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COMMUNITY

River Mills celebrates St. Patrick's Day

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - Seniors gathered at the senior center on March 12 to celebrate St. Patrick's Day with a holiday-themed concert.

During the celebration, attendees dressed in festive green and St. Patrick's Day-themed attire enjoyed light refreshments, dancing and traditional Irish music performances from Banish Misfortune.

The entertainment was sponsored by the Friends of RiverMills Senior Center.

Rolande Renaud, dressed from head to toe in St. Patrick's Day attire, was having the time of her life dancing to Irish tunes with friends.

"It's great, playing great music and great music to dance to, also. I got to get up there and dance!" Renaud said.

Renaud enjoys dressing up for holiday-themed events, hearing the traditional Irish music and having the chance to celebrate.

"It makes you feel better. You're celebrating. Whatever it is, you're celebrating," Renaud said.

Renaud is also a frequent visitor to the senior center, coming to the exercise classes three



Rolande Renaud and Maria Duffy have a ball dancing to Irish music during the St. Patrick's Day Concert at RiverMills Senior Center.

TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

times a week.

"It's great. We try to come to almost all of them. They always have good turnout(s) and it's not expensive and it's really great," Renaud said. "We love it."

Theresa Nallett, who is Irish, also got out on the dance floor at one point, performing a

line dance she learned from an instructor at the senior center.

Nallett was thrilled to attend the St. Patrick's Day concert, having attended other festive performances in the area ahead of the St. Patrick's Day holiday.

"I love the music. To me, it's all about the music," Nallett said.

Nallett also had high praise for the senior center holding the concert, sharing the impact it has on seniors.

"It makes it so convenient for people that can't go out and go to other places. It's so nice," Nallett said.

For her, it's important to

celebrate Irish heritage and roots along with all cultures.

"I think we gain a better understanding of people if we understand someone of another culture and enjoy differences," Nallett said.

See RIVERMILLS page 7

COMMUNITY



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

A group photo of State Rep. Shirley Arriaga (D-Chicopee), 2024 Chicopee Colleen Kinamarie Ayala, Colleen Court Members Lillian Young, Madelyn Rice, Morgan Presnal and Giannalee Beach, State Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield), State Sen. Jacob Oliveira (D-Ludlow) and Mayor John Vieau during the Irish Heritage Flag Raising ceremony outside City Hall in Chicopee on March 8.

Chicopee raises Irish flag for Irish Heritage Day

The ceremony comes ahead of St. Patrick's Day

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - Residents, community members, state and local elected officials and more gathered outside City Hall on March 8 to raise the Irish flag for

Irish Heritage Day.

In his remarks, Mayor John Vieau reflected on Irish Americans and culture in Chicopee, including former mayor Dennis Murphy, who served in 1899 and organized his own construction business, the Dennis Murphy Company.

Vieau also thanked the Chicopee St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee for keeping Irish culture alive in the city.

"You keep Irish Ameri-

can culture active in Chicopee," Vieau said.

State Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield) said he was proud to be with the Irish community to celebrate.

"The Irish community first, steadfast, has been gracious and impacting this community through business, through its culture and through its community

See IRISH HERITAGE DAY page 8

COMMUNITY

City Council approves filing petition on four-year mayoral term

Recall provision and Charter Commission recommendations also pose questions

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - City Council approved on March 7 a petition to the General Court on making the city's mayoral term four years instead of two years.

During the 2023 municipal election, a ballot question concerning whether residents were interested in considering a mayoral term of four years in the city received 4,963 votes saying 'yes' (59.9%), while 3,319 (40.1%) voted 'no.'

Currently, mayors serve for two-year terms in Chicopee.

After City Clerk Keith Rattell read the agenda item into the record, Ward 8 Councilor Gary Labrie explained the motion was to get this "on to the regular ballot" as opposed to a non-binding ballot question.

Ward 2 Councilor Shane

Brooks then elaborated on what comes next.

"So, this will cement the voters' will at the next municipal election. Whether they voted up or down is immaterial, but this is the next step in the process to allow voters to choose whether they want their municipal leader to serve a two or a four-year term," Brooks said.

Councilor-at-Large Tim Wagner is in favor of the question going on the ballot should it be approved by the State Legislature, but is uncomfortable with the item being approved without a recall provision in place.

Wagner suggested tabling the item until the recall provision is included.

"It's a lot of power to give to one person to remain in office--unless they're convicted of a crime--for four years," Wagner said. "With us being elected every two years or with the mayor being elected every two years now, it's a little bit different, but I think that along with this recommendation

See MAYORAL TERM page 11

Student Advisory Committee provides update on seal of community service request

Retirees also honored

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - School Committee received an update from the Student Advisory Committee on March 6 regarding their plans for a seal of community service initiative.

Students Duwayne Barker and Maria Faretti explained the initiative, called the Chicopee Seal of Community Service, would be similar to the Seal of Bilingual.

Barker said the seal would apply to graduating seniors "who not only meet a minimum community service requirement but also actively seek and earn this recognition through their dedication to service."

"The following requirements are 50 hours of community service throughout freshman to junior year, 75 hours of community service if you want the seal of distinction and you need a reference via Google form from someone inside the community and a faculty member in the student's school," Barker said. "Hours can be both earned in and outside of school activities. Students do not need a certain GPA to be eligible as we feel that there are many students out there who maybe do not have a 4.0 GPA but should be recognized for their efforts and dedication to the community."

Barker said students would log in their hours in the Google form, with a

two-week deadline in place so hours are current and accurate to the student.

Faretti shared the committee hopes to have a ceremony each year to honor the students and invite members of the community to speak and support them.

"To kick off this initiative, we are partnering with the mayor's office and the Chicopee Public Schools Family and Community Liaison, Miss Kristen Coelho, to publicize and participate in the city's Clean Sweep. In addition to partnering with Coelho, we're also currently working to loop in athletics from both CHS and CCHS. We working with Athletic Director Mr. Sean Mackin to normalize these kinds of community service activities and promote diligent participation in students," Farretti said.

She added the Chicopee Seal of Community Service "is not an allocate."

"It's a testament to our commitment to producing well-rounded, socially-conscious individuals who are poised to make a difference in the world. We hope that the School Committee and administration supports our efforts to promote this award, but more importantly, promote student involvement and community service and activities such as the Chicopee Clean Sweep," Farretti said.

Farretti said anyone who is interested in helping out at the Clean Sweep, it will take place on April 27 from 9 a.m. to Noon and to check the Chicopee High School and Chicopee Comprehensive High School Facebook and Instagram pages for updates.

Another highlight was when Su-

perintendent Dr. Marcus Ware honored seven people who are retiring this year, having a combined 160 years of service to Chicopee Public Schools.

They are Kathleen Abood, a science teacher at Streiber Elementary School, Douglas Beaudry, school custodian at Fairview Elementary School, Patricia Bieda, senior clerk typist at Sztela Preschool, Mark Davignon, senior custodian at Bowie Elementary School, Susan Hauschild, school adjustment counselor at Chicopee Comprehensive High School, Doreen Lukasik, cafeteria helper at Bowie Elementary School, and Paula Terkelsen, fifth grade teacher at Streiber Elementary School.

Ward 4 School Committee member Sandra Peret congratulated everyone for their service to the district.

"We know how mentally and emotionally difficult it is for any teacher to stand in front of a classroom day after day, but to see the length of service for someone in a physically challenging position as custodial work or to work in the cafeteria, I commend them as well because that's not easy work to do," Peret said.

Ward 5 School Committee member Grace Schofield shared she had the honor of working with Davignon and Lukaski.

"Their personalities and kindness were truly going to be missed and they shape the fabric of the school. Also, Kathy Abood helped me a lot during committee work and has really added a lot and all the retirees will be missed and we appreciate their service," Schofield said.

Chicopee Comp Class of 1974 plans 50th Reunion

CHICOPEE - It's the time to renew friendships and share memories with high school classmates.

The Chicopee Comprehensive High School Class of 1974 will be holding its 50th reunion on Sept. 13 at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 460 Granby Rd. in Chicopee.

The reunion party will begin at 5:00 p.m. with cocktails and dinner. Committee members are planning details for the festivities and also working hard to track down classmates and reach out to as many as possible.

If you think you have contact information for long-lost friends, please send it to Linda Parlengas at lparlengas@hotmail.com; Mona Marciel Friberg at tinker245@aol.com, or Lynn Provost Larrabee at penrose43@comcast.net.

We will be sending out details soon and would like to include everyone. Information can also be shared on Facebook at Chicopee Comp Class of 1974 Reunion Page or at Classmates.com.

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City receives Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Award

The grant will be reviewed by Finance Committee

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - Mayor John Vieau announced on March 7 the city has received a Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Award totaling \$66,990.

The grant will be used for a new vertical lift to comply with ADA/MAAB requirements and serve as a connector bridge between the main building and the annex at city hall.

Vieau explained how the lift system would take people from the annex down to the first floor of the main building, consisting of ten steps.

The lift is currently inoperable and parts for it cannot be obtained.

"This will help with the expenses replacing that as part of phase two of city hall renovations," Vieau said.

Planning Director Lee Pouliot explained the city has been successful "with this program in the past" as a grant award was received for phase one of city hall renovations for replacing the annex's elevator.

"The critical component here is there's a very short time frame in which we have to spend this grant. This is state funding and it's attached to the state fiscal years," Pouliot said. "So if accepted, we will need to accelerate the speed of the phase two project as this work is integrated with a number of other trades that have work in that area."

Pouliot said the grant has to be expended by June 30, 2024.

"So we'll be working with the mayor to accelerate the balance of the phase two project, but I just wanted to make you aware that there is a pretty hard deadline with this particular program for spending," Pouliot said.

After President/Councilor-at-Large Frank Laflamme asked about the deadline being this year and Pouliot confirmed yes, he said this.

"So what you are saying is we will have to start the phase two project now," Laflamme said.

Pouliot affirmed yes.

"We will have to move that forward.

If not, we will have to try to find a way to separate the scope into a separate bid package that we can accelerate on a different schedule," Pouliot said. "I would just caution that if we do that, the price of doing the lift will increase because we won't have the other trades on site as part of the larger project that we will need because there's steel, there's marble, there's other structural components surrounding the lift area that need to be done that will not be done by the lift subcontractor."

After Laflamme asked if all city departments had an opportunity to review and confirm there weren't any changes to the plans, Pouliot confirmed yes to both questions.

"I have reviewed all of the final layouts with all the departments. Every department head that I've met with has been satisfied with the layouts that we've creat-

ed," Pouliot said. "We've made revisions based on the new staffing levels in HR and in the city council office proper based on your request, Councilor Laflamme. So that's the last layout edit that's underway right now is to add that additional workstation area to the city council office. But all the other department layouts have been reviewed and the staffing levels are accurate and we have enough desks and they're laid out appropriately."

During the vote, Ward 2 Councilor Shane Brooks explained the grant would fix the lift issue and help make the mayor's office, law office, and city clerk's office more accessible to residents needing accommodations.

He reiterated what Pouliot stated earlier about the coming deadline and if approved, phase two of city hall renovations would begin.

Ward 8 Councilor Gary Labrie then presented an amendment for the item to be sent to the Finance Committee for review of the plans, with the amendment passing 12-1.

City of Chicopee utilizes Chapter 90 Funding for road resurfacing projects

CHICOPEE - The City of Chicopee is excited to unveil its road resurfacing projects for Spring 2024, supported by the Chapter 90 Program. This program provides annual funding to municipalities for the enhancement and investment in local transportation infrastructures.

Mayor John Vieau expressed gratitude for the Chapter 90 Program, stating, "The purpose of this program is to give municipalities the means to meet their specific transportation needs and ambitions. We're thankful for this essential support, which allows us to improve the safety and condition of our roadways for the benefit of both residents and visitors."

The Chapter 90 Program distributes funding to every municipality within the Commonwealth, empowering them to assess and address their transportation objectives. Accordingly, the City of Chicopee has outlined resurfacing work for numerous streets:

Lawrence Road (Granby Rd. to Nichols Rd.)

Nichols Road Intersection (approximately 230' each side of Lawrence Road)

Lemuel Avenue (entire length)

Moore Street (Fairview Ave. through Glenwood St. intersection)

Glenwood Street (entire length)

Gilbert Street (Leeds St. to Newbury St.)

Bromont Street (Carew St. to Rochester St.)

Griffith Road (entire length)

Better Way (entire length)

Johnson Road (entire length to Westover ARB fence)

New Ludlow Road (Montcalm St. westerly to city line)

Additionally, the Chapter 90 funding encompasses the consulting fees for the design of a specific roundabout, further contributing to the city's transportation improvement efforts.

The city sent out the bid package for the 2024 Resurfacing Project, with bids expected by late March / early April, and aiming for construction to start in mid to late May.

Brad Whalen promoted to Fire Apparatus Technician/Foreman



PHOTO AND CAPTION COURTESY OF CHICOPEE FIRE DEPARTMENT

CHICOPEE - Congratulations to Brad Whalen on his promotion to Fire Apparatus Technician/Foreman. We appreciate his hard work keeping our large fleet of emergency vehicles operational.

Investigation into fatal shooting on I-391 in Chicopee underway

SPRINGFIELD- On Wednesday, March 12 at 10 p.m. a vehicle with multiple occupants arrived at Baystate Medical Center, some of whom were suffering from gun-shot wounds, one of the individuals passed away.

The surviving occupants have been uncooperative, leaving investigators trying to locate a crime scene.

Investigators were able to locate a scene earlier this morning on Interstate 391 South between exits 3 and 4.

This investigation is being conducted by the Massachusetts State Police Detective Unit assigned to the Hampden DA's Office and the Hampden District Attorney's Murder Unit.



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Chicopee St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee hosts Irish Night

CHICOPEE – The Chicopee St. Patrick's Day Committee hosted its annual Irish Night event at the Portuguese American Club on March 8 to celebrate Irish pride. The festivities included food, gift basket fundraisers and entertainment from Irish step dancing from the Black Rose Academy of Irish Dance, bagpipes performed by Tom Knightley to music from DJ Nick Gagne.

Attendees also got the opportunity to meet this year's 2024 Chicopee Colleen and her court ahead of the annual Road Race and Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade taking place on March 17.

Photos courtesy of Joel Rodowicz





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Chicopee Police Officer Mark Wilkes retires



CHICOPEE – Please join us in congratulating Officer Mark Wilkes on his retirement. Officer Wilkes was a graduate of the 35th MPOC in Agawam and has proudly served the City of Chicopee as a police officer since 2001. Officer Wilkes spent his career in the patrol division on midnights and day shift, he patrolled Chicopee Falls and Wilmansett for most of his career. Officer Wilkes had a positive impact on the communities that he served; this was exemplified by the outpouring of support for him after his injury last year. As many know, Ofc. Wilkes suffered a massive heart attack last March after playing in our annual charity hockey game against the Fire Department. That night the rivalry on the ice was set aside and our brothers and sisters in red came through to provide life saving measures to Ofc. Wilkes. It is because of those actions and the medical attention provided by all the doctors and nurses that we are here today to wish Ofc. Wilkes a happy retirement.



PHOTOS AND CAPTION COURTESY OF CHICOPEE POLICE DEPARTMENT

World Autism Day: An Interactive Experience and Reception

CHICOPEE – Join Sunshine Village in the Chicopee Mayor’s Hallway -- for an engaging sensory showcase highlighting individuality, ability and talent. A reception will follow on the 3rd Floor in the Auditorium, where you can:

Meet the creators of this interactive exhibit. Enjoy refreshments served by Sunshine Village’s Catering Team

Discover the extraordinary talents of our Artists with Distinct Abilities – shop this unique collection of art, photography and more. Every purchase supports entrepreneurial opportunities and instills pride in the person who created it.

The event takes place on Tuesday, April 2, from 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at Chicopee City Hall at 17 Springfield St.

Eversource to trim trees from helicopters to help ensure reliable power

What: As part of its efforts to ensure safe, reliable service for customers, the energy company will be using a low-flying helicopter to trim tree limbs from the sides of a power line corridor in Western Massachusetts starting this week. Highly skilled pilots working for Eversource will conduct the overhead trimming using rotating blades and a helicopter. This helps to significantly reduce the amount of time it takes climbing crews to conduct the work manually and reduces the risk of injury to tree crews.

Eversource’s transmission lines are the superhighway of the power grid and are critical to deliver clean energy to the region. When a tree grows too close or falls onto these critical portions of the electric system, it can interrupt service for thousands of customers across multiple communities. The clearance area around transmission lines provides the necessary protection, which is why it’s essential to keep this space free of vegetation to prevent a public safety issue and outages for customers.

When: Tuesday, March 12 through April 6. Weather permitting, flights will take place between 7:30 a.m. and 5 p.m.

Where: The helicopter will be working in the following towns crossing over the following roads:

Hampden, MA: Mill Rd., East Longmeadow Rd., Allen St.

Wilbraham, MA: Stony Hill Rd., Soule Rd., Tinkham Rd., Springfield St., Manchonis Rd.

Ludlow, MA: Chapin St., East St., Miller St., Saw Mill Rd., Focosi Ln., Pallet Way, Libby St., Holyoke St., Tank Farm St., Fuller St., Munsing St., Moore St., Alden St., Paine Ave.

Agawam, MA: Parkedge Dr., North Westfield St., Vicinity of Barry St., South Westfield St., Shoemaker Ln., Silver St., High St.

Suffield, CT: Mapleton Ave.

Enfield, CT: George Washington Rd.

East Longmeadow, MA: Shaker Rd., Somers Rd., Meadowbrook Rd.

Longmeadow, MA: Vicinity of Wolf Swamp Rd.

South Hadley, MA: Vicinity of Ferry St.

Holyoke, MA: Vicinity of Mt. Tom

Westfield, MA: Sackett St., Neck Rd., East Main St.

West Springfield, MA: Circuit Ave., M St.

Chicopee, MA: Vicinity of Schoolhouse Rd., Montgomery St., Sheridan St., Burnett Rd., Shawinigan Dr., Old Fuller Rd. Ext.

Description of Aircraft: Color: Red, Silver, Black / Tail #: N107SF / Type: Hughes 369D

For more information, contact Priscilla Ress at priscilla.ress@eversource.com or 413-787-1055.

Chicopee Public Library announces upcoming events

CHICOPEE – The Chicopee Public Library on Front Street has announced the following March events are coming up:

Thursday, March 21 at 6 p.m. Needlecraft Circle Do you want a place to work on your needlecraft projects while you chat with other crafters? Join us in the Conference Room on the third Thursday of each month to work on your projects.

Tuesday, March 26 at 6:30 p.m.
“Organic Gardening for Everyone” with John Root. This PowerPoint presentation provides practical advice and inspiration to gardeners of all ages and physical conditions on growing vegetables, fruits, herbs, and flowers organically. Topics include composting and mulching to promote healthy soil, using space efficiently, growing plants from seed, succession planting, inviting beneficial wildlife, controlling weeds and pests naturally, and preserving homegrown produce. Questions and comments are welcome, and handouts

with recommended books and websites are made available to participants. This program is free to the public and no registration is required.

This program is supported by the Chicopee Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the MA Cultural Council, a state agency.

As always, the computer lab is available to work on genealogy on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 a.m.-Noon and 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. We are a FamilySearch Affiliate Library and have helpful databases such as Ancestry, American Ancestors and HeritageQuest to help you in your search. We have also just added Newspapers.com to our genealogy resources available in the library.

If you need technology help, we offer one-on-one computer help on Mondays and Fridays at 2 p.m. or by appointment.

For more information, email or call the Reference Desk at cpl@chicopee-publiclibrary.org and 594-1800 x3.

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GUEST COLUMN



PHOTO BY KEITH RAMOS/USFWS

American woodcock

A Fiskdale couple reported seeing an American woodcock in their large field.

They said, "On Saturday, March 9 we heard the first woodcocks of the season. So happy to have them back."

The woodcock has an extremely long bill, a short neck, a dark back and buff breast. Its feathers blend into the leaf litter. The long bill allows the bird to probe into the earth and it can open its beak below the surface to grab prey.

It can eat its weight in earthworms within 24 hours. It also eats insects and seeds. Woodcocks inhabit woods and thickets bordered by open areas.

Both sexes make a "peent" call. In spring, woodcocks display in open fields. The male rises in the air in wide circles. When he reaches about 50 feet about the ground his wings start to make a twittering sound. At about 200 to 300 feet the twittering stops. He gives a canary like flight song and begins a zig zag descent.

Several males may display in the same field. Woodcocks are polygamous. Females are attracted to the area and mate with the males. Males continue to display after mating and may mate with other females.

After mating, the females raise their brood alone. The nest is a scraped depression in the ground lined with twigs or grass and placed within 100 to 200 yards of the male's display ground. The female lays four buff eggs with brown splotches.

Canada geese

On Friday, March 1 I saw a large flock of Canada geese in a field in Spencer. On Monday, March 4 I heard the honking of geese. I looked up and saw two large flocks of Canada geese fly overhead. The first flock flew lower and lower and landed in my hayfield and the pond next to it. The second flock flew much higher and headed northward.

Belted kingfisher

On Feb. 29, a spotted pair of belted kingfishers at a small pond in Ware on my way back from the Ware River News/Barre Gazette office. I was surprised to see them this early.

Black bears and more

I received an email from a Wilbraham resident. He said, "It was March 1, when I woke to see the damage a bear did to our poles and feeders. This was the second time our poles and feeders were damaged by a bear, in the last few years. Shame on me, for not bringing the feeders in at dusk."

He said, "We have been casual bird watchers and feeders for over thirty years. It is relaxing and fun to see the local and migratory birds visit our feeders. Unfortunately, we have to consider the risks associated with placing food sources in our back yards. It means we have to be aware and maybe take the feeders in at dusk, putting them back out in the morning." He also said, "However, that will not eliminate the chance

See **BACKYARD** page 7

GUEST COLUMN



News from my garden to yours

I received a text from a friend earlier today asking what is covering my strawberry plants.

I answered her with one word: water.

Yes indeed, a good portion of my garden is drowning at the moment, as are various parts of my yard. We have had too much rain in too short of a period and the ground is still frozen partway down.

It's happened before and will likely happen again, but every time it does, I wonder how these areas could possibly rebound and look good come spring. Usually, they do and with little help from me.

The water recedes and spring comes.

Keep in mind that the soil, be it in your garden or yard, will lose some of its fertility because of leaching, and it will be compacted from such excessive rainfall. Give your plants a side dressing of compost this spring; it will be sure to help restore fertility and improve the condition of the soil in general.

According to a soil test, my garden was notoriously low in nitrogen, so I incorporated blood meal into the soil at planting time with another dose a few weeks later. It didn't occur to me at the time, but flooding a couple of times early in the year could be the culprit of the low nitrogen reading.

Soil that is heavy with water literally pushes out the space that was meant for oxygen and becomes compacted. Without oxygen, plants' vascular systems won't function properly.

As I said before, a few days in the off season likely won't hurt much, but if this were to happen during the growing season, your plants may look wilted even though they are sitting in water.

Root rot, perhaps, or simply that the roots are unable to absorb the water around them.

Lawns should be aerated to remedy this problem, and garden soil should be loosened – once it's dry of course – to get some air into

the soil. This can be done numerous ways, by use of various hand tools.

Although scratching around with a three tine cultivator will likely bring some weed seeds to the surface, it is one of my favorite things to do in the garden. I find it a great stress-buster, too.

Do remember to try not to walk on saturated soil or it will compound the problem. Even in the spring when you are working in your garden, place a board under your feet to distribute your weight evenly and prevent more compaction.

Have you noticed that your houseplants have begun to put on an abundance of new growth? Mine sure have! Support this with a dose of half strength liquid fertilizer.

I need to take cuttings of fuchsia and geranium plants that I overwintered. It will sure be great to make cemetery logs with our own geraniums this year.

I will simply cut a terminal (meaning top) stem about 4-5 inches long just after a node (that's where the leaves join the stem). I'll carefully take off all but the top two or three leaves and insert the leafless section into a small pot (say around 2-3 inches in diameter) of good quality moist potting soil.

The two or three leaves you left will be above the soil line. If you have rooting hormone on hand, you can dip the stem into that first, but you don't have to; plants in active growth usually root fine even without it.

I will place my cuttings in indirect light and mist with a spray bottle a couple of times a day to keep them from wilting before they root. Check in about a month, and if you are lucky, roots will have formed.

Depending on the size pot you used, and the size of the roots, it may be a good time to put the plants into a bigger pot and place them in a sunnier window until it's safe to plant them outside.

My daffodil plants are starting to pop up here and there in the yard. I had a little bit of balanced organic granular fertilizer left from last year, so I sprinkled it around the clusters.

Now and once the flowers have gone by are the two best times to fertilize narcissus. I am so excited to enjoy the varied colors and scents from this huge Genus of plants.

To me, they are the epitome of a true spring flower. Soon enough, soon enough!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 31 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.



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IN THE CITY



From the left, Sue Stebbins, Margie Cooper, Bill Cooper and Karen Walker smile for a group photo during the St. Patrick's Day Concert.



Theresa Nallett does a line dance as Banish Misfortune performs during the St. Patrick's Day concert at RiverMills Senior Center.

River Mills celebrates St. Patrick's Day



TURLEY PHOTOS BY KRISTIN RIVERS

Henry and Maureen Dumes were festive in their St. Patrick's Day attire during the St. Patrick's Day Concert at RiverMills Senior Center on March 11.

RIVERMILLS from page 1

Sean Burke and Ellen Remond of Banish Misfortune are multi-talented instrumentalists and singers, having a great time performing for the seniors.

"It's just nice to see people appreciate the music and it's in a situation where you can hear everything. It's not like in pubs where there's an awful lot of noise going on and everything," Burke said. "It's really nice you're able to talk to the people and get a feel for it."

"I loved the people getting up and dancing and clapping along and being engaged with the music. It feels like that they're really happy to be here. That gives us energy and helps us play better too," Remond said.

Burke explained the band has been together for over 15 years.

"We started out just by playing in Irish sessions at different pubs and ev-



From the left, Larry Stetson, Maria Duffy and Rolande Renaud dance an Irish jig during the St. Patrick's Day Concert at RiverMills Senior Center on March 11.

erything and came across that way. We all got together at different times and started playing that way," Burke said.

Redmond was thrilled with the turnout.

"Especially after COVID, it's so nice to see big groups of people and people, obviously, so happy to be together," Redmond said. "It's great. Live music I think is a really unifying force."

Nallett encourages the community to support the senior center and embrace the power of music, calling it "a healer."

"It's really import-

From the left, Christine Rumanowski, Richard Salvas and Beatrice Santaniello at the St. Patrick's Day Concert at RiverMills Senior Center.



ant. It's important for people to go out and to have a place to go to," Nallett said.

Burke and Redmond wish everyone a Happy St. Patrick's Day.

"I just hope they have a good time and I'm glad they had a good time here," Burke said.

"This is music that everyone can enjoy. You don't have to be Irish to enjoy it," Redmond said.



Banish Misfortune performs traditional Irish songs during the St. Patrick's Day Concert at RiverMills Senior Center on March 11.

BACKYARD from page 6

for a bear/human encounter. Last year, a black bear was in our neighbors back yard, at 10:30 a.m. in the morning. The bear was attracted by the chickens in the coup. Fortunately, they have an electrified fence, surrounding the coup. After getting shocked, it ran across the street and into Cedar Swamp woods. It will be back, since a bear does remember where the food sources are located." He said he recently saw a male, pileated woodpecker.

Loon fact

The Loon Preservation Committee in Moultonborough New Hampshire included these interesting loon facts in their newsletter. Loons are physiologically adapted for life in the water, so much so that they struggle to walk on land as a result. Their dense, thick walled bones help to weigh them down in the water. The extreme rear-placement of their legs and feet allows them to maximize the propulsive force that they can exert with each kick.

Many studies documented the duration of observed loon dives. Most of these studies have reported that average loon dives last somewhere between 33 and 52 seconds, regardless of season or location. Loons diving to deeper depths tend to spend more time underwater than those diving in more shallow areas.

In a study of loons using Lake Michigan as a stopover site during fall migration, Kenow et al. (2018) found that loons diving to depths of 40 m (131 feet) were spending, on average, 139 seconds (over 2 minutes) underwater per dive. In contrast, loons diving to depths of just 20 meters (65 feet) in that study were spending less time under water per dive (87 seconds, on average).

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.



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IN THE CITY

IRISH HERITAGE DAY from page 1

and awareness, honestly, on standing up for what is right fairly early on and helping lead a political sphere that has really disseminated and dropped seeds into other communities," Gomez said. "And I have to give credit where it's due, and I just want to say thank you for that, especially in Western Massachusetts."

State Sen. Jacob Oliveira (D-Ludlow) recently updated his ancestry and learned he has Irish heritage, later singing an Irish song.

Oliveira praised Vieau, the City Council and the business community for recognizing the "patchwork of cultures that make up the city of Chicopee and Western Massachusetts," and expressed his best wishes to the Chicopee Colleen and her court.

"You guys put in a lot of work and a lot of effort to get here today. We're looking forward and we are praying for wonderful weather next Sunday and making sure that you guys get a great day to march across the river in the city of Holyoke," Oliveira said.

State Rep. Shirley Arriaga (D-Chicopee) was excited to raise the flag, also thanking the Parade Committee for their support of the Irish community.

"As we know here in Chicopee, we're very prideful and our Irish community is extremely prideful. We have so many events thanks to the committee, so I want to take a moment to thank them for all of their hard work," Arriaga said.

Vieau then declared March 8 "Irish Heritage Day" and presented the proclamation to 2024 Chicopee Colleen Kinamarie Ayala, who joined her court members Giannalee Beach, Lilian Young, Morgan Presnal and Madelyn Rice to crank the lever to raise the Irish flag.

Meghan Balakier, president of the Chicopee St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, explained Chicopee has marched in the annual parade for 70 years and she and the committee are excited to celebrate this year's festivities.

"I'm just so excited to celebrate with our new Colleen and court, our committee members, our community-at-large and just enjoy the culture and the camaraderie that we all have together," Balakier said.

Balakier began serving with the committee in 2019 and was a 2008 Chicopee Colleen court member, crediting her par-



TURLEY PHOTOS BY KRISTIN RIVERS

The Irish flag blows in the wind ahead of the Irish Heritage Flag Raising ceremony outside City Hall in Chicopee on March 8.



Chicopee Colleen Court Member Lilian Young cranks the lever to raise the Irish flag during the Irish Heritage Flag Raising in Chicopee on March 8 as Ward 4 City Councilor George Balakier, State Sen. Jacob Oliveira (D-Ludlow), Mayor John Vieau and 2024 Chicopee Colleen Kinamarie Ayala, Chicopee Colleen Court Members Madelyn Rice, Giannalee Beach and Morgan Presnal look on



From the left, Ward 1 City Councilor Abigail Arriaga, Ward 9 City Councilor Mary Beth Costello, City Councilor-At-Large Gerry Roy, Ward 4 City Councilor George Balakier, City Council Vice President/Councilor-at-Large Robert Zygarowski, Mayor John Vieau, State Sen. Jacob Oliveira (D-Ludlow), 2024 Chicopee Colleen Kinamarie Ayala and Colleen Court Members Lilian Young, Morgan Presnal, Giannalee Beach and Madelyn Rice listen as State Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield) speaks during the Irish Heritage Flag Raising ceremony outside City Hall in Chicopee.

ents for getting involved with the organization.

"It's just really important for me to give back to an organization that gave so much to me and my parents as well," Balakier said. "They did that because I had such a wonderful experience that they wanted to

give back to all the wonderful people."

Balakier hopes the Colleen and her court have a great time at the upcoming parade.

"I just hope that they just cherish every moment, soak it all in, just appreciate the community aspect of this and just enjoy the

time with each other and doing events out in the community," Balakier said.

Balakier wished everyone a Happy St. Patrick's Day.

"My message would be, even if you're not Irish, everyone's Irish on St. Patrick's Day!" Balakier said.



From the left, Ward 9 City Councilor Mary Beth Costello, City Councilor-At-Large Gerry Roy, Ward 4 City Councilor George Balakier, City Council Vice President/Councilor-at-Large Robert Zygarowski, City Assessor Laura McCarthy, State Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield), State Sen. Jacob Oliveira (D-Ludlow), 2024 Chicopee Colleen Kinamarie Ayala and Colleen Court Members Lilian Young, Morgan Presnal, Giannalee Beach and Madelyn Rice watch as Mayor John Vieau reflects on Irish culture in Chicopee during the Irish Heritage Flag Raising ceremony outside City Hall on March 8.



From the left, State Rep. Shirley Arriaga (D-Chicopee), State Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield) and State Sen. Jacob Oliveira (D-Ludlow) applaud as Mayor John Vieau presents the mayor's proclamation to 2024 Chicopee Colleen Kinamarie Ayala, with Colleen Court Members Lilian Young and Morgan Presnal applauding as well.



From the left, Ward 9 City Councilor Mary Beth Costello, City Councilor-At-Large Gerry Roy, Ward 4 City Councilor George Balakier, City Council Vice President/Councilor-at-Large Robert Zygarowski, Mayor John Vieau and State Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield) listen as State Sen. Jacob Oliveira (D-Ludlow) provides reflections on Irish Heritage, culture and community during the Irish Heritage Flag Raising ceremony outside City Hall in Chicopee.



State Rep. Shirley Arriaga (D-Chicopee), provides remarks as State Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield), Mayor John Vieau, State Sen. Jacob Oliveira (D-Ludlow), 2024 Colleen Kinamarie Ayala, Chicopee Colleen Court Members Lilian Young, Morgan Presnal and Giannalee Beach at the Irish Heritage Flag Raising ceremony outside City Hall on March 8.

Sports

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Chicopee Youth compete in Suburban playoffs

CHICOPEE – Last week, Chicopee’s 7-8 Youth girls basketball team participated in the Suburban Basketball League playoffs. Chicopee would enter the playoff phase of the season last week with games throughout the week. The playoffs were hosted at Chicopee High School.



Rayna Carter takes a shot on the hoop.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Sophia Moreira heads for a layup.



Dream Smith makes her way down the court.



Na'le Malone eyes the hoop as she heads inside the arc.

St. Patrick’s Road Race set for this Saturday afternoon



PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

The first wave of harriers are off in the 2023 St. Patrick’s Road Race in Holyoke.

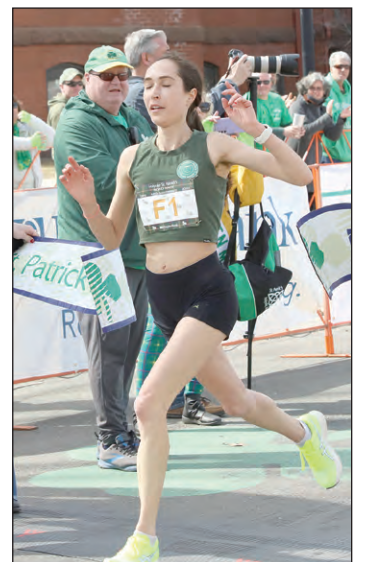
By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

HOLYOKE – The weekend of St. Patrick’s Day is synonymous with the popular parade in the streets of downtown Holyoke. But equally tradition is the 10K St. Patrick’s Day Road Race.

The road race was disappointingly cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and again in 2021 when COVID-19 rates rose due to the vaccine not being as widely available at the time.

But last year, the race returned to the joy people throughout the region and beyond and Holyoke once again became a hub of activity beginning with “Race Day.”

And the sights and scenes of St. Patrick’s Day weekend were also back in the Paper City the past two years as the downtown area around Maple and High Streets were lined with patrons. Bars and restaurants



For the second straight year, Jenna Gigliotti, of Amherst, was the top female finisher. She came in at 35:29.

were filled with people going in and out, the Mummers gave their performance, and children and others were able to partici-

See **ROAD RACE** page 10

Papermen represent region in new league

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Papermen, an amateur adult hockey team, was in action last Saturday afternoon. The Papermen are brand new adult team participating in the Union Hockey League, a new adult league in the New York and New England region. The new team got started in January and is playing a 32-game season with seven other teams that joined the league. Home games are played at Fitzpatrick Rink in Holyoke.



Mark Laviolette, of Ludlow makes his way up the right side of the ice.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Vinnie McAllister sends a pass away.



Nick McNally comes into the ice and immediately takes control of the puck.



Nick Cambria looks to center the puck.



Zach Paisley heads up the left side of the ice.

T-Birds suffer shutout against Bruins

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (26-26-3-2) threw everything they could at the net of the Providence Bruins (35-17-3-2) without success in a 5-0 defeat on Sunday at Amica Mutual Pavilion.

It was evident from the onset that the goaltenders were not going to allow anything easily, as both Colten Ellis of Springfield and Brandon Bussi of Providence came out with laser-like focus. Bussi was exceptional from the get-go, as he turned away a trio of point-blank chances in the opening 10 minutes off of Will Bitten, Joey Duszak, and Zach Dean.

Operating on the first power play of the afternoon, the T-Birds instead saw the scoreless deadlock broken when Jayson Megna intercepted a pass and beat everyone up ice to beat Ellis on a backhand breakaway, giving the P-Bruins a 1-0 lead at 11:23 of the first period.

Megna's tally, which began Providence's Teddy Bear Toss, proved to be

the only shot to beat Bussi or Ellis for the next period and a half. The T-Birds peppered the Providence net from all angles and in all situations, but Bussi continued to bamboozle his division foes.

With Springfield still pushing hard to equalize, Oskar Steen finally afforded Bussi and his defense some insurance when he elevated a wrist shot past Ellis 3:58 into the final period. Joey Abate and John Beecher would follow suit, setting each other up for odd-man rush goals at 13:45 and 15:37 respectively. With the game well in hand, the Bruins' top power play unit added one more for good measure as Georgii Merkulov potted the Bruins' 5th goal at 19:28.

The T-Birds get some well-deserved rest before a crucial two-game series in Charlotte next Saturday and Sunday against the Checkers inside Bojangles' Coliseum. Puck drop on Saturday is set for 4 p.m., with a 1 p.m. matinee on tap for Sunday.

Railers suffer loss to Lions

TROIS-RIVIÈRES, QC – The Worcester Railers HC (25-25-4-2, 56pts) lost to the Trois-Rivières Lions (23-26-3-3, 52pts) on Saturday afternoon by the final score of 3-1 in front of a crowd of 2,224 at the Colisée Vidéotron. The Railers head back home to play the Reading Royals for their second school-day game of the year on Wednesday, March 13th at 10:05am.

Trois-Rivieres notched the game's first two goals from Jakov Novak (1-0-1) and Justin Ducharme (1-0-1) to go up 2-0 entering the second. Nicolas Guay (1-0-1) extended the Lions lead to 3-0 with an early goal in the second. Trevor Cosgrove (1-0-1) scored the final goal of the game in the second on the power play as the Railers would go on to lose 3-1 to Trois-Rivières to wrap up the weekend.

Jakov Novak (21st) continued his hot play against the Railers with his 13th point against the team this year. Novak found the puck loose in front on a chaotic play in front of Ceci and proceeded to pat it past him to put the Lions ahead 1-0. While short-handed, Cory Thomas airmailed a puck from his own corner into the neutral zone. Justin Ducharme (14th) skated past the Railers defense

and scooped up the puck en route to scoring blocker side on a breakaway past Ceci to make it 2-0 Trois-Rivières going into the second.

Trois-Rivières picked up in the second where they left off in the first with a goal just 3:57 into the frame. Nicolas Guay (6th) entered the Railers zone on a three-on-one rush with Tyler Hylland and John Parker-Jones. As the puck bounced around the attacking zone, Guay placed a perfect shot bar-down past Ceci for his second goal in two games to make it 3-0 Lions. Worcester went to the power play for the second time off a trip from Nicolas Lariviere. Trevor Cosgrove (7th) hammered a one-timer off a pass from Keeghan Howdeshell and made it 3-1 Railers on the man-advantage. The Lions continued to pressure in the second, but Cole Ceci was strong the rest of the period as Worcester was outshot 13-7 in the second.

Worcester woke up in the third, outshooting the Lions 18-2 in the frame. Worcester tested Strauss Mann heavily in the period, but the Greenwich, CT native was strong in net as he turned all 18 shots aside. He secured the third star of the game for the Lions, along with the win for Trois-Rivieres.

Registration now open for Quabbin Valley baseball league

The Quabbin Valley Over-28 Baseball League is looking to infuse new talent into its league for the 2024 season.

Registration for the 2024 season is now open and any interested players can go to www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org to get registered, or to seek more information or make inquiries about the league. The league website will also be updated over the next month with information about the upcoming season.

There are many open roster spots available in the league for the 2024 season, which is tentatively scheduled to begin on Sunday, April 21. The league plays most Sunday from late April through late August with playoffs following that. The league plays a 15-game schedule and typically fields six teams each year. Games are usually played at 10 a.m. with fields in Easthampton and

South Hadley normally used.

The Quabbin Valley league is an all-abilities league and all are welcome to join. Eligibility is players who are age 28 and over. You must be 30 to be eligible to pitch in the league. Your age for eligibility is whatever age you will turn in 2024. The league is also able to entertaining taking in an entire group as a team to add to the league. Please email the league board for to inquire about entering a team.

The league is currently in the process of preparing for the 2024 season and held a meeting on Feb. 18 to discussion plans for the upcoming season. The next meeting is scheduled for Sunday March 24 at 11:40 a.m. at the Hangar Pub & Grill in South Hadley. All are welcome to attend the meeting, ask questions and express interest in joining.

Pioneers 2024 schedule released

LUDLOW – Earlier this week, the Western Mass. Pioneers have released their 2024 schedule. It includes potential participation in the U.S. Open Cup, which begins on March 19.

The Pioneers have won an Open Cup match in the past. Later, the Pioneers have their "friendly" exhibition game scheduled for May 10. They will

face 3rd Eye FC prior to the start of their USL-2 League schedule.

Their opener for the regular season is against the Boston Bolts on the road May 14. Their home opener is scheduled for May 18 against Pathfinder FC of New York. The schedule continues through July 13 and includes a total of 14 games.



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Race fans view the flag during the singing of the National Anthem.

ROAD RACE from page 9

pate in the Kids Walk and Fun Run prior to the "main event" taking place at 1 p.m.

This year's race, the 47th running of the tradition, will take place this Saturday, March 16. Once again, many will be looking to add their name to the list of winners of the 10K.

In 2023, it was the ideal day for Jenna Gigliotti, an Amherst woman who won the 10K Road Race for the second consecutive year. She crossed the finish line at 35:29.

This year's male and overall winner was Michael Norberg, who also is from Amherst. He finished with a time 30:50. He was more than 30 seconds ahead of the second-place finisher, Bradley Mish, of Hadley.

There were more than 5,000 participants in this year's event, which is part of a big weekend in Holyoke, going along with the parade that took place on Sunday. It also is viewed as a practice course for runners participating in more races later in the year, including the Boston Marathon. There are harriers who will run 6.2-mile course multiple times to simulate 26.2-mile marathon distance, including participating in the main race.

Of the more than 5,000 harriers signed up, 3,813 registered finishes.

Benjamin Lasky, of Ludlow, was a top local finisher, coming in 14th at 33:41. Lasky has been a top 10 finisher in the past.

The race continued traditions of par-



Michael Norberg, of Amherst, finishes first overall in the road race with a time of 30:50.

Participants running for various charities and other causes, in honor of deceased loved ones, and of course, the running of the race in costume.

The current cost, as of press time, to enter the race, is \$35. The two-mile walk price was \$25 as of press time, but was expected to rise on March 13.

The weather, as of press time, is expected to be warmer than in previous years, near 60 and sunny.

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Freedom Credit Union accepting donations in support of Griffin's Friends

March Month of Giving Campaign focuses on bringing moments of joy to children with cancer

SPRINGFIELD - Freedom Credit Union is collecting cash donations through March 30 at its branches throughout western Massachusetts to benefit Griffin's Friends, a volunteer-led group dedicated to providing relief and support to children with cancer and their families. "This is a cause we support annually because it is near and dear to the hearts of our members and staff," said Freedom

Credit Union President Glenn Welch. "Griffin's Friends is committed to helping ease the hardships of children in treatment for cancer, and the families who love and support them." All funds raised throughout the March Month of Giving campaign will benefit the Griffin's Friends Children's Cancer Fund at Baystate Health Foundation, Inc. Established in 1994, Griffin's Friends is named for Griffin D. Kelleher who passed away from cancer when he was 14 months old. This fund is his legacy, uniquely supporting children in treat-

ment for cancer and their families by providing small acts of kindness. Examples include trips to stage performances and sporting events; in-hospital and outpatient entertainment; massage therapy; and activities such as art, computers and games. "We encourage our employees, members and community to donate to this worthy cause at any Freedom branch this month," said Welch. "Together, we can help ease the all-consuming burden of a child's cancer diagnosis for local families by providing them with moments of comfort and happiness."

Fish Dinners available at Immaculate Conception Church

INDIAN ORCHARD - Fish dinners of baked fish, mashed potatoes and coleslaw for take-out only will be available on Friday, March 15 from 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. at the Immaculate Conception Church Hall on 25 Parker St., Indian Orchard, Ma. Tickets cost \$20. For tickets, please call Ania at 413-265-0575, Darek at 413-265-0573 or Ala at 413-543-1434.

MAYORAL TERM from page 1

from the Charter Commission, there were also recommendations for a recall provision, although I disagree with the content of what the Charter Commission recommended by simply having somebody be arrested if they're removed from office, but I agree with the principle. I don't want to have somebody be put in office for four years regardless of their position without the ability to remove them." Ward 7 Councilor William Courchesne said he received similar concerns, adding there is time to create a recall provision and a majority of people support that.

"Some people were concerned that the one that was proposed by the Charter Commission was too restrictive and almost impossible to even happen, but we do have, obviously, ample time," Courchesne said. "And we do have the power to control that it happens, not just we're not at the mercy of someone else creating it for us, per se. We have the control to make sure it happens before the next election, and that's incumbent upon us to do that and I think the voters expect that."

Courchesne stressed voters still have the power to decide.

"So, if that doesn't happen, they have the right to shoot it down at that moment and then start all over again. But, I'm comfortable with knowing that I'm going to make sure that it happens and I think a few of my colleagues will too," Courchesne said. "So we can put that nervousness aside. We do have plenty of time to get something done and it's up to us to make sure it happens."

Brooks, after sharing the origins of the recall provision, said it is "a little narrow in scope" and agreed with Wagner's concerns on how an arrest is not enough "because the voters should have their will heard if they become uncomfortable with the person holding office."

He also agreed with Courchesne and is willing to work with him on "crafting something that will be more appealing to the board" around the recall provision.

"Because this was all predicated on a social media post that, without going into great detail, was highly offensive and we knew it was time to implement this as a mechanism within our city government to ensure that there was compliance with elected officials acting as elected officials and not children playing on social media with highly offensive comments," Brooks said.

Ward 5 Councilor Frederick Krampits agreed with his colleagues, including reviewing the suggestions from the Charter Commission and the recall provision.

"I think that will also make me feel more comfortable. I'll certainly support this going forward tonight, but I think hand-in-hand, we need to have the Charter Commission's comments, at least, reviewed and come up with something for the recall petition and other suggestions that they have made," Krampits said.

Ward 9 Councilor Mary Beth Costello shared her husband was on that committee and had asked about the other rec-

ommendations, agreeing with Krampits. "These people put in, volunteer, many, many hours to give us their recommendations in regards to how the charter should proceed in the 21st century, and we should respect that," Costello said. "Not only in regards to the four-year term and to the question of recall, but any all of the other suggestions that that particular committee has made."

Wagner expressed skepticism about getting something hammered out before going on the next ballot, citing how it took over three months for appointments to be put in by the council and the two-plus years it took for the discussions of the recall provision to occur.

"I understand that legislating takes time. It takes patience and it takes dedication to the craft and you want to try and get it right the first time," Wagner said. "But this is something that we've been talking about, or this board and the people of the city of Chicopee have been talking about for years, but which has not yet materialized."

Wagner did not want "to put the cart before the horse on this issue" and would not vote yes unless there was a recall provision, also expressing concerns about issues the Charter Commission experienced.

He clarified he appreciated the time the members put in for their recommendations.

"I'm not going to vote for this when we don't have a recall provision in hand and when I think it's going to take several months, if not a couple more years, for us to actually iron something out. I'd be skeptical if we got it done in a reasonable timeframe at this point," Wagner said.

Ward 1 Councilor Abigail Arriaga said she was on the fence.

"I think the only reason I would even vote yes tonight is just in the hopes that there could be a provision put through and then maybe just being very transparent with voters if this does get put on the ballot that what they are voting for and just kind of lay it out for them and knowing what they're possibly voting for," Arriaga said. "There's just a lot of questions there and a lot of missed opportunity, I think...I'm really on the fence too on this one. It's a hard vote for me."

Courchesne agreed with Wagner on the timing, but said, "I think sometimes we need to have a looming deadline to force the action to happen."

"Because when there's no end date and no ending to it, it could go on forever because there's no sense of urgency," Courchesne said. "I think that is the only thing that's going to make this happen, otherwise it will be another three years because it's just going to fall away. But I do believe with that looming deadline, it's going to force the hand to be dealt and we're going to deal with it."

President/Councilor-at-Large Frank Laflamme had the final word, saying he got together with Attorneys Kevin Corridan and Tim Riley on the process and how to move forward on the recall provision and the Charter Commission recommendations the week prior.

Laflamme said the recall provision is a main item and will be coming out of the Rules Committee shortly with a couple of other recommendations.

"We can't do them all at one time. (A) lot of them are clerical things, but this one is important. I do believe that we can get that done soon and get it to be approved," Laflamme said.

Laflamme said he will be setting up a Rules Committee next for further discussion.

"So, I'll be setting it up in the next couple weeks and we'll get it, we'll be working on it," Laflamme said.

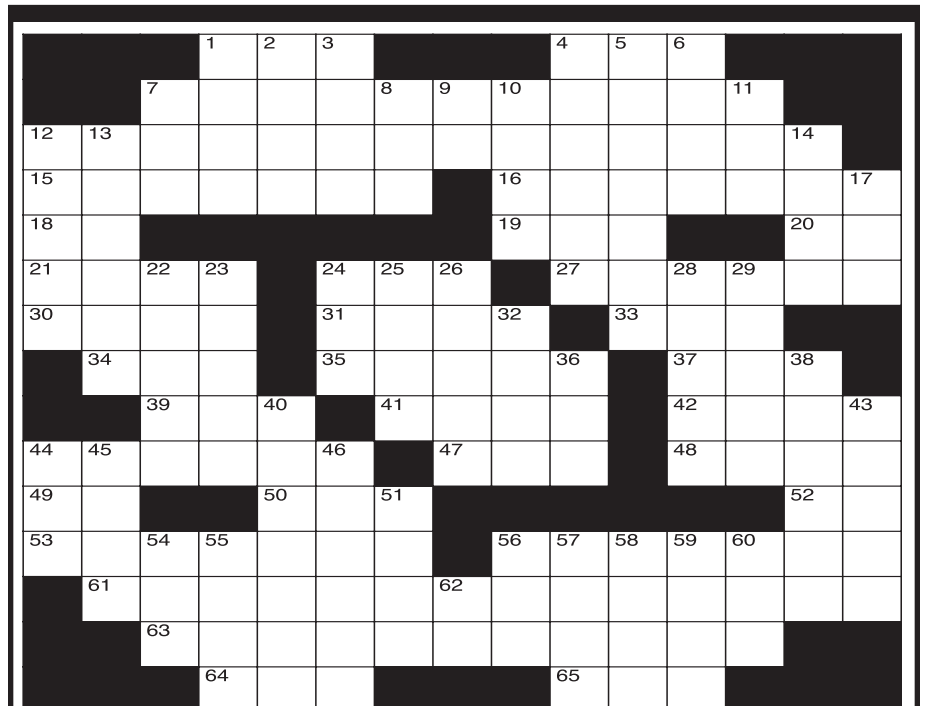
Riley then finished the conversation when he shared the next steps for the order itself.

"The order is voted upon, has to be a two-thirds vote required by the City Council or it's believed that the legislature won't consider it. Then we send it

to the state representative, our local state representative, for filing in the House. The state representative sends it to the House Council for review, revisions and approval. If House Council has no revisions, then it can immediately go to the floor of the House and the Senate for approval and then once it gets approved, it comes back for voter approval," Riley said. "However, if the House Council has substantial changes, then it will have to come back to this body. This body would have to approve it by two-thirds vote and then it would have to go back to the House and Senate for a vote. (The) governor would sign it and then it would have to be voter approved. So those are the steps."

Riley reiterated the four-year term would become law after voters approve it during that final step.

The motion passed 11-2.



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Helps little firms
- 4. Political action committee
- 7. Allowed
- 12. Olivia Colman played one
- 15. Open
- 16. He had a notable lamp
- 18. Promotional material
- 19. Domesticated animal
- 20. Larry and Curly's buddy
- 21. The best ever
- 24. TV network
- 27. Checked for
- 30. Dry or withered
- 31. Expression of annoyance
- 33. Dash
- 34. Fifth note of a major scale
- 35. A secret clique
- 37. Partner to

- cheese
- 39. ___ school: where to learn healing
- 41. City in ancient Syria
- 42. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
- 44. Established practice
- 47. Thanksgiving side dish
- 48. District in Peru
- 49. It's becoming more prevalent
- 50. State in India
- 52. Measure of illumination
- 53. Raised platform
- 56. Japanese warrior
- 61. R.L. Stevenson novel
- 63. Transitory
- 64. Advanced degree
- 65. Fiddler crabs

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Prevent from

- 2. Czech city
- 3. ___ and Andy, TV show
- 4. A young pig
- 5. Removed surgically
- 6. Covered with (slang)
- 8. Nigerian City
- 9. Midway between south and east
- 10. A way to shut
- 11. Stop playing
- 12. Marshy places
- 13. Takes apart
- 14. Ten cents
- 17. A gesture of assent
- 22. Scent
- 23. Teletypewriter
- 24. General's assistant (abbr.)
- 25. Hillside
- 26. Taxi driver
- 28. Semitic Sun god
- 29. Town in India
- 32. Traditional rhythmic pattern
- 36. Fugitives are on the ___
- 38. Type of dance
- 40. Two letters, one sound
- 43. Having a strong, pleasant taste
- 44. Golf score
- 45. Mayhem
- 46. Drenched
- 51. River in northeastern Asia
- 54. Drug to treat anxiety (abbr.)
- 55. Part-time employee
- 56. A very large body of water
- 57. Aboriginal people of Japan
- 58. Millisecond
- 59. Forearm bone
- 60. Subway dweller
- 62. Royal Mail

ANSWERS ON PAGE 13



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Colleges announce Dean's and President's Lists

Natasha Kezer makes Dean's List at RIT

ROCHESTER, N.Y. - Natasha Kezer was named to the Dean's List at Rochester Institute of Technology for the fall semester of the 2023-2024 academic year. Kezer is in the mechanical engineering program.

Full-time degree-seeking undergraduate students are eligible for Dean's List if their term GPA is greater than or equal to 3.400; they do not have any grades of "Incomplete", "D" or "F"; and they have registered for, and completed, at least 12 credit hours.

Western New England University congratulates Dean's List students

SPRINGFIELD - Western New England University is proud to announce the following Chicopee students who were named to the Dean's List for the Fall 2023 semester.

- Chicopee:
- Maheerah Shaikh is working toward a Doctor of Pharmacy degree
 - Emily Fountain is majoring in Elementary Education/Math Science Teacher Prep.
 - Haley Agostinucci is majoring in Law & Society.
 - Julie Mason is majoring in Psychology.
 - Kali Kowal is majoring in Biology.
 - Bailey Prendergast is majoring in Biology.
 - Austyn Denette is majoring in Computer Science.
 - Richard Starsiak is majoring in Construction Management.
 - Victoria Zyskowski is majoring in Construction Management.
 - Hadi Syed is majoring in Criminal Justice.
 - Chloe Coyle is majoring in Criminal Justice.
 - Michael Bozетка is majoring in Criminal Justice.
 - Julianies Cruz Hernandez is majoring in Health Sciences.
 - Nicholas Messer is majoring in Health Sciences.
 - Marcos Henriquez is majoring in Information Technology.
 - Nicholas Aube is majoring in Information Technology.
 - Corbin Wetherell is majoring in Information Technology.
 - Alejandro Caraballo Pelaez is majoring in Pharmacy Studies.
 - Benjamin Faletra is majoring in Marketing Communication/Advertising.
 - Justin Clarkson is majoring in Sport Management.
 - Lindsay Reidy is majoring in Civil Engineering.
 - Ethan Kapinos is majoring in Civil Engineering.

Jonathan Garcia is majoring in Civil Engineering.

Vladimir Popovichenko is majoring in Electrical Engineering.

Damian Sanabria Ramos is majoring in Electrical Engineering.

Benjamin Halley is majoring in Mechanical Engineering.

Trever Kenneson is majoring in Engineering.

Geshua Otero is majoring in Science.

Chicopee students named to Western New England University President's List

SPRINGFIELD - Western New England University takes immense pride in recognizing the outstanding academic achievements of the following Chicopee students who have been named to the President's List for the Fall 2023 semester.

- Michael Gauthier is majoring in Accounting.
 - Aidan Gilhooly is majoring in Chemistry.
 - Guilherme Garcia is majoring in Civil Engineering.
 - Caitlyn Crochiere is majoring in Civil Engineering.
 - Benjamin Shirely is majoring in Creative Writing.
 - Isabella Piantoni is majoring in Creative Writing.
 - Karissa Lambert is majoring in Criminal Justice.
 - Emily Meyer is majoring in Criminal Justice.
 - Daniel Mogan is majoring in Electrical Engineering.
 - Logan Los is majoring in General Business.
 - Katherine Warzybok is majoring in Health Sciences.
 - Jaenedy Alcantara is majoring in Health Sciences.
 - Anthony Mezzetti is majoring in Information Technology.
 - Marek Filip is majoring in Information Technology.
 - Lindsey Labbe is majoring in Integrated Liberal Studies.
 - Caitlin Guntly is majoring in Marketing Communication/Advertising.
 - Jack Ryczek is majoring in Mechanical Engineering.
 - Anthony Czarniecki is majoring in Mechanical Engineering.
 - Daniel Hocog is majoring in Mechanical Engineering/Mechatronics Concentration.
 - Jenna Dirosa is majoring in Psychology.
 - Jessica Lindsey is majoring in Secondary Education/English.
- The President's List acknowledges those who have achieved a semester GPA of 3.80 or higher, showcasing their remarkable scholastic accomplishments.

Spring session III classes at HCC start March 18

HOLYOKE - Prospective students still have one more opportunity to sign up for spring 2024 classes at Holyoke Community College.

Spring session III classes at HCC begin Monday, March 18, and run for seven weeks, concluding by Thursday, May 2.

Students who enroll for spring session III have the opportunity to take a variety of classes in a wide array of academic areas and can earn as many as four credits per course for a lab science, such as biology or forensic science.

These accelerated spring courses are being offered in person and online in accounting, anthropology, biology,

business, communications, culinary arts, economics, English, environmental science, forensic science, general studies, geography, history, human services, law, management, marketing, math, medical assisting, nutrition and sociology.

To get started, please go to: hcc.edu/flexible-spring-starts

The HCC Admissions and Advising offices are located on the first floor of the HCC Campus Center and are open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. (4:30 p.m. on Fridays).

For more information, please contact HCC Admissions at 413-552-2321 / admissions@hcc.edu or visit us online at hcc.edu.

Elms College congratulates December 2023 Graduates

CHICOPEE - College of Our Lady of the Elms congratulates 75 students who graduated in December 2023 following the conclusion of the Fall 2023 semester. The following students are from Chicopee:

Hannah Cameron, Bachelor of Arts in Computer Science

Stefany Gonzalez, Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice

Michelle Haspesslagh-Torres, Master of Science in School Nursing

Zaida Marsh, Master of Business Administration in Management

MassCPAs brings CPAs to 21 high school classrooms for career exploration

Massachusetts Society of CPAs successfully concludes Accounting Opportunities Experience Month

BOSTON - During Accounting Opportunities Experience Month in November, the Massachusetts Society of CPAs, in collaboration with the AICPA & CIMA and state CPA societies nationwide, introduced 460 Massachusetts high school students to the diverse career paths within the CPA profession.

Governor Maura Healey declared Accounting Opportunities Experience Month in November. As part of this initiative, 32 MassCPAs members from diverse backgrounds delivered engaging presentations to 21 high schools across the state, sharing their personal journeys and insights into the multifaceted world of accounting, including:

- Andover High School
- Bedford High School
- Braintree High School
- Bristol-Plymouth Regional Technical School
- Chelmsford High School
- Chicopee High School
- Easthampton High School
- Haverhill High School
- King Philip High School
- Lowell High School

- Malden High School
- Milton High School
- Notre Dame Cristo Rey High School
- Old Rochester Regional High School
- Oliver Ames High School
- Peabody PREP (Online and In-person)

- Quaboag Regional High School
- Quincy High School
- Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School
- Wilmington High School

These sessions offered a comprehensive look at the education and training required to become a CPA and highlighted the dynamic and essential role that CPAs and accounting professionals play in the business world, while dispelling common myths associated with the profession. This collaborative effort represents just one facet of the Society's commitment to fueling and diversifying the accounting pipeline.

"Thank you to our volunteers for bringing awareness of the accounting profession to hundreds of Massachusetts high school students," said Upasana Prasad, manager of academic and career development at MassCPAs. "Their unwavering dedication and collaboration made Accounting Opportunities Experience Month a success and will help shape the future of the profession."

WE'RE ALL EARS

Questions? Comments? Story Ideas?

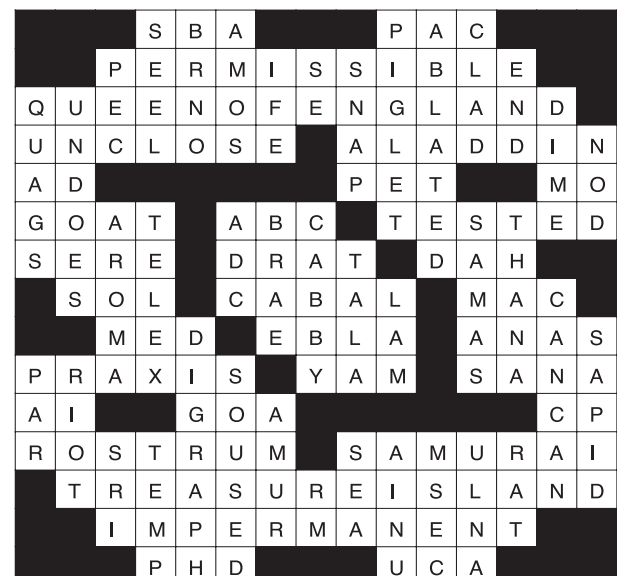
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The Town of Huntington is seeking a part-time **HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT** for 16 hours per week. Applicants must be proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, and Outlook. Hours are flexible, but must be worked during the regular highway department hours of Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. to assist the Highway Superintendent. Application and complete job description are available online at **www.huntingtonma.us** or by emailing **admin@huntingtonma.us**. Position is open until filled. Town of Huntington is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

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29 Base Price \$30.50	30 Base Price \$31.00	31 Base Price \$31.50	32 Base Price \$32.00
33 Base Price \$32.50	34 Base Price \$33.00	35 Base Price \$33.50	36 Base Price \$34.00
37 Base Price \$34.50	38 Base Price \$35.00	39 Base Price \$35.50	40 Base Price \$36.00

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Docket No. HD23P2505EA
Estate of:

Evelyn Anne Charron
Also known as:
Evelyn A Charron
Date of Death: 09/18/2023
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 Diane E Charron 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: Diane E Charron 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 04/10/2024.

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. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 11, 2024
Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
03/15/2024

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD24C0073CA

In the matter of:
Kyara Adaluz Clausell
CITATION ON PETITION
TO CHANGE NAME

A Petition to Change Name of Minor has been filed by Kyara Adaluz of Chicopee, MA requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:

Kyara Adaluz Boutin
IMPORTANT NOTICE

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: Hampden Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/02/2024.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 05, 2024
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
03/15/2024

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Probate and Family Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
Docket No. HD24P0271GD

In the matter of:
Jade Marie Libbey
Of: Chicopee, MA
RESPONDENT

Alleged Incapacitated Person
CITATION GIVING NOTICE OF PETITION FOR APPOINTMENT OF GUARDIAN FOR INCAPACITATED PERSON PURSUANT TO G.L. c. 190B, §5-304

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Tisha Dane Libbey of Chicopee, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that Jade Marie Libbey is in need of a Guardian and requesting that Tisha Dane Libbey of Chicopee, MA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Guardian to serve Without Surety on the bond.

The petition asks the court to determine that the Respondent is incapacitated, that the appointment of a Guardian is necessary, and that the proposed Guardian is appropriate. The petition is on file with this court and may contain a request for certain specific authority.

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 a.m. on the return date of 04/05/2024.

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. Barbara M. Hyland, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 08, 2024
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
03/15/2024

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. HD24C0081CA
In the matter of:

Hailey Mae Reardon
CITATION ON PETITION
TO CHANGE NAME

A Petition to Change Name of Adult has been filed by Hailey Mae Reardon of Chicopee, MA requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:

Hailey Mae Sunshine
IMPORTANT NOTICE

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: Hampden Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/08/2024.

This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.

WITNESS, Hon. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 11, 2024
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
03/15/2024

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. HD24P0475EA

Estate of:
Jonathan W Robert
Date of Death: 07/29/2021
CITATION ON PETITION
FOR FORMAL
ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for Fxormal Adjudication of Intestacy and Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by Egdalise Melendez 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: Egdalise Melendez 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 04/02/2024.

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. Barbara M Hyland, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 05, 2024
Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
03/15/2024

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

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

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Upcoming events and announcements

RiverMills Center Transportation Services available to seniors

CHICOPEE – The Chicopee Council on Aging’s Transportation Department provides rides to the senior center, doctor’s offices, supermarkets, pharmacies, etc. for Chicopee older adults.

Transportation service is available Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Reservations must be made at least five business days in advance by calling 413-536-5733.

A \$7,875.00 grant from WestMass Eldercare has allowed the senior center to expand its transportation offerings. Shopping Trips are funded in part by a Title III/Older Americans Act grant from WestMass ElderCare, with support from the Mass. Executive Office of Elder Affairs and the Federal Administration for Community Living. There is no charge for this service, but participants are welcome to make a voluntary, confidential donation for a shopping ride.

To learn more, contact Nicholas Wosko at 413-536-5733 or NWosko@Chicopeema.gov.

Caregivers needed for Harmony House opening

CHICOPEE - Harmony House of Western Massachusetts (Harmony House) is in the final planning stages for a spring-time reopening. After closing the original home to purchase and renovate a much larger home in the Aldenville section of Chicopee, the Harmony House Board and volunteers are excited about this reopening so they can resume caring for terminally ill people in need of loving care and a comfortable, safe home. To care for these neighbors in need, many more volunteer caregivers are needed by this spring.

If you are interested in this mission, please stop by at any time during an upcoming caregiver recruitment event to learn about the caregiver opportunities offered at Harmony House and to take a tour the new home. Harmony House is located at 66 View Street in Chicopee. Many of the current volunteers and members of the Board of Directors will be available to answer your questions.

March Caregiver Recruitment Events: Wednesday, March 20th from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Harmony House becomes a new home with 24/7 support for hospice patients who can no longer remain safely in their own home. Therefore, caregivers should have a healthcare background and ideally be able to commit to at least 4 hours per week. Whether it’s a few hours a week or a few hours a month, Harmony House is a welcoming place for people looking to help people.

Harmony House is a local, non-profit organization whose mission is to provide a loving home providing compassionate care for the terminally ill who have limited or no resources for special care in the final stage of life. Harmony House is primarily

staffed by trained volunteers including nurses, CNAs/HHAs, caregivers, companions, and others. If interested in learning more or becoming a volunteer, please contact Harmony House at 413-315-9784 or harmonyhousewma@gmail.com.

Diabetes Management Series

The Chicopee Council on Aging will offer the series “Diabetes Management” Wednesday, March 20, and 27 at Noon at Chicopee Council on Aging’s RiverMills Center, located at 5 W. Main St.

Holyoke Medical Center will be at RiverMills for this three-part series on Diabetes Management. This is a great series for those living with Diabetes, those caring for someone with the disease, or for those who want to learn more and offer support. Each class will be led by a nurse, registered dietician and pharmacist and allow for open discussion on defining diabetes, how to eat to control blood sugar and how to manage medications and lifestyle to be able to lead a healthy, happy life. You must register by stopping by RiverMills center or by calling 534-3698.

National Puppy Day Photo Shoot

The Chicopee Council on Aging will have a Puppy Photo Shoot on Friday, March 22 at 10 a.m. at Chicopee Council on Aging’s RiverMills Center, located at 5 W. Main St.

In honor of National Puppy Day, RiverMills will be holding their second annual National Puppy Day Photo Shoot. Bring your furry friend to RiverMills for a photo. All dogs must be leashed. No registration is required, but you will be asked to take a number when you arrive.

Judicial Outreach Workshop

The Chicopee Council on Aging will host the Associate Justice, the Honorable John P. McKenna of the Westfield District Court on Monday, March 25 at 10 a.m. at Chicopee Council on Aging’s RiverMills Center, located at 5 W. Main St.

Associate Justice, the Honorable John P. McKenna of the Westfield District Court, will be at RiverMills in recognition of Judicial Outreach Month. You will learn about the importance of a judge’s work and the importance of impartial and independent judiciary, and the challenging matters the courts see every day. You must register by stopping by RiverMills center or by calling 534-3698.

Chronic Medical Conditions Workshop

The Chicopee Council on Aging will host the workshop “Living with Chronic Medical Conditions” on Thursday, March 28 at 10 a.m. at Chicopee Council on Aging’s RiverMills Center, located at 5 W. Main St.

Ascentria Care Alliance’s Snap-ED department will be at RiverMills for a nutrition education workshop for those living with chronic medical conditions. Participants will learn about healthy eating and physical activity tips, along with resources

for leading a healthy lifestyle. There will also be a cooking demonstration to teach participants how to prepare and cook a nourishing meal with simple and tasty ingredients. You must register in advance at RiverMills or by calling 534-3698.

To learn more about these and other events, check out the RiverMills newsletter or contact Program Coordinator Casey Conroy at 413-534-3698 ext. 118 or cconroy@chicopeema.gov.

Fairview Cemetery announces Spring Cleanup

CHICOPEE – The Chicopee Parks and Recreation Department will begin cleanup of the Fairview Cemetery beginning the week of March 18th. The Fairview Cemetery Commission and Parks Department asks that all families please remove grave decorations by Sunday, March 17, 2024. Once the cleanup begins all remaining decorations will be removed and discarded by cemetery staff.

Artificial grave ornaments, artificial flowers, enclosures of any kind, and new plantings in the ground are not allowed as they are hazardous to both visitors and workers. Holiday pots and boxes will only be allowed during the Memorial Day and Holiday seasons.

The Fairview Cemetery Commission and Cemetery Staff would also like to remind the public and families owning lots in the cemetery that planting any shrubs or other plantings in the ground is prohibited.

For a complete list of Fairview Cemetery rules and regulations, fees and charges, and monument policies, please visit www.chicopeema.gov/384/Fairview-Cemetery or call the Parks and Recreation Office at 594-3481.

Holyoke Chicopee Family and Community Program presents ‘Dads and Kids’

CHICOPEE – Drop in for a free family program “Dads and Kids” at Sztela Early Childhood Center at 66 Macek Drive, as dads, grandfathers, uncles and male caregivers and children ages two to five spend time together playing and learning with Learn in Motion.

Learn in Motion gets kids active, socializing and practicing important life skills such as listening, following directions, sharing, taking turns, teamwork and overcoming challenges.

Learn in Motion gets kids moving, learning and having a ball!

The program will occur on Saturdays March 23 and 30 and April 6 and 20 from 1 – 2 p.m. at the Sztela Early Childhood Center.

Join for one or more Saturdays. For more information, contact Christine at 413-536-0363 x 4536 or email zaskeyc@headstart.org. All are welcome! Children may attend with any adult.

The program is sponsored by the Holyoke Chicopee Coordinated Family & Community Engagement grant from the state’s Department of Early Education and Care.

Visual art inspired by books with Enchanted Circle

CHICOPEE – Through the Holyoke-Chicopee Family & Community Program, which coordinates services and engages families, join “Books, stories & art: Visual art inspired by books with Enchanted Circle”.

Enchanted Circle will lead these hands-on sessions with fun art and literacy projects for families with children ages three to five years old on Tuesdays during March and April from 10:30 a.m. to Noon

Informal playtime at 10:30 a.m. at the RiverMills Assisted Living at 7 River Mills Drive, Chicopee. Register with Christine at zaskeyc@headstart.org or 413-536-0363 x 4536.

VOC kicks off 2024 Tax Assistance Program

CHICOPEE – Valley Opportunity Council, which manages the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program providing free tax preparation to those of low- and moderate-income, began its 2024 tax preparations on Monday, Jan. 29.

VITA in-person tax preparation appointments are available from Jan. 29 through May 15 at 35 Mt. Carmel Avenue, Chicopee, 300 High St., Holyoke and new this year, 20 Lathrop St. in West Springfield.

To schedule an appointment, call 413-612-0206. Those eligible for the VITA program must live in Massachusetts with an income of up to \$60,000. Appointments are available on weekdays, evenings and Sundays.

Certified volunteer tax professionals help qualified individuals prepare and file basic state and federal tax returns and prior year returns. VOC also offers free electronic filing (e-filing) of tax returns, allowing for individuals to receive their refunds much quicker than paper filings.

The core mission and goal of VITA is to assist low- to moderate-income taxpayers in satisfying their tax responsibilities and minimize financial hardships, in turn saving taxpayers thousands of dollars in filing fees.

In 2023, VOC helped 743 individuals file their state and federal tax returns through the VITA program. VOC has been providing the VITA program for 25 years in the communities of Chicopee, Holyoke, and more recently, Westfield.

VOC is the largest and most diverse Community Action Agency in Western Massachusetts with an annual budget of \$45 million. With this Federal designation, VOC has established a powerful network of support and collaborative services intended to encourage community members to actively achieve self-sufficiency for themselves and their families. VOC employs over 250 staff members and has 150 local vendors, providing a significant economic investment in the community.

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