

Chicopee Register

A TURLEY PUBLICATION | www.turley.com

March 20, 2026 Vol 30 No. 42 | FREE

www.chicopeeregister.turley.com

Ireland flag raised for IRISH HERITAGE DAY

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - Residents, community members, local and state elected officials and more gathered inside City Hall Auditorium on March 13 to raise the Irish flag for Irish Heritage Day.

The ceremony came ahead of St. Patrick's Day and the upcoming Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 22, with Chicopee among the community contingents that will be marching in the parade.

Mayor John Vieau thanked the Chicopee St. Patrick's Day Committee, "because you are here keeping the Irish-American traditions and their heritage active" in the city.

"It's an exciting year for us because we have a new tartan. The city of Chicopee Parade Committee has never had a tartan. It's been years in the making and there's a lot of pride associated with that tartan because it really represents what Chicopee—the fabric, pun intended—the fabric of what this city's all about and that's something really special," Vieau said.

Vieau also noted this year's Colleen, Charlotte Fields, and her court members, who are Shannon Caloon, Mila Dillard and Gracelyn Jarry, "the new ambassadors to the city of Chicopee."

"It's a really important role that you're going to see what it feels like to be this wonderful ambassador to the



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOEL RODOWICZ
From the left, Court Members Shannon Caloon and Gracelyn Jarry, Chicopee Colleen Charlotte Fields and Court Member Mila Dillard after unveiling of the Irish Flag inside City Hall Auditorium.

city we love. So, I'm excited for this wonderful opportunity for you," Vieau said.

"You're going to be admired by many as you proudly represent Chicopee on our float—which, usually, is an award winner—on the St. Patrick's Day Parade. So, I'm excited for this wonderful opportunity and the two weeks to come are going to go by quick. Take full advantage of this wonderful, amazing opportunity of a lifetime that the four of you get to experi-

ence."

State Rep. Shirley Arriaga (D-Chicopee) also congratulated the Parade Committee and noted the festivities, including Family Irish Night later that day, bringing everyone together no matter how much Irish heritage you have.

"It brings us together, these festivities, and that's what community's about, that's what Chicopee is about and I'm happy to be here with you all just to share this

day and to take on the week ahead," Arriaga said.

State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow) shared how he served as a judge for the Grand Colleen Contest in Holyoke and "it was one of the hardest jobs that you possibly have."

"It's always a hard decision to pick out who is going to represent the community and Colleen Court, and it's

See **FLAG RAISING** page 5

Gina Kos honored

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - Gina Kos, president and CEO of Sunshine Village, was honored by the community ahead of her upcoming retirement.

Kos has served at the organization for nearly 35 years and will retire on April 29. Her successor, whose name will be released soon, will begin on March 30.

During the week of March 9, Sunshine Village celebrated Kos during their Spirit Week through Wear Purple Day, an agency-wide Bingo event inspired by her favorite things, an "I Love the 80's" Party and a time travel adventure going back in time on the milestones and memories she made throughout her time at Sunshine Village.

On March 13, Mayor John Vieau presented a proclamation declaring that Friday as "Gina Kos Day" and a Wave Parade featuring clients and their families, current and former staff, friends and community partners including Westover Maintenance Systems and many more with vehicles decorated with balloons, streamers, ribbons, hand-painted signs and music escorted by members of

the police department took place.

Vieau said when you come to Sunshine Village, "it's exactly that."

"You come here, there's always smiles on everyone's face," Vieau said.

He then read the mayor's proclamation, explaining Kos began at Sunshine

Village in 1991 as director of marketing and development and later became president and CEO in 1997 due to her "vision, dedication and leadership."

"During her tenure as president and CEO, Gina

has guided Sunshine Village through a remarkable period of growth and advancement, expanding the organization from a \$6 million agency to a \$17 million nationally-accredited nonprofit recognized for excellence in services and programs," Vieau said. "Through her commitment, compassion and steadfast leadership, Sunshine Village has become widely-respected as both a provider of choice for families and an employer of choice for staff, enriching the lives of countless individuals and families across Western Massachusetts."

Vieau said Kos also demonstrated "a deep commitment to strengthening the broader community

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Gina Kos

School Committee hears colleges and careers presentation

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - The School Committee heard a presentation on colleges and career opportunities on March 4.

College & Career Readiness Counselor Carrie Vickers explained the College and Career Centers at Chicopee High School and Chicopee Comp are open to all students.

"We approach our services with proactive counsel-

ing and advising, and our goal is that every student leaves our schools with clear, actionable, post-secondary plans, whether they're going to college, training programs, the union, military employment, name it, we're helping with it in there. While students are in high school, we work towards providing all students with meaningful opportunities," Vickers said.

The seasonal activities included college planning, college application days, Vir-

tual Scholarship Night and the college fair, while all-year activities were MYCAP engagement and networking fairs in the fall at CHS and the spring at Comp.

"We also do mock interview days, we help proctor the ASVAP and, in partnership with CTE, we help expand access to credential programs such as our Health Science Academy and our EMT Academy," Vickers said.

Ongoing activities include Want to Work Wednes-

days and College Help Thursdays.

"We also manage a part-time job newsletter, which we try to update quarterly with new jobs that are coming for students and we manage articulation agreements and dual enrollment opportunities that are partnered," Vickers said.

Also, college-focused field trips, presentations and partnering with Holyoke Community College and Springfield Technical Com-

munity College

"We are in part of their 123 Pathways, which we have the colleges come in. They help with the application. Then we use the career centers to proctor the placement exams and then the last step is the Accepted Students Day, which we do in the spring, where at STCC, we go to campus, they get their student ID, they tour the campus, they see the different services and then they get their class schedule," Vickers said.

Kara Blanchard, director of Career & Workforce Development, highlighted the Career Internship Program.

"So, the program requires us to have true mentor partnerships. It is a big lift to support students and mentors in this type of program. What it does is it matches a student's career interests," Blanchard said.

MYCAP, portfolios and

See **SCHOOL COMMITTEE** page 8

Parade Committee hosts Family Irish Night

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

CHICOPEE — The Chicopee St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee hosted its Annual Family Irish Night on March 13 from inside the newly renovated Chicopee Portuguese-American Club, and it was a night like no other.

Leading the way was hostess and chair of Irish Night Alivia Mendes, who was extremely grateful for the turnout, and felt the overall event was a tremendous success.

"Just seeing everyone having fun in the room, and all the smiles throughout means more than you know, and I just want to say thank you to everyone who came out tonight," Mendes said.

She explained that the specialty dinner is one of her favorite events throughout parade season, before bringing awareness to the internal excitement from all among the

committee.

Mendes said they are excited to march in the parade, before providing a small preview of how the Chicopee float is coming along.

"I can confirm that the float is coming along great, but as you know it's under wraps being treated as a secret and surprise," Mendes said.

She also reflected on the importance of community and the sense of home that Chicopee continues to embody.

"At the end of the day we are all family, and we all come from Chicopee, and to bring our community together for an event like this is just amazing and heartwarming," Mendes said.

Festivities included a buffet-style dinner supplied by Peaches Kitchen Restaurant & Catering Service, that consisted of Corned Beef Sandwiches, Fresh Chicken, Pasta, and Meatballs. The Parade Committee also had set up a plethora of raffles, along with a table to sell Chicopee



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOEL RODOWICZ
2026 Chicopee Colleen Charlotte Fields with her family and friends

Tartan merchandise.

Also in attendance were the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians who offered Irish Soda Bread for sale as well.

That, however, was only the tip of the iceberg as it was clear that the Parade Committee pulled out all the stops to ensure the highest degree of Chicopee and Irish-American pride was on full display.

Reflecting on the efforts brought forth by the commit-

tee before the main presentation kicked off, Mayor John Vieau.

"I'm so proud of the Parade Committee, because they keep the Irish-American heritage active in Chicopee, and it's truly been an incredible moment to bear witness, especially for Irish-Americans with the parade right around the corner, and being able to celebrate the Irish these past

couple of weeks, has been

nothing but special," Vieau said.

Vieau acknowledged that Chicopee is one of the loudest and proudest contingents in Western Mass and he can't wait to walk the parade this upcoming Sunday.

"We are the loudest, we are the proudest and usually one of the largest contingents in this parade, and I'm really looking forward to this year, just like any other year, be-

cause we have a great group of Colleens, which is our Colleen and her court, who have done a remarkable job of representing us and have been wonderful ambassadors for our city," Vieau said. "And it's really about the Parade Committee who have been doing all of the work, ensuring everything is running smoothly,

See **FAMILY IRISH NIGHT** page 3

IN THE CITY

Spring Gardening Workshops coming up March 28

By Kristin Rivers
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WESTFIELD - The Western Massachusetts Master Gardener Association will be holding the 27th Annual "Let's Get Growing!" Spring Gardening Workshops on March 28 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Westfield Middle School - South.

The festivities will include a marketplace fair, raffles, an Ask a Master Gardener table, refreshments, soil testing and 10 classes to help educate and empower attendees in gardening this spring.

This year's topics are "Using Trees and Shrubs for Year-long Interest," "Berry Delicious Gardens," "Practical Tips: Growing for a Changing Climate," "Gardening in Small Places," "From One Comes Many: Propagation Workshop (Hands-on)," "Invasive Species 101: Identification & Management," "Vegetables vs. Pests: How to Win!" "Design Your Own Water Feature," "Let's Go Native: A Sustainable, Attainable Approach," and Get your Hands Dirty: Creating a Succulent Garden (Hands-on)."

The hands-on workshops, it should be noted, are already filled.

The speakers include Dan Ziomek, owner of Sugarloaf Gardens, Berry Specialist Laura Griffin McDermott, Plant Magic Garden Owner and Gardening for Hot People Podcast Co-Host Cheryl Rafuse, Master Gardener Chris Ferrero, Wistariahurst Gardens Master Gardener Toi Graham, Environmental Biologist at the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural



Master Gardeners make wreaths and arrangements for Symposium.

Resources Jennifer Forman, Master Gardener Ed Sourdiffe, Full Circle Garden Master Gardeners Margery Gerard and JoAnne Palmer and Kessa McEwen, horticulturist and landscape designer at Berkshire Botanical Garden.

Anyone interested is encouraged to register quickly, as classes fill up fast. Mail-in registrations were post-marked and sent in by March 16 at \$35. Online registration is still through March 26 for \$35 and walk-ins are the day of at \$40 cash only.

Rosey Bonner, a member of the WMMGA and part of the Planning Committee for the event, expressed excitement for this year's workshops and said attendees have an opportunity to take two of them during the day.

"The sessions are an hour and 15 minutes long. The speaker usually speaks for an hour and then gives them a good 15 minutes because they usually have lots of questions that may not have come up in

what we were talking about," Bonner said.

On the topics, Bonner explained, "our whole mission is sustainability and good practices" and community feedback also guides this, with evaluations at the end of the workshops. A couple of this year's workshops, for example, came to be through those evaluations.

"We didn't have anything on trees and shrubs last year, so a lot of people said, 'Can you bring back something else in trees and shrubs?' So, the person we have doing it this year is Dan Ziomek and he's been in the industry for 20 plus years. He's currently the manager of the Sugarloaf Gardens in Sunderland," Bonner said. "He has a wealth of information. He will bring his truck loaded with shrubs and trees and his focus this year is make sure if you're going to use trees and shrubs, it's just like flowers. You just don't have them look good one season, you have them look good

four seasons. So, he's really going to talk about what trees or shrubs might be featured for your garden or landscape over the year long. So, it's just good biodiversity, but it also makes pretty art too."

Another topic Bonner highlighted was "Vegetables versus Pests: How to Win!" as attendees always seek a topic on vegetables.

"They talk about some common vegetables that you grow and pests or diseases

that take them over. Number one, how to prevent it and number two, how to manage insects and diseases if you get them. It's practical, useful ideas that really work," Bonner said. "I say they really work because the two presenters, Margery Gerard and JoAnne Palmer, are both master gardeners, but more important than that, their expertise in this area comes from the fact that they are two of the people that oversee the South Hadley garden called Full Circle Garden. It's a vegetable garden and they raise way over 2,000 pounds of food in the summer for the food pantry there, so not only are they master gardeners, they have such practical, hands-on experience."

Bonner said another concern gardeners have is invasive species in "how to identify it and what to do about it," with the focus on spotted lanternflies, jumping worms, Japanese Knotweed and more.

"The person doing it is very careful to say manage, not completely eradicate, because sometimes, once you get these invasives in here,

you can't get rid of them, but you could at least manage them. Others you catch them early enough because you've identified them early enough you can really get rid of," Bonner said. "She is the point person for Massachusetts that watches over what plants or insects that go on the invasive list, so she's really got her hands into this part."

After Bonner expressed gratitude to the Western Mass community for supporting the event year after year and, also, for this year's raffle, as many community members donated items too, she added that she hopes attendees take away inspiration and ideas to help better understand biodiversity.

"They're an important part in saving our world and making a difference, and it's not mammoth things they have to do. It's small, little changes that they can do. Whether it's adding a little water feature or adding a native or addressing that invasive or adding a bush with berries for the birds, there's something that they're going to walk away with that they truly will make a difference in helping to save our world," Bonner said. "They're taking care of our environment and that's really what we need is everybody doing a little piece."

Bonner's message was this.

"If you're looking to get energized, inspired, get out of this humdrum of winter, come to our workshops. We guarantee you'll walk away with a smile and feeling spring is here!" Bonner said.

To learn more and to register, visit wmmga.org.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ROSEY BONNER

Hands on workshop making succulent container gardens.

Sensory Street coming to Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade

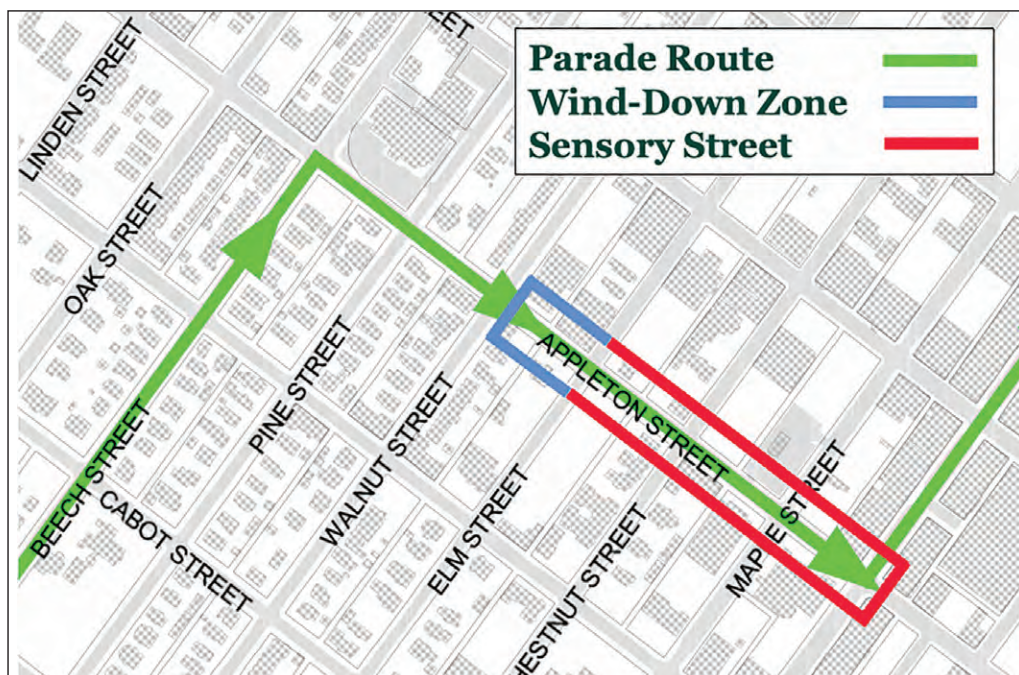
By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

HOLYOKE — A new addition is coming to the 73rd Annual Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade, as the St. Patrick's Committee of Holyoke is partnering with the Miracle League of Western Mass (MLWM) and Magic for Maddie to introduce 'Sensory Street' along this year's parade route, which offers and provides a lower-stimulus viewing option for visitors with sensory sensitivities.

Providing insight into how this came together was Holyoke City Council President Tessa Murphy-Romboletti, who explained that the inspiration came from a trip to Ireland last year.

"Last year, a group of city officials and Parade Committee members took a trip to visit our sister city of Tralee, Ireland. We marched in their parade and saw that their parade offered a 'sensory-friendly' area for spectators, and we thought it was such a great idea," Murphy-Romboletti said.

She explained that she



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE HOLYOKE ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADE COMMITTEE

Map of the Sensory Street Designated Zone .

pitched the idea to the Parade Committee, and they followed through.

"Our 2026 Parade President (Jim Wildman) and volunteers took the initiative and made it come to fruition, with the support of some amazing sponsors," Murphy-Romboletti said.

It was also revealed that Wildman then reached out to Kerry Parsons, a board member for the MLWM, who loved the idea.

"We're so excited, because this is such an incredible inclusion to the parade," Parsons said, something that Murphy-Romboletti also be-

stowed praise towards.

"This addition is a great way to make sure everyone gets to enjoy the parade, including families with children and individuals who may not love the big noises that can happen during the parade," Murphy-Romboletti said. "Simply, it's just another way

for our city to say, 'you are welcome here.'"

Echoing similar thoughts was Wildman.

"This is a huge step for us, because I don't believe there is another St. Patrick's Day Parade that does this type of activity, and to have this area be inclusive for all these kids and adults who have issues with all the lights, sirens, and the noise, and for them to come in and join us is heartwarming," Wildman said.

Wildman added that the social media response and reaction to the announcement has been beneficial and surprising.

"For example, this past week, we had our social media go out, and we had almost 500 likes and close to 1K comments within 24 hours," Wildman said. "We gained interest and traction from groups we've never heard of, who have shared the announcement, that are all talking about coming, and so we're hoping for a very, very good first year, and for people to show up and enjoy this with their families."

According to details, the full Sensory Street zone runs from Appleton Street, Elm, Maple Street, and the wind-down begins to take shape

at Walnut Street before the traditional parade experience

returns on High Street. Both zones will be marked with signs along the route and highlighted on the official parade map.

No reservations are required to access Sensory Street, and the zone will be open to all spectators. Offering an in-depth analysis of what families can expect was Murphy-Romboletti.

"During the couple of blocks of 'Sensory Street,' folks can anticipate no emergency or flashing lights, no sirens or amplified alarms, bands will feature strings only (no percussion or brass), as well as reduced loud or sudden vehicle noises," Murphy-Romboletti said. "I think it's great that we can join others in these efforts because true inclusivity isn't about taking away an experience from anyone else; it's about creating new opportunities that encourage bringing more people into the fold."

The new initiative is believed to be the first of its kind for any major event held in Western Massachusetts.

The Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade kicks off later this month on March 22.

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Logo and graphic from the social media post.

IN THE CITY

RiverMills gets in St. Patrick's Day spirit

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

CHICOPEE — The Friends of RiverMills hosted its annual St. Patrick's Day Dinner on March 12, which drew close to 150 people and was a few days before the actual holiday.

Those in attendance were also treated to a variety of treats, such as 50/50 raffles, a cash bar, and a traditional Irish dinner consisting of Corned Beef and Cabbage, which came with potatoes, carrots, and a piece of rye bread, courtesy of Hamel's Catering out of Holyoke.

The entertainment was the ensemble Banish Misfortune, who covered a variety of Irish classics that had many on their feet and on the dance floor.



Banish Misfortune offering entertainment and live music.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARK KULA

Spearheading the evening was current Friends President Mike Wilk, who felt

the event was a proper kicking off point for the St. Paddy's festivities, locally, which will conclude this weekend with the upcoming Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade.

"We love having this event, and the turnout is truly surreal," Wilk said. "As you can see, our seniors continue to show up, everyone is wearing green, the consensus among the room is that everyone is excited, we have a great meal catered by Hamel's, we have Irish music, and it's very festive."

Wilk also highlighted the importance of community support, noting that the specialty dinners are expanding not only in scale but also in popularity.

"We realize that the more we continue to host these events, we need community and business support, and it starts with building connections, because all the donations and fundraising we do go back into events and nights like this, which helps provide the level of quality when it comes to the food we serve, and the bands we can get, so it's important for us to lean on local businesses to support the senior center, because we need to realize that the one thing we're all going to share is that we're going to grow older, and this is something that at one point in your life you're going to utilize," Wilk said. "So, it's great to reflect and acknowledge the support



Executive Director Sherry Manyak and her staff behind the scenes.

we have built, and to continue to host these events, and we couldn't be happier."

Wilk also provided a little preview of what's to come throughout the year in terms of annual fundraising efforts.

"Currently, we have some events in the works, which are being formulated and put into reality by some committees, such as a Bingo Night at Raymour & Flanigan in West Springfield, and it doesn't cost the Friends

organization anything, and it's nice because all proceeds raised come back to us," Wilk noted. "We also have a committee looking into a Golf Tournament this upcoming fall, and we are looking into different organizations that would be willing to donate their time and wash cars, as part of a Car Wash here at the center, and we are also looking at doing a Calendar Raffle this August."



Attendees taking in the holiday spirit.

FAMILY IRISH NIGHT from page 1

and bringing everyone together, and we can't wait to show our new Chicopee Tartan marching down the streets of Holyoke, and exemplifying what Chicopee Pride truly symbolizes."

After some time passed, Mendes took the mic to offer a round of gratitude to everyone who stopped by, and called upon Fr. Bob Gentile of Ste. Rose de Lima Parish to bless the evening. From there, she then signaled for the main presentation to begin, which saw a live bagpipe performance from Tom Knightly, that warranted a standing ovation, as 2026 Chicopee Colleen Charlotte Fields, and her court: Mila Dillard, Gracelyn Jarry, and Shannon Caloon, who followed behind Knightly before being escorted to their table on the stage.

Keeping the momentum going, dancers from the Black



From the left, Court Member Mila Dillard, 2026 Chicopee Colleen Charlotte Fields and Court Members Gracelyn Jarry and Shannon Caloon

Rose Academy of Irish Dance took to the dance floor and performed a few songs, calling upon Fields and her court to join them to show off their Irish step dance moves.

2026 Chicopee Parade Marshal Bernie St. George felt the evening was the per-

fect kick-off point to Parade Weekend.

"This was truly an awesome night, and I felt every element featured tonight, from the bagpipers to the step dancers. I felt it pulled the entire community together, whether you are Irish or not," St. George said. "Because here at the Portuguese Club, you can be French, Irish, Polish, Portuguese, because it doesn't matter, because all are welcome, and it's a beautiful thing to witness."

The final element of the night was to count the total of donations for who would be getting pied in the face, as throughout the evening, there was another raffle going on that would see attendees raise funds to get the chance to pie Vieau, 2026 Parade President Aly Silwa, Fields, and Club President Brian Mendes. An-



The Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians offered Irish Soda Bread for sale.

icipation continued to build as the drum roll went into effect, and it was announced that over \$600 dollars was counted, and what followed next didn't disappoint, as first to get pied was City Council Vice President/Ward 6 City Councilor Sam Shumsky. After him was Vieau, Mendes, and Fields last.

Providing insight into her role as Chicopee Colleen was Fields, who was taking in the union of laughter and excitement among all.

"I'm just very excited to be here with all of my family, and I'm very excited to share this experience with all of the girls; it's a great bonding experience," Fields said. "Also, we are looking forward to Parade Day, and I want to close by noting I love Chicopee and it's truly an honor to be an ambassador for the



Fr. Bob Gentile with 2026 Parade Committee President Aly Silwa and Committee Member Alivia Mendes offered grace before city."

Parade Day Is Finally Here Officially, this weekend is the 49th Holyoke St. Patrick's Road Race, which kicks off on Saturday, March 21, and closing out the holiday weekend is the 73rd Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade on Sunday, March 22.



Mayor John Vieau and City Council Vice President/Ward 6 City Councilor Sam Shumsky after being pied.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOEL RODOWICZ

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OPINION

On the look out for a nice lawn

I'll be the first to admit that I don't have an especially nice lawn. Looking out the window further proves it.

It is early in the year and all, so the shades of brown I see are pretty common, but there are some lawns that are greening up nicely while mine is definitely not.

My mind always goes to thoughts of green as we approach St. Patrick's Day. I wonder if that's why my Irish dad enjoyed caring for his lawn so much?

One of his spring rituals was to rake it. I remember him out there working his way across the yard a little at a time, making pile after pile of dead grass, leaves and small sticks.

This was the just the first job in a season's worth of work aimed at growing good turf. Chances are that once the ground dries a bit you'll be out there too, clearing the lawn of winter debris and enjoying some long awaited sun on your back.

Find out what else you can do (and I should too) to achieve an attractive green-scape with a minimal commitment.

Don't mow so low, or as often. Mowing at a height of about three inches will encourage a healthy lawn. Why? Taller grass shades out developing weed seedlings.

It also makes large, established weeds more susceptible to mower damage (the more surface area of the weed that is removed, the more weakened it becomes.)

High mowing also fosters deep root growth. Deep roots sustain the lawn during periods of drought.

Keep mower blades sharpened for the cleanest possible cut.

Water efficiently



and effectively. If you set up sprinklers each season to water the lawn for you, take some time early in the season to position them so that water isn't wasted on sidewalks or driveways.

Mark the location and set up will be a no-brainer each time.

To grow best, grass requires an inch of moisture each week, more if your soil is sandy. Do the tea cup test to determine how much water your sprinklers emit and at what rate. Simply place a tea cup or other container on the lawn and turn on the sprinkler, check every five minutes or so until water reaches the inch mark.

Now you can set a timer, or turn off the sprinklers manually knowing your lawn has gotten its weekly drink. Most people know that early morning is the best time to water the lawn. By watering early in the day less moisture is lost to evaporation.

Grass is also less prone to fungal diseases because it has a chance to dry before nightfall.

Know your soil. A friend of mine who knew a lot about turf once told me that if I were to apply one thing to my lawn

each season it should be lime. Grass can't grow well, or fight off diseases or bugs for that matter, if it isn't getting the nutrients it needs.

Many nutrients are bound up until the pH is corrected. Get a soil test and specify on the order form that you wish to grow grass, as results for flower or veggie gardening may differ.

Based on the results of your test, recommendations will be made as to the type of lime to use and at what application rate. For more information contact the UMass Extension or www.umass.edu/plsoils/soiltest. Here are some interesting grass facts: Did you know that according to a poll (sponsored by Briggs and Stratton) 64% of homeowners wish they had a better lawn? Or that 63 million households own at least one lawn mower?

The Professional Lawn Care Association estimates that a well-maintained lawn can increase the value of a home by up to 20%.

This was probably of little concern to Presidents Washington and Jefferson... they were the first to have lawns as we know them today but they were maintained by sheep!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For 34 years she has held the position of staff horticulturist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to pouimette@turley.com with "Gardening Question" in the subject line.

OPINION

Trauma, ACES, mental health and addictions

The interconnection of substance use and eating disorders

By Suzanne Yerdon Lewandowski, M.Ed.

Guest Columnist, 32 1/2 years sober, 30 year tobacco free, 26 years eating disorder free

Up to 50% of individuals with eating disorders misuse alcohol or illicit drugs, a rate five times higher than the general population. (1)

Up to 70% of adults with bulimia nervosa and up to 18% with anorexia nervosa have a coexisting substance use disorder. Conversely, up to 35% of those with substance use disorders have a co-occurring eating disorder, a rate roughly 11 times higher than in the general population, confirming a strong, dangerous link.

These intertwined, often hidden, conditions share common risk factors like anxiety, depression, and trauma. (2)

Scientifically defined, "Addiction is a complex, chronic brain disease driven by a combination of biological, environmental, and developmental factors, rather than a mere failure of willpower or moral weakness."

Addiction is also a developmental disorder, usually beginning in adolescence as a result of what is identified as ACEs. Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences are the strongest predictors of addiction.

Trauma may be caused by a single stressful or dangerous event, or repeated and prolonged exposure to highly stressful events such as child abuse, bullying, or domestic violence.

Individuals with an ACE score of four or higher face significantly elevated risks for substance use disorders: they are seven to 10 times more likely to report illicit drug addiction, and seven times more likely to be alcoholics.

Research considers trauma as the "gateway drug." Trauma survivors struggle with anxiety, depression, PTSD, emotional dysregulation, shame and low self-worth. Many individuals use substances to escape, "not feel," or self-medicate for emotional, physical, or sexual abuse.

Because the brain does not fully mature until age 25, young people are more vulnerable to addiction; PTSD and trauma can have varying degrees of severity and long-term effects

SAMHSA 2024 data

reveals that 16.8% of the U.S. population aged 12 or older (about 48.4 million individuals) met the criteria for a substance use disorder (SUD) and that 10.1% of youths aged 12-17 reported significant suicidal thoughts. 2.7% attempted suicide.

Prevention and intervention by friends, families, teachers, and professionals, at any stage of development, can reduce the risk of an individual turning down the very dangerous path of addiction.

Awareness and education are the best places to begin and why public and mental health agencies and advocacy groups designate certain months to encourage people to recognize the signs of trauma and associated mental health concerns.

January brings us National Mental Wellness Month as well as Substance Use Disorder Treatment Month. Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month and National Eating Disorders Awareness Month follows in February. All mental health conditions are interwoven!

Eating disorders, again scientifically defined, can be understood as a maladaptive coping mechanism. This means that they serve a function for people; an eating disorder may help someone feel safe or in control during challenging times.

Eating disorders in teens often emerge as a coping mechanism for control, trauma, or emotional pain stemming from unhealthy relationships. Eating disorders are serious mental illnesses, where one's relationship with food and eating is disturbed. This can also extend to preoccupation with movement and body size/weight/shape.

Early signs of an eating disorder include body dissatisfaction and feelings of unhappiness, rapid weight loss or weight gain, changes in body shape and size, or particular body parts/areas, an intense fear of gaining weight, fear, avoidance or lack of interest in food and certain types of foods, denial of being hungry, deceptive behavior around food (hiding or tossing out food), avoiding food and eating in social situations, excessive or compulsive physical activity, cutting out particular food groups, developing food rituals - such as always using the same bowl, cutting food up into tiny pieces or eating very slowly.

These in turn can bring on behavioral changes such as social withdrawal, or not engaging in activities once

See **GUEST COLUMN** page 10

Chicopee Register

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The Chicopee Register is published every Friday by Turley Publications, Inc., 24 Water St., Palmer, Mass. 01069. Telephone (413) 283-8393, Fax (413) 289-1977.



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WE CARE ABOUT YOUR NEWS!

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

Election letters to the editor

The Chicopee Register welcomes readers to participate in this year's election campaigns by writing letters to the editor for publication on these pages. Letters of up to 250 words from local residents endorsing candidates on the ballot or discussing campaign issues should be sent to Chicopee Register care of Turley Publications, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069, faxed to 413-289-1977 or emailed to journalregister@turley.com. Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes (it will not be printed). Letters must be received by noon Monday to be considered for that Thursday's newspaper. No attack letters will be printed. No letters written by candidates supporting their own candidacy will be printed. If the volume of letters received is larger than the space available in the newspaper, or if the letters become repetitive, the newspaper reserves the right to print a representative sample. No endorsement letters will be printed in the last edition before the election. For more information, call the editor at 413-283-8393.

Campaign news As part of its election coverage, the newspaper plans to print stories about contested races for Congress, state Senate, state House, district attorney and Governor's Council during the weeks leading up to the election, as well as a question-and-answer voters guide. In order to ensure fairness to all candidates, no political press releases will be printed, nor will reporters cover political rallies or fundraisers. Candidates who wish to further publicize their candidacy, beliefs and events may contact advertising, 413-283-8393 about paid advertising in Chicopee Register.

When will I get full credit for delaying my SS retirement?

Dear Rusty:

The time is nearing that I want to move from my current Social Security survivor benefit to my own SS retirement benefit at 70 years of age.

I have been looking more deeply into the application of Delayed Retirement Credits and I have read that DRCs accumulated in the year that I turn 70, September 2026, will not be effective when I actually turn 70. Rather, those DRCs won't be paid until the following year. Can you verify that this is correct? I presume that if the DRC's are not applied at age 70, that they will be applied sometime after the first of the year and any increase will be paid retroactively.

Signed: Retiring Soon

Dear Retiring Soon:

The Delayed Retirement Credits you speak of have accumulated at the rate of 8% per year (.667% per month) since you reached your SS Full Retirement Age, which means that at age 70 your monthly SS benefit will be about 129% of the amount you were entitled to at your FRA of 66 years plus 4 months.

However, your understanding of how DRCs will work for you at age 70 is not correct. If you claim for your Social Security retirement benefits to begin in Septem-



By Russell Gloor

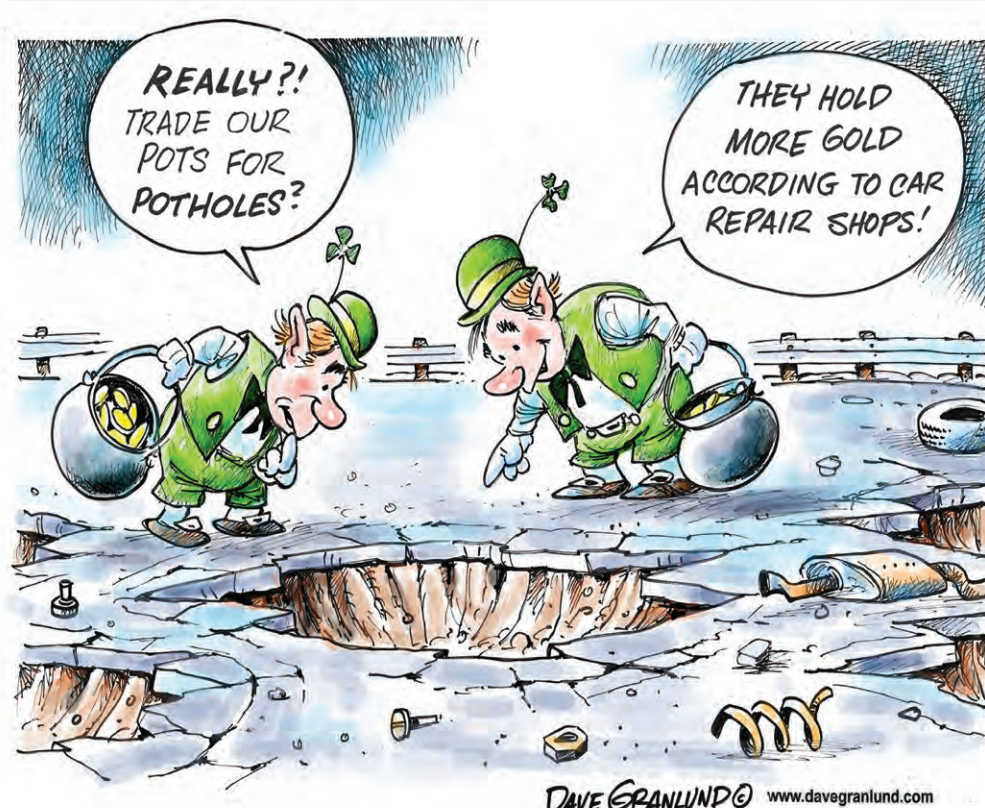
ber 2026 (the month you turn 70) you will receive all DRCs, you have accumulated up to that point in time. In other words, you will get your full age 70 benefit amount immediately, including all DRCs earned until then, effective with your first SS retirement payment, which you will get in October 2026. What you have likely read about is that DRCs work a bit differently for those who claim SS after their full retirement age, but before their 70th birthday month.

For those who claim mid-year but before age 70, only DRCs earned through the end of the preceding year are initially applied and DRCs earned during the current year are not paid until the following January. This results in a loss of some SS benefit between the time benefits start and the following January, because only the amount earned as of the end of the previous year are first paid, and the full number of DRCs earned during the current year are applied in January.

But, as is the case for you, when benefits are claimed to start in the month you reach 70 years of age, all

DRCs earned up to the month of your 70th birthday are immediately applied. Congratulations on selecting a strategy which will maximize your monthly Social Security benefit.

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



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PEOPLE/MILESTONE NEWS

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

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

IN THE CITY



State and local elected officials in a group photo with this year's Chicopee Colleen and Court Members.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOEL RODOWICZ



Councillor-at-Large Jerry Roy, Parade Mom Nicole Mendes and 2026 Atkinson Award Winner Ray LeHoullier, president of the Home Association for the Knights of Columbus Elder Council 69.



Parade Moms Nicole Mendes, and Denise Noble and Mayor John Vieau with the mayor's proclamation.

FLAG RAISING from page 1

never an easy decision because everybody who comes to it with their own personal story, with their own Irish Heritage, what they're feeling, with their expressions," Oliveira said. "So, congratulations to the Colleen Court here in the city of Chicopee. It truly is an honor to represent the city of Chicopee during the Parade Season."

Oliveira said how the city recognizes the "various, different ethnicities that make up the city," including Polish Heritage.

"So, on behalf of the Senate delegation here for the city of Chicopee, joining my colleague Rep. Arriaga representing the House side, Senator Gomez, Senator Velis, all three of us enjoy participating and being part of all the activities that we have for St. Patrick's Day season. It's going to be an exciting time because every community is coming out and we're all praying, and hoping, that the weather next weekend will hold out to have a wonderful, wonderful

parade," Oliveira said.

After Oliveira ended his remarks with a song, Vieau talked about the Irish-American traditions originating in the city, including former Mayor Denis Murphy—whose construction company built the former Central Library that is now known as The Hub at Market Square—and the Irish immigrants who worked in the city's mills, finding home and opportunity in the community.

"The traditions of Ireland and the Irish-Americans, they're prominent here, there's a lot of pride and we're excited about Parade Day and about dropping this flag and hanging it outside on City Hall Plaza," Vieau said.

After reading the mayor's proclamation declaring March 13 as Irish Heritage Day and presenting it to Parade Moms Denise Noble and Nicole Mendes, the Irish flag was unveiled by Fields, Dillard, Caloon and Jarry.

The Chicopee Colleen and her Court Members also received certificates from Vieau to conclude the ceremony.



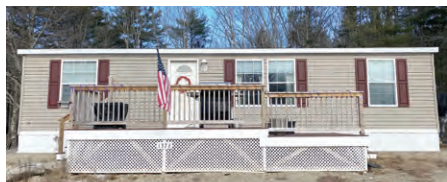
Court Members Shannon Caloon and Gracelyn Jarry, Chicopee Colleen Charlotte Fields and Court Member Mila Dillard with Mayor John Vieau after receiving their certificates.



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IN THE CITY



TURLEY PHOTOS BY BRENDAN ROONEY

The Dance Dad Mafia and their families gathered together with personnel from Bridal's Corner.



Host Alan Moreau getting the crowd warmed up.

Comedy Show supports Dance Dad Mafia

Took place at Portuguese American Club

By Brendan Rooney
Correspondent

CHICOPEE — Last month, on Feb. 28, the Portuguese American Club hosted the Second Annual Funny Raising Comedy Show in support of the local nonprofit 501c3 'The Dance Dad Mafia' (TDDM) based out of Westfield.

The main goal of the organization and mission statement is built upon the goal to help improve the quality of dance life for individuals and families in need, and it was truly a night of laughter, joy and community support. The live performance drew more than 150 attendees and encouraged them to bring snacks, which led to a variety of options from takeout pizza to other items.

The program also includ-

ed a cash bar and numerous 50/50 raffles, with all proceeds going to the charity. The event raised over \$3,800, which will fund up to eight dance scholarships.

Reflecting on the evening, each of the TDDM who assembled is Matt Lemberg, Dustin Kellogg, John Conner, Brian Albee, Jeff Szczepanek, and Tony Capua.

Lemberg, thought the night carried a point of success, walking away feeling a sense of achievement, and that the fundraiser was "something to be proud of."

"We have tripled our results from last year, and we can't thank Jess(Miller) and her comedy tour enough. The comedians were great, and I feel everyone had a great time, and we're just happy to help kids who want to dance, and who can't, so if we can make those bright days a little bit brighter, then we achieved our mission," Lemberg said.

Kellogg has two daugh-

ters in dance, adding he "sees the joy" the sport brings to families, especially the kids.

"I just really enjoy helping families, and I think any extracurricular activities are important, and I want it known that even though some people don't like to play sports, dance is a sport, and being able to help alleviate some of the costs is a main staple of why we formed our foundation," Kellogg said.

Conner said the night was truly special, appreciating the support of companies that assisted in providing donations for the raffles.

"We had a number of businesses that provided gift cards and materials, such as artisans, breweries, and countless others who came together to help us, and it was a big lift overall," Conner said.

Playing host to the show and getting the crowd warmed up was comedian Alan Moreau, who has been

in the comedy field for close to a decade and resonated with the nonprofit's mission and values, given his connection to giving back and mentoring in youth basketball.

"Before they(TDDM) even explained it further, I told them I get it, it's the sport, and I thought it was extremely cool, because I felt the main takeaway was that this group is built upon this foundation of dads who care for the sport of dance, and it's great to see, to fathers supporting their children no matter what endeavor they want to pursue, and that's a special feeling because we need people that care," Moreau said. "I want to add I had a great time, I feel the crowd had a blast, it was a good-sized room, just how Jess(Miller) set it up and created the show, and I truly hope everyone got what they wanted, they made money, and hopefully we made some people laugh, and hearing the chatter on the way out, I feel

we accomplished that goal."

Miller also had her time on stage under the lights, along with fellow comedian and veteran Christina Thomas, who came all the way from Warwick, Rhode Island. Each carried a sense of looseness and fun to their performance, before the headliner, Stephanie Peters, who travels worldwide, took the stage, and had the crowd in tears of laughter, as she regaled everyone with a few notable acts, and discussed her path as a comedian, and told the crowd, "I'm having so much fun, you guys rock!" and when the lights came back on, a standing ovation manifested, and many citing they will return for future performances.

Portuguese American Club President Brian Mendes, reflected on the success of the fundraiser, and noted this is what the venue is here for, citing "our doors are always open."

"It's truly an honor to play host to these events down here at the club, because the list ranges from Jack and Jill's, wedding receptions, fundraisers like tonight, and

recently, the Colleen Ball, which just provides a sense of familiarity and attraction for all to stop by and make their fantasy a reality, no matter the occasion, and that's a special feeling to realize," Mendes said. "I also want to add that being here in the center of Chicopee, our doors are always open, and that invitation extends to everyone, and with this group tonight(TDDM), being out of Westfield, it just shows the reach we possess and the community support we have achieved."

Mendes added the nonprofit's mission of helping parents with dance costs hits close to home, citing his two daughters, who have grown up in the sport of dance and still pursue their dreams, similar to many others, and noted he's a proud "dance dad."

"I just learned that the proceeds from this fundraiser go to a great cause, and I want to add my daughters dance, and currently, my youngest still dances, so their story hits home, so I feel I'm really proud to be part of this moment," Mendes said.

KOS from page 1

through her service and leadership" with the MassHire Hampden County Work-Force Board, Human Service Forum, Greater Chicopee Chamber of Commerce, the Westfield State University Board of Trustees and the Elms College Board of Trustees. Numerous honors include BusinessWest's Inaugural Women of Impact in 2018, the Paul Harris Award from the Rotary Club of Chicopee and the St. Joseph Medal Distinguished Alumni Award from Cathedral High School.

"As Gina prepares to retire in April, she leaves behind a legacy of compassion, innovation and unwavering commitment that will continue to inspire Sunshine Village, the community and the city of Chicopee for generations to come," Vieau said.

Kos said, "the whole week has been wonderful" and came together through many people at the organization.

"They've all come out for me with my administrative staff and it's just been a wonderful week of memories. It's been a wonderful week for me to think about what's happened in the last 35 years and it's been a wonderful way for me to look forward to the future knowing that I'm going



TURLEY PHOTOS BY KRISTIN RIVERS

A group photo of the clients and staff at Sunshine Village with former Mayor Richard Kos, Gina Kos, president and CEO of Sunshine Village, and Mayor John Vieau.

to carry so much of Sunshine Village with me," Kos said. "It is heartwarming. Sunshine Village is a special place and this week just reminded me of how very, very special it is. I came here 35 years ago not even knowing anybody with a disability and within two weeks, I felt like I was at home and I will always cherish my 35 years—which is more than half my life—that I spent at Sunshine Village and I'll be their biggest fan."

Kos will miss the people most from clients and their families to the employees.

"They're coming here to help people improve their lives, they're coming here to

help people live and learn, work and earn and, honestly, everyone at Sunshine Village is here and everyone shines," Kos said.

The biggest accomplishments—which Kos credited her team for—included growing the organization and right-sizing it, becoming a \$20 million organization that is "programmatically-strong," maintaining national accreditation through CARVE "since before 1986" and operations are accountable.

Also, "we do what we say that we're going to do" as a provider and employer.

"The things that we do have to do with making peo-

ple's lives better and I've had family members thank me, thank Sunshine Village, for allowing them to sleep at night," Kos said. "There's no amount of gratitude that I can give knowing that that's what I've done for people and Sunshine Village does for people, and that's what I'm leaving here with. Wonderful memories of people."

Colleen Brosnan, vice president of Day Services at Sunshine Village, worked alongside Kos for nearly three decades and started at the organization in 1996.

"Gina's biggest impact is on the people, the employees that we work with here and

have learned so much from them. Gina inspires us every day, the clients absolutely adore Gina. She has made such a difference in their lives, she's always been out to the different programs, everyone knows her by her first name and they are so thankful that they've known Gina and they're going to miss her terribly," Brosnan said.

Brosnan will miss Kos and their longtime bond.

"She has been so wonderful to work with and I'll miss her professionally, but personally as well," Brosnan said. "Gina has transformed the organization. When I started here 30 years ago,

the organization was always a great organization, but she has transformed it to where it is today. Everybody loves coming to Sunshine Village and the employees wear our Sunshine Village outfits with pride and she's done that. It's all because of Gina."

Kos said knowing she made an impact on people brings tears to her eyes.

"It's been a wonderful career and I've been incredibly lucky to be a part of Sunshine Village for 35 years, and that I'm leaving and Sunshine Village will be a part of me," Kos said.



One of the vehicles was decorated with a golf theme.



The band getting together for this group photo during the Wave Parade.

SPORTS

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Chicopee wins girls D1 title

CHICOPEE – On Sunday, Mar. 8, Chicopee’s D1 7-8 girls basketball captured the Division 1 title in the Pioneer Valley Suburban Basketball League. Chicopee defeated West Springfield in the championship game to capture the title.



The Chicopee D1 7-8 girls Pioneer Valley Suburban Basketball League Champions.



McKenze Caney takes a mid-range jump shot.



Sarina Garcia looks for an opening to the hoop.



Kiah Ashmore looks to get around an opponent.



Ruby Garcia rushes for the paint.



Jazz Lavertue eyes the hoop looking to shoot.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Wrestling season nets many championships

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

The high school wrestling season has come to an end, with many individuals and teams in Western and Central Massachusetts bringing home titles.

At the All-State Tournament held on Mar. 1 and 2 right in Springfield at the MassMutual Center, Agawam High School girls wrestling captured the All-State title with 86 points. Ludlow was 11th overall at 46 points. Stella Christopher captured the All-State title at 165 pounds, defeating Jordyn Reynolds of Greater Lawrence. Gabriela Ramos was a runner-up at 145 pounds. For Ludlow, Ella Libiszewski was the runner-up at 114 pounds.

In the mixed-gender all-state event, Agawam would place 16th with 33.5 points. Minnechaug scored 26 points and both teams crowned an all-state champion. Jordyn Agosto was Agawam’s all-state champion with a top finish at 144 pounds. Minnechaug’s Kai Ly also took an all-state title at 138 pounds.

Ludlow High School captured the Division 3 state girls wrestling championship with 97.5 points, crowning four state champions. Quabbin Regional High School was ninth overall with 36 points. South Hadley finished with 18 points and Holyoke with 16 points in the meet.

See **WRESTLING** page 8

Women’s basketball season comes to a close

HOLYOKE – Earlier this month, Holyoke Community College Women’s basketball saw their stellar season come to a close on Sunday afternoon, Mar. 1, falling to top seed CC of Rhode Island in the New England (Region XXI) championship game. The #2 seed Lady Cougars played well in their attempt to win a regional title but were on the wrong end of the 86-51 final score.

Holyoke had a tremendous season overall, finishing in second place in the regular season New England standings before their runner-up finish in the regional championship tournament. Their postseason and title game appearances were the program’s firsts since the 2010-11 campaign.



Annastacia Dixon sends a pass away.

Women’s basketball finishes the year with an 11-4 regional record and a 15-8 overall record. They were

13-4 against fellow NJCAA teams. Eight players from this year’s squad can return to play next season.



Johnnays Andrades gets the open layup.

Thunderbirds inch closer to .500 with big comeback

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds (24-27-6-2) rode their veteran forwards to a thrilling, come-from-behind 4-3 win over the Providence Bruins (45-12-1-0) on Sunday afternoon inside Amica Mutual Pavilion.

After potting seven in a win over Hartford a night ago, the Bruins wasted little time adding to their potent offensive weekend as Matthew Poitras cleaned up a rebound in the blue paint after Georgi Romanov made an initial save off of Ty Gallagher. Poitras’ 12th goal of the year made it 1-0 Providence just 2:10 into the contest.

The Springfield power play provided a good response for the visitors at

9:34 when Juraj Pekarcik shuffled a rebound past Simon Zajicek following a Marc-Andre Gaudet slapshot, tying the score, 1-1.

Unfortunately, the Bruins would restore their lead in short order when Matej Blumel surprised Romanov with a long slap shot just 1:18 later to make it a 2-1 game.

Springfield’s special teams continued a strong first period, as the mandown unit successfully fended off two Providence advantages to keep the deficit at just one goal heading into the second.

With a carryover power play to begin the second, Dillon Dube nearly

See **T-BIRDS** page 8



Tatiyana Zuniga heads across the court.



The Cougars face off with Bristol Community College early in the playoffs.



Mileidy Rosado heads into the paint.

Registration now underway for Quabbin Valley Baseball League

SOUTH HADLEY – Registration has opened for the Quabbin Valley Baseball League, an over-28 recreational league, held its first meeting of 2026 to prepare for the upcoming season.

For the 2026 season, the cost will be \$215 and will include a 16th game added to the regular season schedule.

During the 2025 season, the league experimented with playing on Mother’s Day Saturday as well as a weeknight game to allow players an opportunity to play under the lights. While the night games were very successful, the Mother’s Day Saturday games were rained out.

Those elements will return along with a 16th game with an opponent to be determined as the league’s board explores possibilities for interleague matchups with another league in the region.

For returning players to the league, the deadline is Mar. 22 at 12 noon to be registered for the 2026 season in

order to be guaranteed a roster spot. There will be open practices for all players but specifically targeted at new players scheduled for March 29 and April 4 at times and locations to be announced. The draft is currently scheduled to take place on April 4

See **QVBL** page 8

IN THE CITY

Chicopee Public Library hosts programs for kids and families

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

Crafts! - Mondays in March 4 to 5 p.m. Stop by the Kids Room for arts and/or crafts! For kids and families of all ages.

Terrific Twos will be held on Tuesday March 31 at 10:30 a.m. Terrific Twos is for two-year-olds and their caregivers. This program features about 25 minutes of structured circle time, followed by about half an hour of semi-structured playtime. During circle time, we will sing songs, do rhymes, do some big movements, and read 1 book. The book choice rotates between either a read aloud picture book or a group read of a board book. Playtime in-

volves a choice of craft, activity, or play.

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

Little Kid Dance Party will be on Wednesdays, March 25 at 10:30 a.m. Moving and grooving for kids and their caregivers. Geared toward ages 0 to 5, but all are welcome! 45 minutes to one hour of energetic activity including singing and dancing, action rhymes, and playing with props like scarves and shakers.

The library **Home-school Meetup** will be on Thursday, March 26 at 12 p.m. This group meets once a month September - June for homeschooling families with kids of all ages to hang out, do activities and learn together. This month each family will share spring traditions or activities and we'll make a Cherry Blossom craft.

som craft.

Teens

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

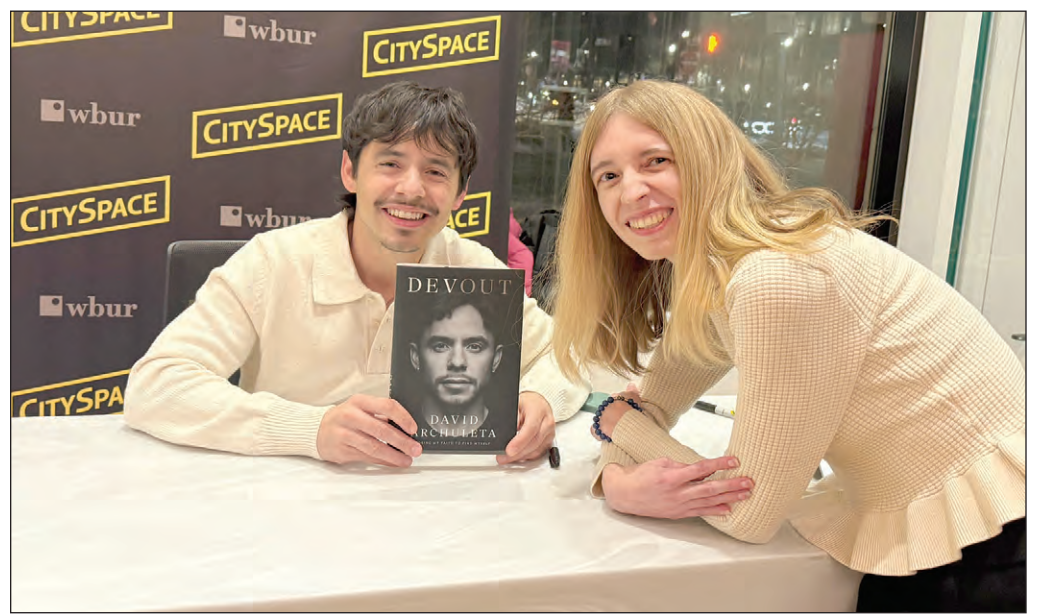
Is your life lacking some cool, anime themed swag? Then stop by our Anime Club on Wednesday, March 25 at 3 p.m. and maybe walk away with some fun posters, knickknacks, or other goodies!

Friday Teen Hang

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

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

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



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Editor adventure in Boston

BOSTON - Chicopee Register Editor Kristin Rivers took a rare day off on Feb. 18 to head out to Boston for American Idol Season Seven Runner-Up and The Masked Singer Season 9 Runner-Up David Archuleta's book tour for his new memoir, "Devout."

The memoir was released on Feb. 17 and chronicles Archuleta's life including his

time on American Idol, leaving the Mormon Church after he came out as queer in 2021 and other stories revealed for the very first time.

The Boston Book Tour Stop was at WBUR CitySpace and was moderated by WBUR Host and Senior Producer Amory Sivertson and featured Archuleta performing two songs from the "Devout" EP that was included in

purchases of the audiobook.

A book signing also took place after the event, where Rivers and Archuleta reunited in person for the first time in over three years, as she's been a longtime fan of Archuleta's music and has continually supported him.

The memoir later became a New York Times Bestseller a week later.

Vietnam Veterans Ceremony Honors Veterans and Gold Star Families

SOUTH HADLEY - Please join the South Hadley American Legion Post 260, South Hadley Sons of the American Legion, Yankee Division Veterans Association - YDVA Holyoke & South Hadley VFW Post 3104 on Thursday, March 26 at 6 p.m. at the South Hadley Public Library, 2 Canal Street, as we honor the service and sacrifice of our Vietnam Veterans. We pay special tribute to the service members of South Hadley, Holyoke, and Granby who made the supreme sacrifice defending our Nation's free-

dom. This ceremony honors ALL who served anywhere in the world between 1955 - 1975. Thank you for your service and WELCOME HOME!

Please join us for light refreshments followed by Veteran speakers, community leaders, and special recognition to the honored guests, OUR VIETNAM VETERANS. We will conduct a wreath-laying ceremony and the sounding of Taps for those who made the supreme sacrifice during the Vietnam War. A special tribute will also be paid to our

Gold Star Families.

A special flag presentation will be made to the Gold Star Family of U.S. Army Corporal Vincent Owen McCann Jr., of Holyoke who made the supreme sacrifice in Vietnam on December 26, 1969.

This event is family friendly and appropriate for people of all ages. We hope to see you for this moving tribute to our hometown heroes who answered the Nation's call and served with great honor during trying time for our Nation.

Scholarships for Class of 2026 high school graduates

CHICOPEE - St. Stanislaus School has two scholarships available for High School Seniors that will be attending college. One scholarship is for students that graduated from

and attended, St. Stanislaus School for at least six years. The other scholarship is for students that belonged to the Junior Youth Ministry for a minimum of one year. Applications are available at

the School Office (Mon-Fri 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.) and at the Parish Office (Mon-Fri 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.). Applications can also be emailed out by contacting: cconklin@saintstansschool.org.

WRESTLING from page 7

Ludlow's champions were Libiszewski at 114 pounds, Samantha Bertini at 120 pounds, Ellianna Williams at 145 pounds, and Riley Morais at 152 pounds. Quabbin had one champion with Kailynn Schuster scoring the win at 138 pounds.

Agawam took second place in the Division 2 state girls tournament, scoring 94.5 points. Christopher had the big performance by placing

first in the 165-pound bracket. Ramos placed second at 145 pounds and Madison Minalga also had a runner-up finish at 185 pounds.

In the Division 2 state championship, Agawam was the second-best finisher from Western Mass., finishing fourth overall with 96 points, and crowning one runner-up in the field. Minnechaug was a distant 14th with 52 points. The Falcons' Ly won the state championship at 138 pounds, while Agawam's Ryan Sexton

placed second.

In the Division 3 state championship, Holyoke placed ninth overall with 69 points, Ludlow was 25th with 28 points, Quabbin 26th with 27 points, and South Hadley and Belchertown also registered points in the competition. Holyoke would place two wrestlers as runners up. Steven Santiago was the second-place finisher at 120 pounds and Parker Brunelle was the runner-up at 285 pounds.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE from page 1

assessments, she added, help connect students and get them experience.

"So, students work limited hours. They get credit for the program. So, typically, if it's an unpaid internship because it's related to a career goal and because they're just gaining experience," Blanchard said. "They're not someone who's a certified nurse, for example. There could be other areas, like HIPAA or FURPA that prohibit certain areas of their involvement. A lot of it's shadowing, but there definitely are opportunities like Polish National where students are doing the same job an adult is."

Chapter 74 Cooperative Education are paid experiences and a state-designed program that is required for districts to have.

"So, it has frameworks that we document. Students are given credit. It involves site visits and follow-ups and it has to tie to that student's

framework. But, it's really the culmination of our students in our Chapter 74 Career and Technical Education programs to be able to go out, network, make these connections and get this type of experience," Blanchard said.

College & Career Teacher Assistant Charles Laboy said MYCAP is "an ongoing process" that helps students reflect on strengths, explore careers and set goals to guide planning for life after high school.

"We capture that process through what we call success planning with the College and Career Center and during these sessions, students use Mass CIS to explore career pathways and develop career plans. We then capture their reflections and goals through a series of Google forms connected to those career plans," Laboy said. "Those responses become a living record of each student's thinking over time."

The information, he said, was organized into a

database that helps share insights with guidance counselors, school stakeholders, parents and students.

"In middle school, this process is especially helpful as students consider what high school options they are taking. Whether they're considering CTE at Chicopee Comprehensive or Pathways at Chicopee High, we hope that the information that they are receiving is helping them choose their post-secondary planning more effectively. Now, this process moves us beyond simply asking students what they want to do after high school. Instead, it gives them structured opportunities each year to reflect, explore and refine their goals," Laboy said.

Blanchard said the goal for the College and Career Center was "to be not just a physical space, but the district's engine for workforce development, post-secondary planning and real-world preparation."

"So, our vision would be to move forward from

a location-based model to a system-based approach where career and academic planning are embedded for middle school through graduation. So, we've built a strong foundation at the high school level with these college and career centers from internships to MYCAP helping students plan for college careers. We have that solid foundation and now we need to build on it to make these experiences even stronger and accessible for students," Blanchard said.

MYCAP, she said, would be part of that vision.

"So, this is the vehicle to ensure students are aware of those CTE programs and options in general for academic students as well as to understand their future opportunities and, ultimately, expand high-quality career development, education and strong employer partnerships. So, every student graduates not just with a diploma, but confidently with a direction," Blanchard said.

T-BIRDS from page 7

got Springfield even with a one-time slapper that beat Zajicek but caught the iron. Romanov, meanwhile, had a strong showing in the period, especially early in the period, keeping his team within a goal by making nine stops in the period.

Zajicek and the Providence penalty kill stiffened on a third man-down scenario near the midpoint of regulation, and the 2-1 score remained intact heading to the third.

The third period began with Springfield penalty kill once again answering the bell on back-to-back Providence power plays to keep the score at a manageable 2-1.

As the third passed its midpoint, the T-Birds' most experienced leaders took over, beginning at the 10:36 mark when Chris Wagner's torrid weekend continued as he threw a shot off a defender and past Zajicek to tie the game, 2-2.

Just 1:50 later, the

T-Birds flipped the game upside-down when Wagner won an offensive zone draw directly back to Dillon Dube, who snapped a perfect shot under the crossbar to give Springfield its first lead, 3-2.

Romanov and the T-Birds' defense locked things down in the defensive zone, and Alek Kaskimaki hit an empty net after a clutch shot block from Wagner at 18:53 of the third. Blumel would get his second of the night for Providence, but only three seconds remained at the time of the goal, making it too little, too late for the Bruins.

The T-Birds' comeback marked the first time all season that the Bruins failed to win when leading after two periods. With their victory, the T-Birds now sit in the sixth and final playoff spot in the Atlantic Division with 13 games remaining in the regular season.

The T-Birds take a trip north of the border for their next two contests on Friday and Saturday in Laval and Belleville, respectively.

QVBL from page 7

following that practice.

The season is currently slated to start on Sunday, April 19 and following the success of the six-team fall league last year, the league will also have a fall league in September and October this season.

The registration is live at www.quabbinvalleybaseball.org. Players must register and then pay the league dues via Venmo or

contact the league leadership if an alternate form of payment is needed.

Aside from the weekly and Mother's Day games, other games take place Sundays at 10 a.m. outside of Mother's Day, Memorial Day and July 4 weekends. Playoffs will be in August.

This is the 30th season for the league and league officials are looking to celebrate the anniversary with a couple of events.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

ALDEN CREDIT UNION NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING AND MEMBER VOTE ON PROPOSED BY-LAW AMENDMENT

Alden Credit Union will hold its Annual Meeting on Monday, **March 30, 2026, at Food 101 Bar & Bistro, 19 College Street, South Hadley, MA, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.** For further details or to RSVP, please contact Jennifer Faustino at 413-536-0475 ext. 107.

The Division of Banks approved an amendment to Article II, Section 1 of the By-Laws of Alden Credit Union to expand the field of membership. The membership will vote on this proposed amendment at the Annual Meeting.

A copy of the proposed amendment is available for review at Alden Credit Union, 710 Grattan Street, Chicopee, Massachusetts, during normal business hours, and on the Credit Union's website at www.aldencu.com 03/13, 03/20/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 Docket No. HD25P2465GD In the matter of: Luis Antonio Rivera Colon 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 **Benigno Rodriguez** of Chicopee, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that **Luis Antonio Rivera Colon** is in need of a Guardian and requesting that **Benigno Rodriguez** 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 **04/07/2026**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

IMPORTANT NOTICE
The outcome of this proceeding may limit or completely take away the above-named person's right to make decisions about personal affairs or financial affairs or both. The above-

named person has the right to ask for a lawyer. Anyone may make this request on behalf of the above-named person. If the above-named person cannot afford a lawyer, one may be appointed at State expense.

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

Date: March 06, 2026
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
03/20/2026

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

Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on March 27th at Interstate Towing, Inc the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicles.

2005 Honda Accord
VIN: 1HGCM66515A076000
Alvarezsusana, D A
2143 Amsterdam Ave. #6
New York City, NY 10032

2014 Ford Fusion
VIN: 3FA6P0K92ER116069
Carlos Rodrigues
5 Loring St., Apt. 1
Hudson, MA 01749

2013 Chevrolet Equinox
VIN: 2GNFLCEK4D6217939
Anthony Ellicock
71 Ruth St., Apt. 1 E
New Bedford, MA 02744

2006 Mercedes E 350
VIN: WDBUF87J76X204645
Francisca Cruz
485 Mill St.
New Bedford, MA 02740

2006 Honda Accord
VIN: 1HGCM56766A120277
Terrian Mitchell
19 Lawndale St.
Chicopee, MA 01013

2005 Honda CRV
VIN: SHSRD78925U322034
Julius Williams
2056 Palmer Ave., Apt. 21
Three Rivers, MA 01080

2009 Ford Escape
VIN: 1FMCU94GX9KC33670
Fabio Tadeu Pereira
64 Stewart St.
Bristol, CT 06010

03/13, 03/20, 03/27/2026

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

Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on March 20th, 2026 at Interstate Towing, Inc the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicles.

2013 Chevrolet Impala
VIN: 2G1WG5E38D1193345
Trevor Smith
541 Front St., Apt. 3R
Chicopee, MA 01013

2006 Jeep Liberty
VIN: 1J4GL48K16W187798
Konan Martes
431 Appleton St., Apt. 2R
Holyoke, MA 01040

2012 Honda Crosstour
VIN: 5J6TF2H51CL004174
Shamara Price
1197 Page Blvd.
Springfield, MA 01104

2003 Ford Explorer
VIN: 1FMYU60E03UB79994

Raul Alejandro Fuentes
7811 Basswood Ave.
El Paso, TX 79925

2006 Toyota Camry
VIN: 4T1BE32K36U726460
Eric Phakos
44 Mount Carmel Ave.
Chicopee, MA 01020

2003 Cadillac Deville
VIN: 1G6KD57Y73U144747
Robert Kapecki
17 Goodwin St.
Indian Orchard, MA 01151

2011 Nissan Altima
VIN: 1N4AL2AP0BN402227
Lorin Heath
25 Genesee St., 2nd Floor
Springfield, MA 01104
03/06, 03/13, 03/20/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 Docket No. HD26P0545PM In the matter of: Edward Lawler Of: Chicopee, MA RESPONDENT (Person to be Protected/ Minor)

**CITATION GIVING
NOTICE OF PETITION
FOR APPOINTMENT OF
CONSERVATOR OR OTHER
PROTECTIVE ORDER
PURSUANT TO
G.L. c. 190B, §5-304 & §5-405**

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, a petition has been filed by Chicopee Rehabilitation and Nursing of Chicopee, MA in the above captioned matter alleging that **Edward Lawler** is in need of a Conservator or other protective order and requesting that **Lisa Judkins** of Auburn, MA (or some other suitable person) be appointed as Conservator to serve **With Personal Surety** on the bond.

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

You have the right to object to this proceeding. If you wish to do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance at this court on or before 10:00 a.m. on the return date of **04/10/2026**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to file the written appearance if you object to the petition. If you fail to file the written appearance by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you. In addition to filing the written appearance, you or your attorney must file a written affidavit stating the specific facts and grounds of your objection within 30 days after the return date.

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

Witness, Hon. **Claudine T. Stoudemire**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: March 13, 2026
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
03/20/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 Docket No. HD26P0495GD In the interests of Emma Skye Owens of Chicopee, MA Minor

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

1. Hearing Date/Time:
A hearing on a Petition for Appointment of Guardian of a Minor filed on **03/09/2026** by **Sandra Y Torres** of Chicopee, MA will be held **04/07/2026 08:30 AM Guardianship of Minor Hearing In-Person**. Located: **Hampden Probate & Family Court, 50 State Street, 4th Floor, Springfield, MA, 01103.**

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

Mail a copy to all interested parties at least five (5) business days before the hearing.

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

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

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

Date: March 9, 2026
Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
03/20/2026

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758 Docket No. HD26P0492EA Estate of: Luann Theresa Sheridan Also known as: Luann T Sheridan Date of Death: 01/24/2026 CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION

To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Pro-**

bate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative has been filed by **Mark T Sheridan 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 **Mark T Sheridan 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 04/07/2026. This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.

**UNSUPERVISED
ADMINISTRATION
UNDER THE
MASSACHUSETTS
UNIFORM PROBATE**

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

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

Date: March 09, 2026
Rosemary A Saccomani,
Register of Probate
03/20/2026

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – HIGHWAY DIVISION NOTICE OF A DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING Project Description: Chicopee – Hugh Scott Streiber Elementary School Improvements (SRTS) Project File No. 612079

A Design Public Hearing will be held to present the design for the proposed project in Chicopee, MA.

WHERE: Streiber Memorial School, Cafeteria
40 Streiber Drive
Chicopee, MA 01020

WHEN: **Tuesday,
March 31, 2026 @ 6:00pm**

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed project. All views and comments submitted in response to the hearing will be reviewed and considered to the maximum extent possible.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project consists of installing new sidewalks and replacing existing sidewalks as well as improved crosswalks that will improve connectivity to Hugh Scott Streiber Memorial School along Telegraph Avenue (from Prospect Street to the school), Streiber Drive (from Memorial Drive to the school), along Chicopee Housing Authority from Debra Drive to Streiber Drive, on Irene Court (from Irene Street

connecting to the school, and along the front of the school.

A secure right-of-way is necessary for this project. Acquisitions in fee and permanent or temporary easements may be required. The city is responsible for acquiring all needed rights in private or public lands. MassDOT's policy concerning land acquisitions will be presented in the hearing.

Project inquiries, written statements and other exhibits regarding the proposed undertaking may be submitted to Carrie E. Lavallee, P.E., Chief Engineer, via e-mail to MassDOTProjectManagement@dot.state.ma.us or via US Mail to Suite 7550, 10 Park Plaza, Boston, MA 02116, Attention: Project Management, Project File No. 612079. Statements and exhibits intended for inclusion in the public hearing transcript must be emailed or postmarked no later than ten (10) business days (14 calendar days) after the hearing is hosted on the MassDOT website listed below.

This hearing is accessible to people with disabilities. MassDOT provides reasonable accommodations and/or language assistance free of charge upon request (e.g interpreters in American Sign Language and languages other than English, live captioning, videos, assistive listening devices and alternate material formats), as available. For accommodation or language assistance, please contact MassDOT's Chief Diversity and Civil Rights Officer by phone (857-368-8580), TTD/TTY at (857) 266-0603, fax (857) 368-0602 or by email (MassDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us). Requests should be made as soon as possible and prior to the hearing, and for more difficult to arrange services including sign-language, CART or language translation or interpretation, requests should be made at least ten business days before the hearing.

In case of inclement weather, a cancellation announcement will be posted on the internet at <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/highway-division/events>.

JONATHAN GULLIVER
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATOR
CARRIE E. LAVALLEE, P.E.
CHIEF ENGINEER
03/20, 03/27/2026

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

Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on April 3rd, 2026 at Interstate Towing, Inc the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicles.

2006 Toyota Corolla
VIN: 2T1BR30EX6C597152
Tiffany Perry
307 Winthrop Ave. 1
New Haven, Ct 06511

2006 Acura TSX
VIN: JH4CL96866C031197
Hector Rivera
179 Pearl St.
Holyoke, MA 01040

Snow Mobile Trailer
VIN: 5KTSC1217XP013051
Timothy Ormsby
136 Squassick Rd
West Springfield, Ma 01089

2008 Infiniti G35
VIN: JNKBV61F48M264227
Boulevard Auto LLC
309 Wisconsin Ave. 13
Whitefish, MT 59937

2007 Nissan Versa
VIN: 3N1BC13E67L442844
Steeve Marcellus
78 Belmont Ave Apt 3r
Springfield, Ma 01108
03/20, 03/27, 04/03/2027

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IN THE CITY

By Barb Turcotte

Adele Lapointe has made many transformations this last year, some pleasant and some not so much. The most heartbreaking change was losing her husband Frank a year ago in January. Within four months she made some life altering choices; downsizing her home, her son and his family moving into her home and she moving to an independent/assisted living community. This change immediately felt comfortable, like the close-knit neighborhood she'd moved from.

Adele has lived a very full life from not just being the wife of a State Rep and the responsibilities that came with that, but many of her own accomplishments as well.

Being the only girl with six brothers she was not only protected but learned how to stick up for herself. She and Frank met the year after she graduated from high school when he'd become a teacher at that high school. Frank then acquired a one-year fel-

lowship in physics at UCLA, so they traveled cross country for their honeymoon. While in CA, they were members of a church that had a group that did Random Acts of Kindness. Adele loved it! After their year was done, they moved back to the area to be closer to family and start their own. That's when Frank decided to run for the Massachusetts legislature as a State Rep. He won and held that position for ten years.

This made huge changes in Adele's life as a stay-at-home mom. Since there were no cell phones or answering machines in those days, she spent a lot of time answering phones and listening to issues. Frank was the face people saw, but Adele was the behind-the-scenes organizer. Instead of her quiet family weekends, she was expected to accompany her husband to all the social gatherings held in Holyoke and Chicopee. Many of these gatherings being formal they required formal attire, so with her sewing ability she made herself over twenty gowns.



By Barb Turcotte

Adele didn't just use her sewing talents on herself and her daughter, once making them matching Easter outfits, but voluntarily made curtains for the Chicopee Mayor's office. They still hang there with his assistant telling Adele she was very impressed as she thought they were professionally made.

In their neighborhood they had a Community Center and she'd made drapes for there too. Frank and she also served on the Executive Board for the Center. Adele additionally worked Bingo each week and then became the cook. While Frank voluntarily wrote a monthly newsletter, Adele would design and print them. Then when

he did movie reviews for local TV stations, Adele created the website for that endeavor.

Their volunteering didn't end with the Center, but also encompassed their neighborhood. Adele would listen to a neighbor with Alzheimer's repeat the same stories over and over, while Frank and some others would help their elderly and disabled neighbors with various tasks. He was also instrumental in securing federal funds to help some of them obtain home improvements such as new steps and siding.

Their home has really gone full circle with their son and his family buying his childhood home and now having neighbors that he grew

up with surrounding them.

Once again Adele's life changed when Frank was no longer a State Rep. With the kids now older she found her own niche. She said for many years she'd just been known as, "Frank's wife", but that was about to change. She sold real estate for several years, becoming the office manager and agent for the real estate company. She went on to do public relations for the Springfield Board of Realtors. She was then asked to help with a challenging job, helping start a mortgage company. The opportunity to start a new real estate company came her way and she mastered that as well. She ended her career as a Financial Social Worker with Medicaid helping people when moving into nursing homes.

Together she and Frank enjoyed many traveling adventures seeing about 3/4th of the US states, including Alaska and Hawaii. They also relished their voyages to the Carrabian, Mexico, Italy, London, Paris and Australia. Her favorites being Hawaii

and Australia.

Adele and her husband have two children and have been fortunate to have four grandchildren. A boy from her daughter and husband and triplets from her son and his wife. As she described the various personalities of her children and grandchildren, it's obvious that they've all learned the importance of giving back by doing their own Random Acts of Kindness.

Adele said that just being kind with a simple smile can be a Random Act of Kindness and she is so right. It doesn't take a lot to just share a kind gesture. As the saying goes, "You can be anything, so just be kind."

If you'd like to share a Random Act of Kindness story or if this one has touched you, please contact me at bdt514@aol.com or 413-575-9385. Who knows, you might see your story, 'Just 'Cause' you witnessed, you did or maybe received something nice being done for you. See you soon with another Random Act of Kindness! ~ Barb

GUEST COLUMN from page 4

enjoyed, sleep difficulties, low self-esteem, moodiness, and/or irritability.

Binge Eating Disorder (BED) is defined by recurring episodes of eating large quantities of food, often quickly and to the point of discomfort, accompanied by a feeling of a loss of control and shame.

Bulimia Nervosa is characterized by frequent episodes of binge eating followed by vomiting, using laxatives, or exercising to excess to avoid gaining weight. Your hungry body responds to its need for food with powerful cravings and another binge ensues. To feel (short-lived) relief and regain control, you purge, but purging only reinforces binge eating and a vicious cycle of bulimia begins.

Anorexia Nervosa is a restrictive eating disorder, characterized most notably by weight loss and nutrient deficiency. Those with anorexia have difficulty maintaining an

appropriate weight for their size and shape. In addition to restricting calories, compulsive exercise, use of laxatives, and/or purging is used to keep their weight low.

There are other specified feeding disorders (OSFED) that are subcategories of eating disorders that do not fit into the diagnostic criteria. A few include:

- Atypical Anorexia is a disorder that despite food restriction, the person's weight is average or above for their height, not under

- Rumination disorder (habitual regurgitation of food after eating, which may then be re-chewed, re-swallowed, or spit out) avoidant or restrictive food intake

- Pica (the persistent eating of non-food substances with no nutritional value, such as dirt, hair, paint chips, or soap)

- Orthorexia (an obsession with healthy eating with associated restrictive behaviors)

- Drunkorexia (skipping

meals or excessive exercise along with heavy alcohol consumption.)

- Diabulimia is a life-threatening eating disorder specifically affecting individuals with Type 1 diabetes, characterized by the intentional restriction or omission of insulin to induce weight loss.

- Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) is similar to picky eating in children or restricted intake in adults, this involves limiting food intake based on a lack of interest in food, avoidance of sensory characteristics (texture, smell), or fear of negative consequences (choking, vomiting).

In addition to affecting mental health, addictions can seriously damage the physical health systems: gastrointestinal, endocrine, nervous, cardiovascular, immune, respiratory problems, as well as liver damage and kidney disease.

It doesn't take long for tolerance to increase with substance use; more of the

drug/alcohol is required to have the same effect. Dependence follows, and the body needs the substance to function normally.

Addiction takes time to develop but soon the cravings and compulsions are stronger than the consequences that follow. If you try to quit, the negative physical and mental health symptoms of withdrawal take over.

Recovery from substance use disorders and eating disorders have many similarities but also a big difference. Abstinence is the goal for many recovering from SUD, but for anyone with an eating disorder, abstinence becomes an eating disorder.

Never in your right mind would you even think about telling an alcoholic to have a beer for breakfast, wine for lunch, cocktails for dinner and a few shots for snacks. One sip, one drug, or one cigarette and the body and mind crave the substance – substance re-ensues!

For an eating disorder, food is both the enemy (drug) AND the cure. The body and mind crave food in the same way as a SUD, but eating is essential for recovery.

One must eat to regain both mental and physical health, yet EVERY SINGLE BITE triggers intense emotions, anxieties and potential knee-jerk bingeing/restriction reactions. One must sit with those overwhelming negative feelings day in and day out.

You can only imagine what it is like for those 35%-50% with dual diagnosis to abstain from substance use while relearning what is the right amount of food to provide the best nutrition for healing. What is good for the body will not feel good to the mind and the person resists!

The interplay between physical health and mental health is intense.

With food disorders, there is an interplay of the endocrine and nervous system constantly trying to keep the body at equilibrium whether a person is suffering from

bingeing, purging or starvation caused by anorexia nervosa.

Once you're in recovery, it can take three months or more to heal metabolism after an eating disorder. This includes unwanted weight gain, digestive issues, thyroid and hormone problems, and fatigue.

Like alcoholism, anorexia can have fatal consequences without medical intervention. Typical eating disorder recovery takes three-six years.

Marilyn Barrett, author of "Creating Eden: The Garden as a Healing Place" encapsulated my recovery when she wrote:

"Come into the garden with me. Don't worry about not knowing your way: Your heart remembers, even if your head has forgotten. When you were small and first had time to create your dreams, you were at one with the earth you played in and with each leaf, bird, and cloud you saw. This is the garden to which I invite you to return.

Imagine a place to which you can bring stress, sorrow, loneliness, and confusion and from which you can leave with a sense of resolution, understanding, and calm. Imagine a place where you can express your own unique nature, create beauty, grow pure food, and gain control over your life. In my life, the garden has been such a place."

Marilyn so aptly penned that the garden is a place for clearing away anger, confusion, and pain, the trash of the past. She added this clearing is a prerequisite to achieving inner peace, balance and harmony and people must sort through the emotional rubble of the past they have inherited, and they must get to the roots of attitudes and behavior patterns that have stunted their growth.

Getting to the roots of attitudes and behavior patterns that have stunted growth doesn't have to be in the garden. Return to what you loved as a child – sports, art, music, writing, hiking. Find a safe

place to face the past.

If you are able, volunteering can be crucial in recovery addiction because it provides structure, fosters a renewed sense of purpose, provides new skillsets, builds a supportive sober community, and improves mental health by reducing depression and anxiety.

It helps individuals replace the self-centered nature of addiction with empathy and structure, ultimately reducing relapse risk by providing meaningful, productive activity.

Additionally, employers value volunteers because they demonstrate key, transferable skills like initiative, teamwork, and leadership, while also signaling a strong work ethic and passion. On a resume, it fills gaps, shows practical experience, and indicates a proactive, community-minded employee.

For every addicted individual, the descent into dependency is uniquely complex as is the journey of recovery. Professional treatment makes for a more successful outcome, so please insist that all your symptoms and conditions are addressed.

Be honest so that you can understand your past and how it affects today's choices.

Joy and well-being will return with each little success!

National Eating Disorders Association: <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/>

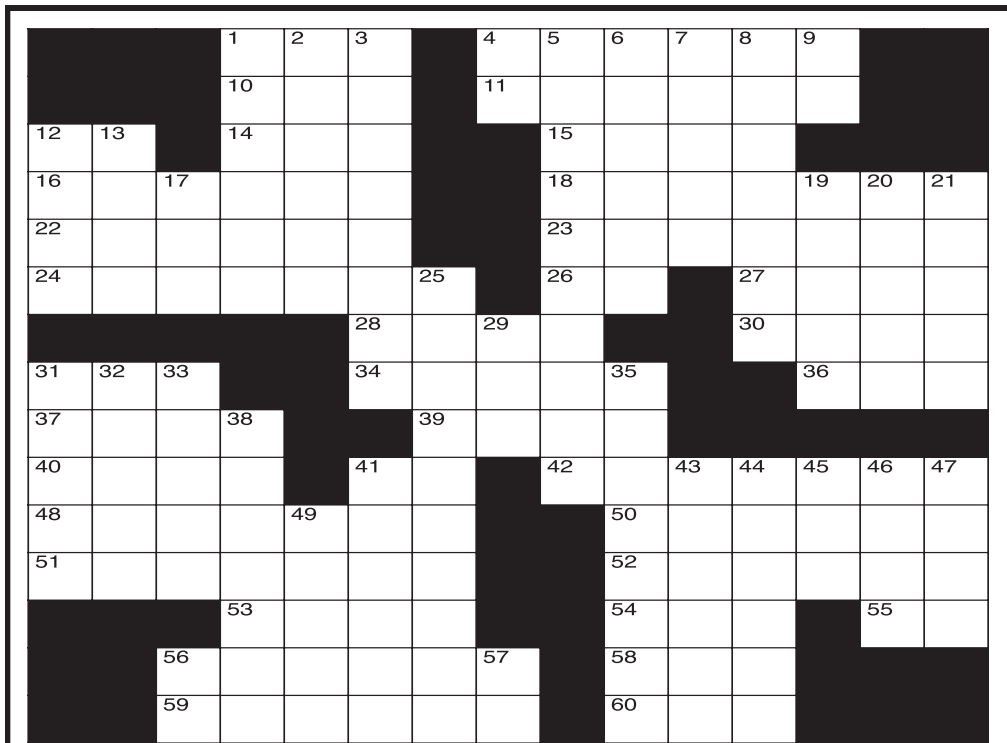
Multiservice eating Disorders Association: <https://www.medainc.org/>

Online Eating Disorder Treatment: Equip <https://equip.health/>

Quaboag Hill Substance Use Alliance: <https://qhsua.org/>

Recovery Center of Hope: <https://www.facebook.com/RecoveryCenterofHOPEWare/> 52 Main Street, Ware. RCH is run by people in recovery and helps those reach goals through a strengths-based and community-based approach.

(1 National Eating Disorders Association (NEDA), 2 National Institute of Health)



CLUES ACROSS

- Inclined to do
- Sketches
- Book of Chronicles (abbr.)
- Atomic #58
- Dorm official
- Small Eurasian deer
- Southern constellation
- Workers' groups
- Former
- Excellent
- Romance language related to Spanish
- Reference
- Equally
- Dirty towels
- A cargo (abbr.)
- Ammunition
- You get one in summer

- Slang for trucks with trailers
- Swiss river
- Exchange rate
- British School
- College teacher
- Foreign Service
- Horse gear
- Cost to fly
- A salt or ester of boric acid
- Mocking
- One who bird-watches
- Concluding passage
- A major division of geological time
- Sodium
- A way to produce
- Soak
- Laughed loudly and harshly
- Affirmative

CLUES DOWN

- Moth species phaloniida
- Quantum of energy
- Break the law
- Location of White House
- Official cancellation of a decision
- Where rockers work
- Cut of beef: mignon
- Nocturnal burrowing reptile
- Atomic #62
- Green of evergreen shrubs
- Flowering plant of the legume family
- Inches per minute (abbr.)

- Tropical fruit
- Hot fluid beneath the earth's crust
- James ____, painter
- Popular dessert
- Payment (abbr.)
- Cuisine style
- Genus of true flies
- City in western France
- Arrogance
- One holding a position of command
- Weekday
- An evening party
- Print errors
- Not good
- Egyptian Sun god
- East German town
- Olfactory property
- Atomic #37
- "Pollock" actor Harris

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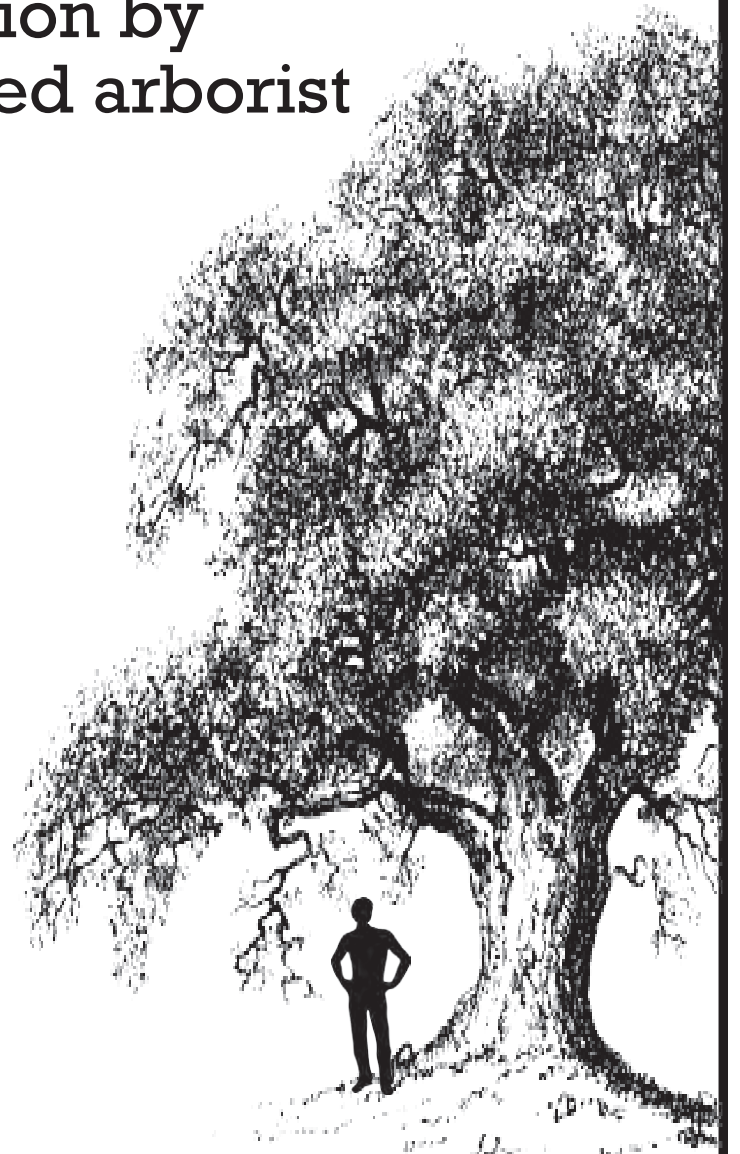


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