out, do activities and learn together. Different activities each month are planned by the group. This month we are celebrating Valentine's Day with a card exchange. (No candy, please).

February School Vacation Week is Feb. 17 through 20

The library will be closed for Presidents' Day on Monday, Feb. 16.

Mario Party

Celebrate everyone's favorite plumber and his friends! We are turning the Kids Room into a Mario Party game! Come enjoy mini games, crafts and more. For kids and families of all ages, no registration required. Stop by the library at any point from 2:30 to 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 17.

The library will host a Big Kid Dance Party on Wednesday, February 18 at 10:30 a.m. A bit like our regularly scheduled Little Kid Dance Party, but geared specifically towards elementary age kids. We'll sing and dance and get out the rhythm sticks. Caregivers and younger kids are welcome.

The library will host Bingo for Books on Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 6 p.m. Play bingo for a chance to win books. Fun for the whole family.

Talking Hands Theatre will present their pup-

pet show, Whale Tales, on Thursday, Feb. 19 at 10:30 a.m. Learn about animals under the sea with engaging puppets and original songs. Great for the story-time crowd. Kids of all ages and caregivers are welcome. No registration required.

Join us for a Craft-ernoon where we will make Pasta Art on Thursday, Feb. 19 at 2 p.m. Create fun art using dyed pasta of all shapes and colors! For kids and families of all ages, no registration required.

On Friday, Feb. 20, stop by the Kids Room any time during the day to contribute to Community Art: Big Coloring. Help us create a mural for our bulletin boards! We will have paper and all sorts of coloring tools available. Stop by anytime! For kids and families of all ages, no registration required.

The Children's Room is a great place to hang out. Coloring pages and board games are always available. There are also some new things you can play with while you visit. Ask us about food toys for the play kitchen, building blocks, or the art cart.

Teens

Visit the library after school and enjoy the Teen Space with friends! We've got board games, puzzles, the library's Switch, and coloring to enjoy.

Anime Club will be on Wednesday, Feb. 25 at 3 p.m. We'll be celebrating 30 years of Pokémon! With the franchise's big three-oh only days after Anime Club, we'll be talking about our hopes for big announcements and enjoying plenty of themed activities!

Friday Teen Hang

Join us every Friday after school in the Teen Space for some games and crafts! We'll have the Nintendo Switch available to play, coloring pages and paper to doodle, and more!

Teens are invited to join us at LEGO, Sewing Club, and

Visit the library website for more info about all of the library's events! www.chicopeepubliclibrary.org.

Rivermills Senior Center Events

Powerback Rehab To-You

CHICOPEE - The Council on Aging will host Powerback Rehab for Physical Therapy appointment every Monday starting Jan. 5 at 10 a.m. at RiverMills Center, located at 5 W. Main Street.

Powerback Rehab To-You is a mobile therapy program that brings care directly to you! Powerback Rehab will be at RiverMills Center for appointments to help your recovery whether dealing with a recent inju-

ry chronic pain or seeking performance enhancement. These appointments are free. This program is open to members 55 and older. There are limited appointments, so you must register in advance at RiverMills or by calling 534-3698.

SNAP Pop-Up Pantry Feb. 10

CHICOPEE - The Council on Aging will offer a Pop-Up Pantry on Thursday, Feb. 19 at 9 a.m. at RiverMills Center, located at 5 W. Main Street.

RiverMills Center will host two pop-up pantries for SNAP recipients, age 55 and older. As a SNAP outreach partner with the Department of Transitional Services, RiverMills recognizes the need for additional nutritional assistance. Only Chicopee residents who are current SNAP recipients age 55+ with a valid EBT card are eligible to sign up for the free bag of groceries. Registration for the Feb. 19 pantry opens Tuesday, Feb. 17. Participation is limited to the first 125 participants. Please call Stephanie Tarrant at 534-3698 ext. 120 to register.



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IN THE CITY

In the Garden

by Roberta McQuaid

Sow onion seeds to get the season started

If you are sick and tired of winter, and want to get the gardening season going already, why not sow some onion seeds?

Onions are the first seeds I sow each year and I always welcome this task as a true harbinger of spring! Many gardeners only know of growing onions from sets, but you can indeed start them from seed, both indoors in the garden.

Read on for more information on growing onions from start to finish, right out of the archives.

First it's important that we "understand the onion," in other words, come to know its life cycle. Onions are biennial.

We are all familiar with biennial flowers like foxglove, hollyhock and Canterbury bells, who develop foliage the first year of their lives and bloom and set seed in the second, but few gardeners today ever experience a biennial vegetable. That wasn't always the case. Just visit the Freeman Farm at Old Sturbridge Village where in the summer you will see beets, parsnips, onions and more in year two of their life cycle, complete with seed heads.

As the seeds ripen, 19th century gardeners would have stored them away for use the following spring.

So then, if the onion is a biennial and its goal is to make seeds the second season of its life, what is it trying to accomplish in its first? Exactly what you and I want: a big bulb!

The bulb is the food storage unit for the plant during its dormancy period—the winter between years one and two. A big bulb gives the second year plant a good head start and almost always directly relates to increased seed production as compared to smaller bulbs.

For me, understanding this concept was one of those "ah ha" gardening moments. It all really came together when I recognized that big bulbs are a direct result of lush topgrowth.

Just imagine the green part of the plant photosynthesizing, drawing in all of that wonderful energy from the sun and turning it into a big, fat onion! Luckily, we gardeners can provide just the right conditions for lush top growth.

Get an early start

All onions have a built-in mechanism that triggers "bulbing up" in response to warmer temperatures and increased daylight hours. Likewise, as daylight begins to decrease, the onion is cued into dormancy.

If lush tops are our first goal, we have to get our onions in early, so that they achieve lots of top growth before being prompted to bulb up. Those of us who garden in the north choose "long day" onions, while southern gardeners opt to grow "short day" types.

Long day onions bulb up when day length reaches 14-

16 hours per day; short day begin at 12-13 hours. If we plant short day in our locale we'd end up with fat scalions, but not much more, so choose accordingly.

Reputable seed companies will list the type of onion it is next to the variety name, or feature them under appropriate headings.

Choose your method

There are three ways onions can be grown: by seeds sown directly in the garden, from transplants started indoors, or from sets, which are tiny onions. One huge advantage of utilizing seeds is the variety at your disposal as compared to sets.

They are also less expensive. Some folks even argue that onions sown from seed store longer. The rest of this article will be devoted to starting onion seeds indoors, which is best accomplished in late January through Valentine's Day—good news for those of you itching to get your hands "dirty!"

Onion seeds are sown indoors in small flats filled with moist soilless growing medium. Spacing can be a little closer than prescribed for outdoor germination, with sowing at ¼" apart. The use of heat mats set at 72 degrees is helpful, but not entirely necessary; regular room temperatures will also encourage sprouting.

Supplemental lighting is vital, however, so that the onions grow straight and strong. Once onions are up, thin seedlings ½" to 1" apart from one another — onions hate competition, so this step is important!

I generally cut out the extras using scissors, right at the soil line so as not to dislodge the roots of those we are growing on. As the seedlings continue to grow, keep them trimmed at 3" tall; this will encourage strong roots and a straight, bulky plant.

About a month prior to the last frost, the transplants should be hardened off for a week by gradually acclimating them to outdoor conditions. When they are ready, seedlings are sunk into 1" furrows 3-4" apart and watered carefully; they can be protected from sun and wind off and on for the first week should it seem necessary; here a floating row cover supported by wire hoops would come in handy, but old pots or trays would work fine too. Additional rows should be one foot apart.

Stayed tuned for part two of this column next week, and extra-large onions will be yours come fall!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 33 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

in my BACKYARD

By Ellenor Downer



Snowy owl

In late December of last year and early January of this year, a snowy owl has been seen at Northampton Airport and in a cornfield.

The snowy owl is an irruptive species from the tundra. Usually, it is the young snowy owls that head this way. There have been reports of snowy owls at Plum Island this month. Logan Airport is another common location for them.

The snowy owl is large and white. The mature males have a lot of white. Females and juveniles have dark brown and black barring. Living in the Arctic, it is well adapted to cold with dense feathers including feathers on their feet. They hunt rodents like lemmings in open tundra. They have exceptional sight and hearing.

Their flight is silent allowing them to catch unsuspecting prey. They hunt during the day, a rarity for

most owls. They expand south during winter food scarcity in the tundra. It is one of North America's heaviest owls with a wing span of 4.5 to 5.5 feet.

They are generally solitary, but form pairs. They build nests in the ground in shallow scrapes. The female lays three to 11 eggs, the number of eggs depending on food availability. Males bring food and the females incubate and feed the chicks.

Helping owls

Here are some tips if you see a snowy owl. Keep a safe distance to observe quietly. Do not play bird calls from your phone or other device. Don't feed the owls. Avoid flashes when taking photos. Keep noises to a minimum. If you find an injured owl: contact your state wildlife agency or local rehabilitator. If you find a dead owl: contact your state wildlife agency.

Also people should avoid using rodenticides; they are poisonous to birds and other animals even a pet. If an owl or other birds of prey eat a rodent that ingested, it will kill them.

Evening grosbeaks

A Worthington resident reported a friend saw two evening grosbeaks on Tuesday, Jan. 6. He said in his email he remembered

when they used to be in giant flocks. He asked if they were were rare out my way. I have not seen evening grosbeaks in sometime. Other people in Central Massachusetts have seen them recently. The Massachusetts Audubon Society reported six evening grosbeaks in North Brookfield.

Mass. Audubon sightings

Recent Mass Audubon sightings include western grebes, eared grebes, tufted ducks and sandhill cranes as well as an unusual visitors, a scissor-tailed flycatcher, a rare state record and a rose-billed pochard. Other sightings include goldeneye, mergansers, horned larks, and wintering raptors like Northern harriers in Massachusetts in early January.

On Jan. 6 and again on Jan. 13 a male King Eider was seen among thousands of common Eiders in North Chatham. A Pacific loon and over 400 razorbills were at Race Point in Provincetown.

Brimfield resident

A Brimfield resident sent an email on Jan. 6 that he received a preliminary total for the Springfield Christmas Bird Count, which was 66 species, a few below the average. He also said, "We occasionally see them in the yard and sometimes hear the barred owls calling."

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

I'm divorced; can I get benefits from my ex-husband?

Dear Rusty:

After 16 years of marriage, we were divorced. I have never remarried, but he has. When he starts collecting Social Security (he is 64 now and still working), is it true that I can claim ex-spousal benefits or does that go to the current wife? How would I find this info?

Signed: A Divorced Spouse

Dear Divorced Spouse:

The fact that your ex-husband has remarried has no influence on your ability to collect benefits based on his record. If you are eligible for ex-spouse benefits (because you did not remarry), you can get those benefits regardless of whether his current wife collects benefits on his record. In other words, both you and his current wife can both collect spousal benefits from your ex-husband's earnings record.

Your eligibility for an ex-spouse benefit is determined by comparing your own SS retirement benefit amount at full retirement age (FRA) to his — if your own SS benefit at your FRA is less than 50% of your ex's FRA benefit entitlement, and you were married to your ex for more than 10 years, are not currently married and are at least 62 years old, then you can get a "spousal boost" (an amount added

to your own Social Security retirement amount). In fact, if you have been divorced for over two years, you can get an ex-spouse benefit even though he is not yet receiving his own SS retirement benefit.

Be aware, however, if you claim any Social Security benefit (both your own SS retirement amount and your ex-spouse "spousal boost") before you reach your full retirement age, the monthly amount you get will be reduced according to how much before your full retirement age you claim. Spouse and ex-spouse benefits reach maximum at your full retirement age but are reduced if claimed earlier than your full retirement age. Claiming your benefits as an ex-spouse will also result in you receiving your own SS retirement benefit (reduced if you haven't yet reached FRA).

I suggest you contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 to make a telephone appointment to evaluate whether you are entitled benefits as an ex-spouse. If your own SS retirement benefit at your FRA is less than half of your ex's FRA entitlement, you will be. To apply for those benefits you will need a copy of your

divorce decree (and perhaps your marriage certificate), and your ex-husband's Social Security number (if you do not have his SSN, you can provide his date and place of birth and his parents' names, and SSA will likely be able to locate your ex's SS record).

SSA will be able to tell you what your total monthly benefit as an ex-spouse will be when you meet with them, at which point you can decide whether to claim your benefits early or wait until your FRA to achieve your maximum amount as an ex-spouse.

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



Chicopee Register TEAM



EDITOR
Kristin Rivers
krivers@turley.com



ADVERTISING SALES
Wendy Delcamp
wdelcamp@turley.com



SPORTS EDITOR
Greg Scibelli
sports@turley.com

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WEB

www.chicopeeregister.turley.com

PATRICK H. TURLEY
CEO

KEITH TURLEY
President

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Publications, Inc.
www.turley.com

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Send letters to:
The Chicopee Register,
24 Water Street,
Palmer, MA 01069
or email
chicopeeregister@turley.com.
The deadline for
submissions is Tuesday at noon.

WE CARE ABOUT YOUR NEWS!

The Chicopee Register welcomes submissions of news in or related to Chicopee and its residents. Our "People News," is filled with submitted engagement announcements, wedding announcements, birth announcements, your new baby or news about your 25th or 50th anniversary celebrations. Please e-mail correspondence along with a photo to chicopeeregister@turley.com or send it to: Chicopee Register, c/o Turley Publications, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

Election letters to the editor

The Chicopee Register 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 Chicopee Register care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to journalregister@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 Thursday'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 the editor at 413-283-8393.

Campaign news

As part of its election coverage, the newspaper plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor's Council during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers.

Candidates who wish to further publicize their candidacy, beliefs and events may contact advertising, 413-283-8393 about paid advertising in Chicopee Register.

PEOPLE/MILESTONE NEWS

As a free service for our readers, we will print all births, weddings, engagements, milestone anniversaries, major birthdays, military achievements, honors and awards. We have a "people news" form available for you to submit these listings. This material is provided to us by our readers and local institutions and we do not charge to print this content.

For more information, or to submit people or milestone news for The Chicopee Register, please email chicopeeregister@turley.com.

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IN THE CITY

Events & announcements schedule

First Central Bible Church Announces Programs for Children and Youth

CHICOPEE - First Central Bible Church, located at 50 Broadway Street in Chicopee, is now offering five age-suitable programs from infants through grade 12 that are designed to help children and youth come to know the Bible, grow closer to God, and build a Christian community.

Sunday Morning

Before Sunday service, from 9:15 to 10:15 a.m., the church's Sunday School partners with parents and caregivers in nurturing children's faith through engaging lessons and activities. Classes are held for ages two through grade 9. Nursery care is provided for children through age two. For

adults, a variety of studies are available during this time.

During the service, from 10:15 to 11:30 a.m., First Central offers Junior Church for age five through fifth grade. While adults attend the service, children experience Bible teaching at their level through lessons, songs, games, and projects. The nursery is available for children through age four.

Wednesday Evening

Wednesday evenings from 6:30 to 8 p.m. children ages two through fifth grade are invited to participate in Awana, which combines Scripture memorization, Bible teaching, fun activities, and mentorship to help children know, love, and serve Jesus Christ. Please register on the

church website at www.firstcentral.church.

Wednesdays from 6:30 to 8 p.m., young people in grades six through twelve can join the church's Youth Group, which combines large- and small-group discussions. Sample topics include how the world's values differ from God's and the nature of sin. Participants explore their viewpoints while learning to apply Christian principles to their lives. No registration is required.

First Central Bible Church, located at 50 Broadway Street, Chicopee, exists to glorify God by making and maturing disciples of Jesus. Sunday service is held at 10:30 a.m. All are invited to join us in worship, prayer, learning from the Word, glo-

rifying God, and feeling the warmth of fellowship. For more information, please visit www.firstcentral.church.

First Central Bible Church of Chicopee launches Awana Program

CHICOPEE - First Central Bible Church today announced the kickoff of Awana, a global, Bible-based discipleship program that helps churches and families raise children and youth to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ.

The program is open to the community and will be held at the church located at 50 Broadway Street, Chicopee.

Weekly sessions run on Wednesdays from September

10, 2025 to May 20, 2026 from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm and are for children ages two through fifth grade. Registration is required on the church website at www.firstcentral.church. There is no charge.

All families looking for a positive activity for their kids are welcome.

Awana combines Scripture memorization, Bible teaching, fun activities, and mentorship to help young people build a lasting foundation of faith. The program provides a safe, structured environment where kids can make new friends, build confidence, grow spiritually, and explore how God's Word applies to their everyday lives.

If you have questions, please call the church office at

413-592-5353.

Volunteer Drivers Needed

CHICOPEE - RiverMills Center is looking for volunteer drivers at the senior center. Volunteer drivers transport older adults to doctor's appointments, the bank, shopping to the senior center and back to their homes.

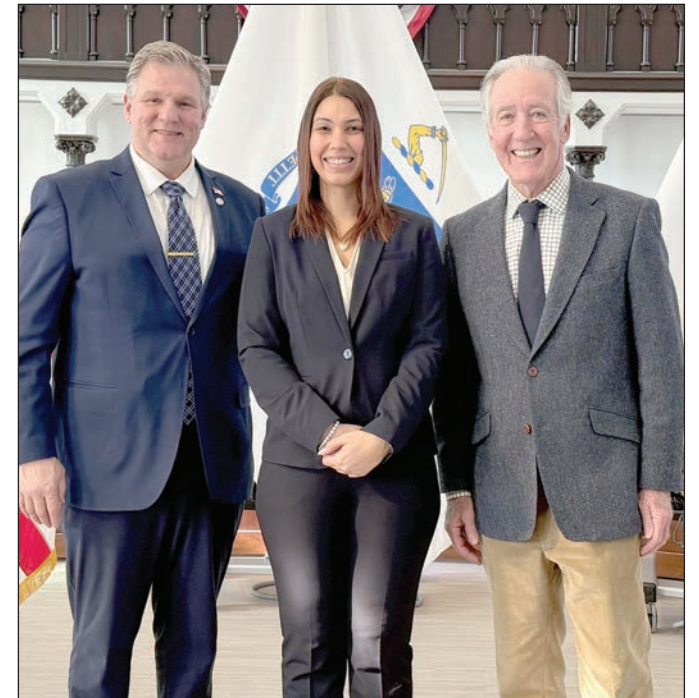
Those interested in becoming a volunteer driver must have a good driving record and fill out a volunteer application, which includes a CORI check. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact Rivermills Volunteer and Activities Coordinator Brandon Dumas at 534-3698, ext. 130.



State Rep. Shirley Arriaga (D-Chicopee) explained why the state legislators will also continue addressing the issue of clean water in Massachusetts.



A group photo of Ward 1 City Councilor Abigail Arriaga, Ward 9 City Councilor Mary Beth Costello, State Rep. Shirley Arriaga (D-Chicopee), Ward 8 City Councilor Douglas Girouard and Councilor-at-Large Jessica Avery, who were in attendance for the federal funding announcement.



Mayor John Vieau, State Rep. Shirley Arriaga (D-Chicopee) and Congressman Richard Neal (D-MA) in a group photo.

WASTEWATER from page 1

We are so lucky to have great teamwork across all levels of government, starting with our congressman, the state and our city, that we can point out what our needs are and we

come up with a plan. We're going to work together."

Arriaga said she and her colleagues will continue addressing this issue.

"There's a lot of folks across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts dealing with this, and one of the things

that I'm fighting for on Beacon Hill is how can we address this? We're not the only ones, but we need to come together to get it done, faster, sooner than later. The longer we wait, the higher the price goes and who pays for that? Our constituents pay for that,"

Arriaga said.

Neal, reflecting on bringing the federal funding to the state—especially to Chicopee—said "it's a nice undertaking."

"Actually, cities and towns didn't get to establish their own priorities and the is-

sue of combined sewer overflow impacts all of us. It's a quality-of-life issue. Clean air, clean water are paramount considerations and the city of Chicopee is taking an upfront position on this," Neal said. "What we've attempted now through almost \$11 million

over the last few years is to give ratepayers some relief."

Neal's message was this. "I understand the complications here, but we all have to take into consideration the idea that water quality is (an) essential part of everyday living," Neal said.

CITY COUNCIL from page 1

or Avery, but going beyond that, we've got to get that communication out there so that people can use and it and understand it," Costello said. "Because, actually, when you go on the city website, it doesn't say SeeClickFix. It says 'Submit a concern.' So, I appreciate what you're doing, Councilor Courchesne, and notifying people that this is a great tool and how to use it."

Ward 6 Councilor Samuel Shumsky also favored this, adding he'd like "to see if this could be brought up at the meeting as well in conversation of SeeClickFix."

"Is this the best system that we could be using, or should we possibly start looking at other things? Because I know it was mentioned that it may or may not be used properly and residents don't know about it. Is it time—and I think I mentioned this a few months ago, and I will have to look back into the minutes—but maybe it's time that we start looking at other systems, potentially, that are more efficient and that are easier for our departments to use," Shumsky said. "So, I think maybe to bring this up in the conversation wouldn't be a bad idea."

Courchesne added how this has been around for over

a decade and is "a great program."

"It is the program to use for municipalities," Courchesne said. "But when you have a department—somebody from the department—closing out saying, 'We'll look into it' and closing it, that's not how it works. You can't close an issue before it's fixed, and I've had the discussion with this person more than once and apparently it's not—I'm not 'the boss' obviously so he doesn't have to listen to me—but we'll get the conversation going. So, maybe we'll get this fixed because it's not the program, it's the people using it. It's a great program and we could utilize it a lot better than we are. But, we're not using it the way it's designed."

Courchesne said, to his knowledge, he was unsure of other programs.

"I was on this when it came to the city, originally, 15 years ago. So, I don't know of any other programs and I've done my research. But, it's not the program, it's the people," Courchesne said.

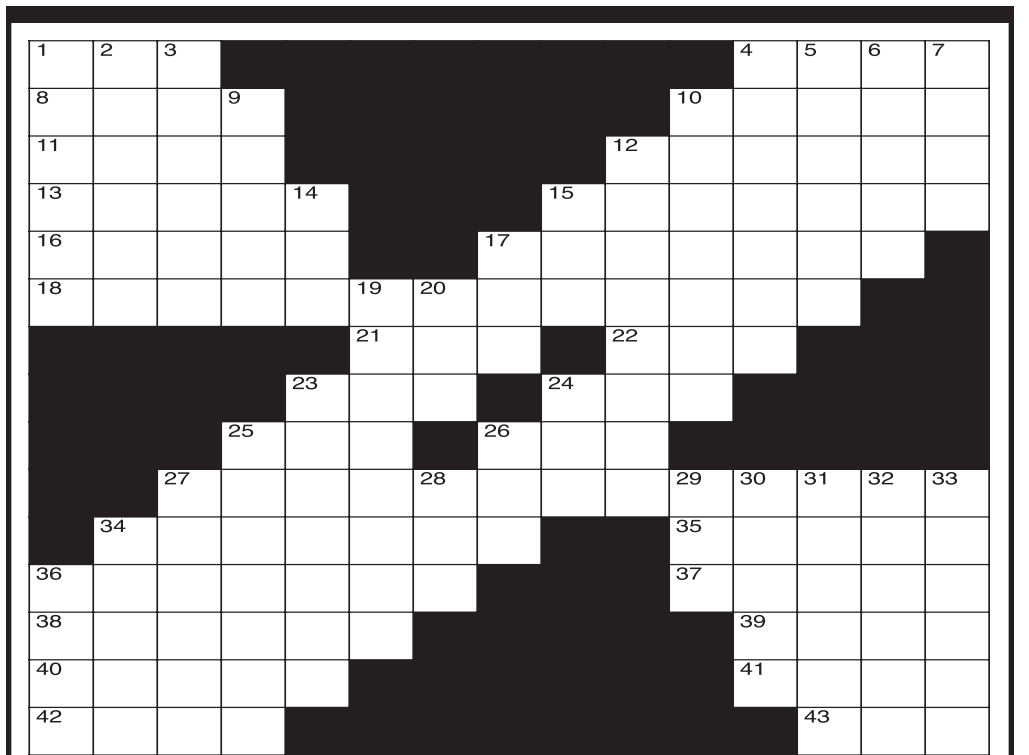
Ward 1 Councilor Abigail Arriaga said she was "happy to see this come across our desk too."

"I think I had 20 phone calls alone on Monday literally talking about this and people didn't know what it was. I don't know if we just need to get it out there better, where

we put it, where we notify people, ChicopeeTV, maybe a notice or something. There just needs to be more because, like you said, we've had this for a very long time and people still aren't knowing what it is and it's becoming more and more difficult to find it, so then we get the calls—which is great, I'm so happy that so many people reached out—and then I saw this, so I think it's fantastic," Arriaga said. "I do need to have a conversation about this because this was very concerning for the weekend that nobody knew what this was. So, thank you and I'm in favor."

Ward 3 Councilor Susan Goff also favored looking into this.

"I have a lot of people that call me on an issue and I mention SeeClickFix and they don't know what it is. So, a lot of times, I'll go in and put in what needs to be fixed for them, but I always follow that up with an email because I know that the system isn't looked at as often as that should be or problems are not solved, because I'll go on there to put on an issue and that issue has already been on there couple other times by different people," Goff said. "So, I'm glad to see that we're going to have a conversation about it and that more people get to know it and use it, hopefully."



CLUES ACROSS

1. Racket sport pros
4. Make tea
8. City South of Moscow
10. Spanish bullfighting term
11. Egg-shaped
12. Could not remember
13. French modernist painter
15. Persons
16. Painful intestinal obstruction
17. Professions
18. Is up to the task
21. Wood or metal bolt
22. Tax collector
23. A way to save for the future
24. Georgia rockers
25. Midway between

- north and northeast
26. High schoolers' test
27. Does not accept responsibility
34. One who prepares
35. Gout-indicative deposits
36. Place to play games
37. Book of Genesis character
38. Cleans oneself
39. Unloaded for money
40. Genus of flowering plants
41. Take a puff
42. Congressmen
43. God of battle in Scandinavian mythology

CLUES DOWN

1. Type of bomb
2. South Pacific islands
3. Celestial body
4. Negotiates
5. Consider in a specified way
6. Type of group in organic chemistry
7. Buddhist monasteries
9. Inhabitant of Bering Sea island
10. Body part
12. Milestone birthday
14. Thyroid-stimulating hormone
15. More (Spanish)
17. Chicago ballplayer
19. Leaves a place
20. Cannot be found
23. One's internal body parts
24. Tell on
25. North American peoples of southwest
26. Soviet Socialist Republic
27. Extract used for jams and jellies
28. Greek goddess of the dawn
29. Old English letter
30. A way to exaggerate
31. Get up and leave
32. "Boardwalk Empire" character
33. More generous
34. Hanging cloth used as a blind
36. Ancient Greek sophist

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Snow blankets Chicopee in major snowstorm



PHOTO COURTESY OF HAYLIE WAWZONEK

A shot from the first night of the snowstorm.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROGERSON TAMAREY

An action shot at the snowblower after the snowstorm.



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

Chicopee Register Editor Kristin Rivers had gotten 18 inches of snow outside of her house on Monday.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TARA PLANTE UPHAM

Cars were buried on this street in Chicopee awaiting plows to arrive and clear the road.

SNOWSTORM from page 1

always ready to step up to protect our community, no matter the weather or circumstances. Their dedication, professionalism, and commitment to service do not go unnoticed. Because of their work, Chicopee continues to move forward safely, and our residents can count on the essential services that keep our city running. We are grateful for everything they do for our community.”

Echoing similar praise was Vieau, who posted a comment of his own via social media on Facebook this past Tuesday, which read, “A big thank you to everyone who helped keep our city safe throughout this winter storm.”

Vieau then took a moment to thank all departments, such as the DPW, Chicopee Electric Light, the police and fire departments, Facilities Department and

Emergency Management. “We cannot thank you enough for your tireless work over the past two days, plowing our streets, restoring power, and ensuring the safety of our residents. A storm of this magnitude takes true teamwork, and we are incredibly fortunate to have such dedicated teams here in Chicopee. We thank everyone for their continued patience as our plows are still working on the roads to maintain safe travel,” Vieau said. Lastly offering insight into the storm cleanup was the fire department, who also shared a comment of their own earlier this week.

“We would like to extend a huge thank you to our members who reported to work for a challenging 24-hour shift during an intense storm. Many then returned home today to begin their own clean-up efforts after their difficult shift,” they said. “We also thank the Chicopee DPW for their tireless work clearing our roadways during and after this storm. We are also incredibly grateful to the City of Chicopee Facilities Department for keeping our stations plowed so we could continue responding to emergencies.” And to help provide a first-hand look from the

frontlines of the blizzard, the Chicopee Register received multiple photo submissions from the general public to highlight and truly show the magnitude of this blizzard. Finally, from the entire Chicopee Register staff, we want to offer an ode of thanks to those who submitted, and we want to confirm and clarify that we can only run as many as able, so we ask, please don't be disappointed if your submission didn't make it in. We are looking to do an additional round of submissions in a future edition.



PHOTO COURTESY OF KIMBERLY OWSIAK

Many cars were buried in the snow throughout this snowstorm, as shown here.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANGIE HUMPHREY

A view of Grattan Street in Chicopee.



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVE RICE

The Chicopee Facilities Department was amongst the folks in full force to clear the roads, with Facilities Director Dave Rice sharing this photo taken outside the Chicopee Police and Fire Departments.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GABE JAWORSKI

In this photo, we have a skating rink made out of the snow, another touch of winter.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK HAMMON

A shot outside Chicopee Comprehensive High School with piles of snow.

SPORTS

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Pacers pick up win over Ludlow

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

CHICOPEE—The non-league boys' basketball game between the Ludlow Lions and Chicopee Pacers was evenly played during the first quarter.

Chicopee pulled away with the help of an 11-4 run and led by as many as 13 points late in the second quarter. The Pacers held onto their lead throughout the second half and secured a 67-59 home win against the Lions on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

"It feels very nice to win a game, especially after we lost to Westfield at home the other night," said Chicopee head coach Jordan Miller. "We played very well defensively, which made it difficult for Ludlow to comeback against us. We've suffered a couple of come-from-behind losses this season, which I didn't want to see happen in tonight's game."

The home win improved Chicopee's overall record to 7-4, while Ludlow fell to 8-4.

"It was a very good basketball game tonight. We just kept battling back, but we needed a couple of shots to go in the basket," said Ludlow head coach C.W. Zimmer. "Chicopee is a very good basketball team. They're going to be a difficult team to beat in the Western Mass. and state tournaments."

It was the first meeting between the two squads since the 2012-13 regular



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Alex Manguel makes a one-hand pass.

season. "Our basketball program has grown a lot during the past couple of years," Zimmer added. "We're trying to play the best competition and we're grateful that Chicopee hosted tonight's game."

The Pacers have now won the last six games in the series since the Lions posted a 63-57 win on January 15, 2008.

In their only meeting of the regular season, Ludlow held a 12-8 lead with two minutes remaining in the opening quarter following a

6-0 run.

Senior guard Ethan Love began the run with an inside hoop, which were his only points of the game. Senior guard Jackson Mateus followed by hitting a runner in the lane before junior forward Tyler Tatro made a pair of foul shots.

Mateus, who scored 12 first half points, finished with a game-high 23 points. He finished with eight field goals, including two 3-pointers. He also went 5-for-6 from the free throw line.

The Lions' only other double digit scorer was se-



Francisco Nieves flies for a layup.

nior forward Mason Morace, who netted 13 of his 15 points during the second half.

Chicopee responded with a 3-pointer from the top of the key from junior guard Alex Manguel (11 points). They then retook the lead at 13-12 when senior guard Dominic Garcia (16 points) made a lay-up.

Junior forward Brandon Thomas also finished the game with 16 points for the home team, while senior guard Rafael Aviles chipped in with 13 points.

A free throw from Lud-

low senior forward Cam Lyman (9 points) tied the score for the final time 18 seconds into the second stanza.

Garcia then took over the spotlight by knocking down a 3-pointer from the left side. He also made another triple with 5:28 left in the half giving his team a 21-15 lead.

The Pacers made a total of seven 3-pointers in the first 16 minutes of the contest.

Thomas drained a 3-pointer with three minutes left in the first half pushing Chicopee's lead into double



Rafael Aviles makes a free throw.
digits for the first time at 30-19. Aviles followed with a lay-up.

The Lions closed out the opening half with an 8-3 run.

Tatro made a pair of foul shots with 5.6 seconds left, which sliced the Lions deficit to 35-27 at the break.

The Pacers didn't make any shots from beyond the three point line in the second half, but they were able to build a double digit lead.

The Pacers, who led by as many as 15 points in the third quarter, entered the final quarter with a 52-41 lead.

After Mateus started

See PACERS page 8

Pacers finally get first win

CHICOPEE - The Chicopee High School co-op ice hockey team finally was able to get a win in the 2025-2026 season.

They defeated Keefe Tech 5-4 on Jan. 17. In the win, Landon Johnson, Braydon LaDuke, Brennan Corcoran, Aidan Nadeau, and Dylan Haryasz scored the

goals for the Pacers, who co-op with Chicopee Comprehensive, Granby, and South Hadley. Chicopee would lose to Easthampton on Wednesday, Jan. 21 8-3 and are now 1-8-2 on the season.

They are next scheduled to face Agawam on Saturday, Jan. 31 at 4:30 p.m. at Olympia Ice Center in West Springfield

Ott named new head coach of Thunderbirds

SPRINGFIELD - St. Louis Blues President of Hockey Operations and General Manager Doug Armstrong announced today that Steve Ott will assume the role of head coach for the team's AHL affiliate, the Springfield Thunderbirds, for the remainder of the season. Ott replaces Steve Konowalchuk, who has been relieved of his duties. Current Thunderbirds assistant coach Chad Wiseman will serve as the interim head coach for today's Thunderbirds game against the Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins until Ott can join the team later this week.

"The Blues want to thank Steve Konowalchuk for his contributions to our organization over the last two years and wish him all the best moving forward," said Armstrong. "We're looking forward to Steve Ott taking over in Springfield to push our young players to get better every day and further their development path to become St. Louis Blues. The current staff will take over his duties with the Blues for the rest of this season."

Ott, 42, has nine seasons behind the Blues' bench af-

ter first joining the staff as an assistant in the summer of 2017. During his tenure, the Summerside, PEI, native has helped the Blues compile a 350-244-74 (.588 points percentage) regular-season record and four postseason appearances. In 2018-19, just his second season as a coach, Ott played an instrumental role in helping the Blues make a historic rise in the standings during the regular season, ultimately capturing the 2019 Stanley Cup championship. Ott becomes the fifth head coach in Thunderbirds history

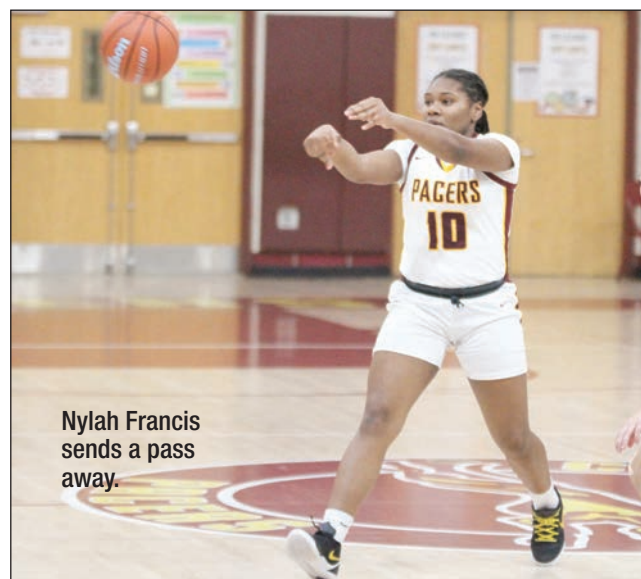
As a player, Ott enjoyed a 14-year NHL career, including 122 games with the Blues from 2014-2016. Overall, he accumulated 288 points in 848 career regular-season games, including stints with Dallas, Buffalo, St. Louis, Detroit, and Montreal.

Konowalchuk, 52, was in his second season as head coach of the Thunderbirds and has recorded an overall record of 47-50-4-8 (.486 points-percentage) during his time in the organization, including a record of 13-18-4-2 (.432) this season.

Chicopee girls shut down Holyoke

CHICOPEE - Last Tuesday night, the Chicopee High School girls basketball team defeated visiting Holyoke 44-27. Kiyah Price led the Pacers with 21 points, and Sophia

Moreira had 11 points. For the Knights, Sujelyz Peralta led the team with nine points while Kyra Lippman with eight points. Chicopee is now 5-8 while Holyoke is now 3-9.



Nylah Francis sends a pass away.



Sophia Moreira crosses midcourt.



Zaniah Kahi is pressured by the Holyoke defense.



Cassidy Pytel tries to get around a blocker.



Kiyah Price tries to settle the ball before dribbling.



Sophia Moreira crosses midcourt.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

PUBLIC NOTICES

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLES UNDER G.L. c.255 Sec. 39A

Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on February 6th, 2026 at Interstate Towing, Inc the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicles.

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David Cote
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East Hartford, CT 06118

2014 Chrysler Town & Country
VIN: 2C4RC1CG6ER248716
Rhonda Ann Lorenz
8743 W 106th Ter.
Overland Park, KA 66212

2013 Hyundai Sonata
VIN: 5NPEB4AC5DH612364
Jessica Viana Dos Santos
97 Grape St., Apt. E
Chicopee, MA 01013
01/23, 01/30, 02/06/2026

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLES UNDER G.L. c.255 Sec. 39A

Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on January 30, 2026 at Interstate Towing, Inc the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicles.

2015 Nissan Altima
VIN: 1N4AL3AP4FC171176
Dylan Conover
256 Grove St.
Chicopee, MA 01020

1998 Honda CR-V
VIN: JHLRD1860WC079304
Anthony All Mitchell
15 Ballard St., Apt. 15D
Easthampton, MA 01027

2014 Utility Trailer Mfg Base
VIN: 1UYVS2484EG053201
Ryder Truck Rental Inc
3100 Industrial Parkway
Jeffersonville, ID 47130

Tank Transpo
VIN: LLPTGLHE9S1030130
Damien Barreto
41 Beacon Cir.
Springfield, MA 01119

2011 Infiniti G37
VIN: JN1CV6AR1BM401800
Taisha Rivera
101 Lakeside Dr., Unit 94
Bristol, CT 06010

2004 Honda CRV
VIN: JHLRD77454C025397
Richard White
306 Ash St., Apt. 246
Willimantic, CT 06226

2004 Nissan Sentra
VIN: 3N1CB51D14L489803

Timothy Curran
86 Wilmont St., Apt. 3
Springfield, MA 01108
2003 Honda Odyssey
VIN: 5FNRL18653B060830
Peddle
3800 N Lamar Blvd., Suite 230
Austin, TX 78756
01/16, 01/23, 01/30/2026

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLES UNDER G.L. c.255 Sec. 39A

Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on February 13, 2026 at Interstate Towing, Inc the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicles.

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William French
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Montpelier, VT 05602

2008 Nissan Altima
VIN: 1N4AL21E98N404033
Joacy Costa De Oliveira
23 School St., Apt. 15
Rockland, MA 02370

2014 Honda Civic
VIN: 19XFB2F52EE234643
Myrna Baehr
112 Santa Barbara St.
Springfield, MA 01104

2023 X Pro Moped
VIN: L2BB9NCC8PB109039
Shaun Guyer
275 Prentice St
Springfield, MA 01104

2011 Hyundai Sonata
VIN: 5NPEB4AC2BH211898
Brianna Monay
23 Connecticut Ave., Apt. B
New London, CT 06320

2006 Honda Accord
VIN: 1HGCM56316A010508
Richard Dickson
30 Bay Meadow Rd., Apt. 30
Springfield, MA 01109

2005 Honda Accord
VIN: 1HGCM56775A140312
Ruth Sanchez
834 Worthington St Apt 2
Springfield, MA 01105

2003 Kawasaki Kx85-A
VIN: JKBKXFAC93A018212
Jomar Yadiel Colon
25 Warner St.
Springfield, MA 01108

2008 Honda Accord
VIN: 1HGCP26358A070462
Malcolm Tiggett
20 Sullivan St.
Springfield, MA 01104
01/30, 02/06, 02/13/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court

50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 Docket No. HD26P0147GD
In the interests of Jacob Thomas LeBlanc of Chicopee, MA Minor

NOTICE AND ORDER: Petition for Appointment of Guardian of a Minor NOTICE TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

1. Hearing Date/Time: A hearing on a Petition for Appointment of Guardian of a Minor filed on **01/22/2026** by **Constance P LeBlanc** of Chicopee, MA

Thomas P LeBlanc of Chicopee, MA will be held **03/05/2026 08:30 AM Guardianship of Minor Hearing**. Located: **Hampden Probate & Family Court, 50 State Street, 4th Floor, Springfield, MA 01103.**

2. Response to Petition: You may respond by filing a written response to the Petition or by appearing in person at the hearing. If you choose to file a written response, you need to:

File the original with the Court; and Mail a copy to all interested parties at least five (5) business days before the hearing.

3. Counsel for the Minor: The minor (or an adult on behalf of the minor) has the right to request that counsel be appointed for the minor.

4. Counsel for Parents: If you are a parent of the minor child who is the subject of this proceeding you have a right to be represented by an attorney. If you want an attorney and cannot afford to pay for one and if you give proof that you are indigent, an attorney will be assigned to you. Your request for an attorney should be made immediately by filling out the Application of Appointment of Counsel form. Submit the application form in person or by mail at the court location where your case is going to be heard.

5. Presence of the Minor at Hearing: A minor over age 14 has the right to be present at any hearing, unless the Court finds that it is not in the minor's best interests.

Date: January 22, 2026
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
01/30/2026

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. HD26P0143EA Estate of:

Shirley A Piquette Date of Death: 11/17/2025 CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons: A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **Brenda P Prince of Chicopee, 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 **Brenda P Prince of Chicopee, 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 02/25/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.**

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE

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

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

Date: January 22, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
01/30/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 Docket No. HD26P0154PM In the matter of: Mella Singleton Of: Chicopee, MA

RESPONDENT (Person to be Protected/ Minor) CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF CONSERVATOR OR OTHER PROTECTIVE ORDER PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, §5-304 & §5-405

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by **Herbert Singleton, Jr.** of Springfield, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that **Mella Singleton** is in need of a Conservator or other protective order and requesting that

Herbert Singleton, Jr. of Springfield, MA
Therese Singleton of Springfield, MA

(or some other suitable person) be appointed as Conservator to serve **Without Surety** on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is disabled, that a protective order or appointment of a Conservator is necessary, and that the proposed conservator is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court.

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 a.m. on the return date of **02/20/2026.** 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.

Date: January 23, 2026
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
01/30/2026

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. HD26P0151EA Estate of:

Sandra Lee Broshears
Also known as:
Sandra L Broshears
Date of Death: **12/11/2025**
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 **Jeannine A LeBlanc of South Hadley, 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 **Jeannine A LeBlanc of South Hadley, 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 02/19/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.**

UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE

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

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

Date: January 22, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
01/30/2026

\$317,000 available in Scholarship and Fellowship awards application deadline is March 15

REGION - The Horace Smith Fund will be awarding \$317,000 in scholarships and fellowships to residents of Hampden County, who have also graduated from an eligible high school or private school. This year 21 scholarships, four fellowships and one William R. Rooney Award for students with special needs will be presented to recipients at the June 18 Awards Night ceremony at Storowton Carriage House

in West Springfield. Scholarships are offered not only to graduating high school seniors but also to students already in college or those wishing to return to college. Scholarships of \$12,000 are distributed as \$3,000 annually and renewable each year until graduation. Fellowship awards of \$15,000 are distributed as \$7,500 annually and renewable for one additional year to students pursuing a full-

time graduate degree. Students must maintain at least a B average to renew. Recipients are selected on a variety of criteria, including academic records, merit, and financial need. Of great importance is a personal written account of why the student feels deserving of financial assistance. Applicants must submit their transcripts and, if applicable, college entrance exam scores or graduate degree specific

tests, and three letters of recommendation. Completed applications must be received either electronically or be mailed to The Horace Smith Fund at 16 Union Avenue, Suite 2K, Westfield, MA 01085 no later than March 15, 2026. Applications are available at local high school guidance offices, college financial aid offices, and on-line at www.HoraceSmithFund.org or by phoning (413) 739-4222.

PACERS from page 7

the fourth quarter with a driving lay-up, the Pacers reeled off eight unanswered points. Junior guard Francisco Nieves, who contributed seven points, extended Chicopee's advantage to 60-43 with a lay-up with five minutes left in regulation. Ludlow battled back

with 10-4 run. Mateus made a couple of 3-pointers during the final minute, but the visitors couldn't get any closer than eight points the rest of the way. The Pacers will most likely be making the trip to Mullins Gymnasium to battle the Lions again during the 2026-27 regular season.



Dominic Garcia gets the easy layup.



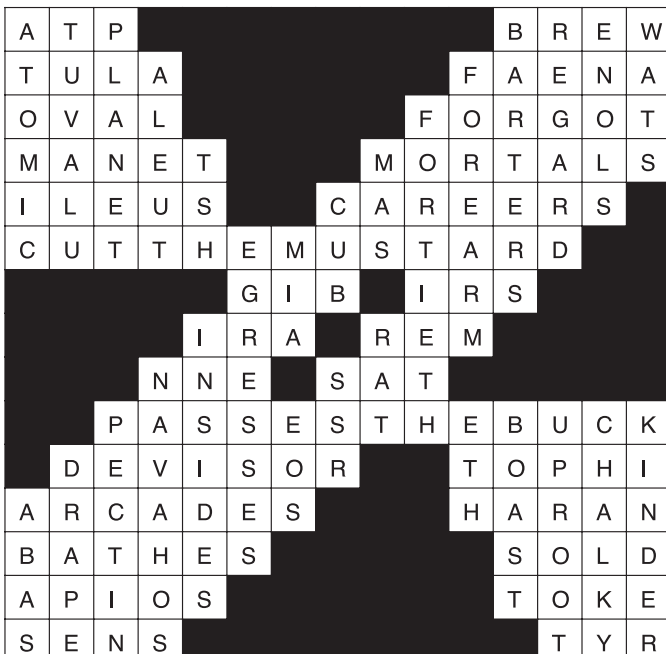
Brandon Thomas flies as he goes for a bank shot.

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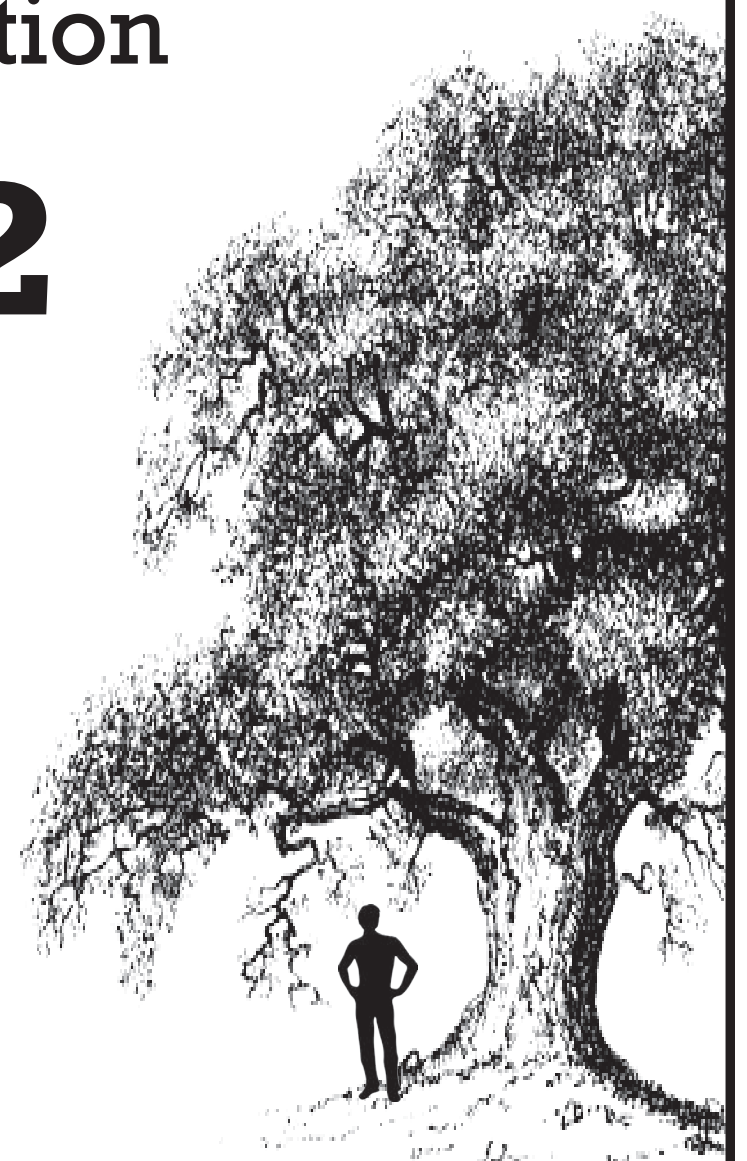
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