

Chicopee Register

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COMMUNITY

Chicopee student accepted to seven colleges

Two of them are Ivy League schools

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
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CHICOPEE - Hampden Charter School of Science East senior Thomas Sibilly, of Chicopee, is grateful after receiving acceptances to seven colleges and more than \$500,000 in scholarships.

He hopes to major in computer science and minor in biology with a focus on computational biology.

"I think it's just a result of hard work and being able to work through everything that's happened, the pandemic and just a lot of other things going on," Sibilly said.

Sibilly is involved in student government, including the National Honor Society, Student Council and more.

"Starting in eleventh grade, I really took on the mindset of trying to take on as many opportunities as possible, so this year, I joined the District Attorney's Youth Advisory Board as well as starting to write for 'Apple Insider' as a product reviewer," Sibilly said. "So there were a lot of different things where if I saw the opportunity, then I decided



(L to R) Tarkan Topcuoglu, chief executive officer at Hampden Charter School of Science East, Robyn Nelson, director at Hampden Charter School of Science East, Patrick Lewis, college and career readiness coordinator at Hampden Charter School of Science East, Thomas Sibilly, Jennifer Sibilly and Dwayne Sibilly pose for a group photo at the Hampden Charter School of Science in Chicopee.

STAFF PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

to take it on and see how far I could go."

He hopes to set an example for the students after him, saying, with college admissions, to not take waitlists and declines personally.

"I had a lot of waitlists," Sibilly said. "Just focus on what you can control. As long as you're satisfied with yourself,

that's what counts."

Sibilly's parents, Jennifer and Dwayne Sibilly, couldn't be happier.

"We're both just very proud and I think the best thing we've tried to do for him is give him the space and opportunities, what we can control and give him a good setting in the home and the resources, the space,

that he needs to reach out and accomplish what he sets out to do," Jennifer Sibilly said.

Dwayne Sibilly is thankful to the Hampden Charter School staff. The family was looking at various middle schools when they applied to

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COMMUNITY

Deputy Chief Gawron retires

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Cultural Council clean sweep

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COMMUNITY

Comp Cleanup

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COMMUNITY

Clean City Initiative banner unveiled



STAFF PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

(L to R) Cayla, Sophia, Mallory and City Council Vice President/Councilor-at-Large Robert Zygarowski hold Clean City Initiative signs as Ward 9 Councilor Mary Beth Costello joins the group photo at City Hall after the Clean City Initiative banner unveiling.

New campaign encourages residents to keep the city clean

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - A new banner was unveiled outside City Hall on April 27 as part of the city's Clean City Initiative and ad campaign.

Mayor John Vieau oversaw

the ceremony alongside city employees, City Council members, state legislators and their staff, the Chamber of Commerce and more.

Also, Litwin Elementary School student Mallory and St. Joan of Arc School students Cayla and Sophia were recognized by Vieau for winning a contest to help create a slogan and logo for the initiative.

Mallory came up with the slogan, "Stop the Drop!" while Cayla and Sophia were behind

the logo.

Vieau explained the importance of the initiative.

"The goal is to clean up Chicopee, and my goal as mayor in this initiative is to have the cleanest city recognized by everyone in Western Mass, if not the whole commonwealth," he said.

He asked students from kindergarten through Grade 12 to take a pledge to "never ever

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COMMUNITY

Chicopee saves \$2 million on City Hall renovations

Money saved during Phase I will be put towards Phase II

By Dalton Zbierski
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CHICOPEE - Mayor John Vieau confirmed exciting news before Tuesday's City Council meeting; the city saved more than \$2 million in the process of completing Phase I of the City Hall restoration project.

The money has already been borrowed and cannot be returned. It will instead be spent on Phase II of the City Hall renovation project, which is currently in its design and engineering phase.

"What we're doing is actually closing out Phase I. The good news is that City Council had approved authorization for up to \$16 million. The city has only used \$14 million of that because of the creativity in finding grants for certain parts of this project,"

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SPORTS

Colts doubled up by Lions

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City Council votes on proposed projects and plans

Councilors also address concerning public input comments

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - City Council voted on proposed projects and plans on May 2 after receiving favorable reports from the Zoning Committee.

First, a vote on the proposed Tesla dealership on Burnett Road, with restrictions: the entrance and exit at the intersection of Burnett Road and New Lombard Road, a 37,000 square foot building maximum, 20 bay maximum, six off-network charging stations and batteries stored properly for the fire and building departments.

Ward 6 Councilor Derek Dobosz thanked the Zoning Committee and council for assisting him, adding residents on Burnett Road are "always cautious with a Burnett Road development and rightfully so" with having "a lot of traffic problems there."

"They listened to the residents and the City Council, and they came back with a proposal at least 40% smaller, if not half as small, so I want to thank the applicant for being willing to work with us," Dobosz said.

Dobosz assured his constituents it's a win-win situation for everyone.

"We get the development for the taxpayer and I think it's the most reasonable development we can ask for at this location," he said.

Ward 9 Councilor Mary Beth Costello said the proposal "was dis-

cussed at length."

"This business is a major change for the City of Chicopee because you're bringing in modern transportation technology that we do not have, and a lot of cities and towns in our area also don't have," Costello said. "So this is something that is brand new, it's a change, and I appreciate Councilor Courchesne's detail to make sure that special conditions were added to address the needs of the residents on Burnett Road."

The vote was 12-0.

Next, a vote on a zone change application for the Mill Conversion and Commercial Center Overlay District on East Main Street.

Ward 7 Councilor William Courchesne clarified the vote approves the applicant to move forward on making plans with more meetings in the future.

"This simply allows them to proceed now with a residential plan in an industrial or commercial zone, so this is not approval of any plans," he said.

During public input earlier, Eugene Principalowitz had asked the council to consider and enact a moratorium on building apartments in the city.

"The City of Chicopee doesn't need any apartments. In fact, I don't think there's really any need for apartments in Western Massachusetts, as we have no jobs. No jobs that pay a living wage," he said.

Principalowitz later added, "The only thing you're bringing to the city is a ghetto. We have no need for it."

Ward 1 Councilor Joel McAuliffe supports the plans and spoke out against Principalowitz's comments.

"Saying 'we don't want apartments

in Chicopee' is coded language for saying 'we don't want the people who live in apartments in Chicopee,' and I don't think this council will stand for that. I want to firmly reject that," McAuliffe said.

Ward 3 Councilor Delmarina López echoed McAuliffe's comments and was "at a loss for words."

"People that live in apartments are not bringing in the 'ghetto.' I don't know what's that even supposed to mean," López said. "They are people who need housing in the same way that a person who owns a home or a luxury condo. Everyone deserves housing. Housing is a human right, and I am not one to pick and choose who gets to live near me because we're all a community and everyone deserves to be housed."

Courchesne was also at a loss for words, saying, "We don't discriminate who comes here."

"It's so expensive right now to own a home. Even apartments are outrageously priced for most folks to be able to live. So if we can bring in something that's subsidized it doesn't matter. Everybody deserves a home," Courchesne said. "There are a lot of good people out there that are struggling. Just because there are a couple of bad people in a development doesn't make the whole development bad, and you can't stereotype and put a label on everybody. It was a very racist comment."

He said on jobs, businesses look for vacant housing units when coming to an area because they will also bring employees.

"People are going to come to town because that employer's in town. So if we don't have available housing, we're not getting big business, because that is the first thing big business looks for before they relocate to a community is if there is available housing," Courchesne said.

Ward 5 Councilor Fred Krampits said, "we're all in need of housing" and "there are good jobs."

He highlighted the Silver Brook project in Chicopee Center as an example of market-rate housing, explaining that developer's primary goal was to have them be market-rate apartments.

"It's kind of discouraging when people mention that, you know, that they don't want a 'ghetto' to develop and things like that and classifying people like that," Krampits said. "It sets kind of a bad tone for a project that will have a positive impact by not having a business in there that would create more traffic."

Ward 2 Councilor Shane Brooks said López "captured, I think, it all pretty well," adding "everyone is entitled to have affordable housing."

"There is definitely a bias to people who can't buy a condo, who can't buy a house, can't afford to live in a nice neighborhood. There a lot of good paying jobs making \$20 an hour, you're making \$42,500 a year at that point," Brooks said. "You can afford an apartment. We should be able to provide affordable housing to folks who work at entry-level jobs without any bias."

He added, "We need to do better."

Ward 4 City Councilor George Balakier mentioned "there's a housing desert throughout the country" and the project would provide a family an opportunity to have a roof over their head.

Balakier said the public input comments were "very unacceptable."

"People do have jobs, and there are companies around here looking for people and it's really a shame to have this sentiment and mentality in today's day and age," Balakier said. "Everybody needs a place to live and if this is an opportunity for a developer to come in and build something and people can move into a new place and feel better about themselves. This is part of the American Dream."

Costello explained at the Zoning Committee meeting residents were concerned about the traffic, parking and number of apartments, not who would occupy the apartments.

"Councilor Krampits, the residents and the developer were working together to make it smaller so that it could fit into that particular area better without any of the traffic and the parking," she said.

Vice President/Councilor-at-Large Robert Zygarowski said the discrimination talk on this and several other projects "is utterly disgusting," and "we got to get away from that."

"There are good people who live in apartments. They pay good rent and deserve to have a place to live," Zygarowski said. "We need to keep an open mind, and the residents need to keep that also."

Ward 5 Councilor Gary Labrie closed the discussion agreeing with everyone's comments, adding the developer also wants to work with residents and the city.

"We're very fortunate that we have two projects that are working with the residents right now," Labrie said.

The motion then passed 12-0.

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City of Chicopee releases request for development proposals for former Uniroyal property

By Brian Salmon,
City of Chicopee Purchasing Agent

CHICOPEE – The city of Chicopee, through its Purchasing Department, has released a Request for Proposals, soliciting redevelopment proposals from qualified development entities for the purchase and redevelopment of the Uniroyal Redevelopment Parcel.

The parcel includes a portion of the former Uniroyal Tire property, a city-owned Brownfield site in Chicopee Falls. The RFP details the significant development opportunity the parcel encompasses as the fourth and final private redevelopment parcel for RiverMills at Chicopee Falls.

The RFP also details the process development entities will follow to submit a development proposal and the evaluation process the city will follow for all received proposals.

The parcel includes 9.58 acres of property located south of Lot #4 of the

former Facemate property (the Baskin Redevelopment Parcel). The property includes four remaining historic buildings that have been retained for development. The city will prioritize redevelopment proposals that provide for creative reuse of these unique industrial structures consistent with the RiverMills Vision Plan.

“The Uniroyal Development Parcel offers an exciting opportunity for an innovative development team to create a signature mixed-use project on the banks of the Chicopee River. We are especially thrilled to begin this substantial segment of RiverMills redevelopment, as this parcel is the largest private redevelopment parcel created as part of the RiverMills Plan. This is a significant project that will serve to continue the revitalization of Chicopee falls and the city of Chicopee,” Mayor John Vieau said.

Release of the Uniroyal Redevelopment Parcel RFP represents a significant milestone towards the revitalization of RiverMills as Chicopee Falls.

“Following a complicated tax foreclosure process for the former Uniroyal and Facemate properties circa 2010, the city has been aggressive and consistent in its efforts to plan for the redevelopment of these properties,” City Treasurer Marie Laflamme said. “Following the successful redevelopment of three redevelopment parcels created out of the former Facemate property, the Uniroyal Redevelopment Parcel completes the city’s efforts to return these properties to productive reuse.”

Located in the urban heart of Chicopee Falls, along a scenic stretch of the Chicopee River, RiverMills at Chicopee Falls represents one of the largest contiguous areas of former industrial properties poised for redevelopment in Western Massachusetts. The RiverMills Vision Plan has guided redevelopment since its adoption in 2012 and will be utilized to evaluate redevelopment proposals submitted for the Uniroyal Redevelopment Parcel.

Preparations for redevelopment of the former Uniroyal property have been ongoing since 2010. Between the former Facemate property and the former Uniroyal property, the city has invested over \$40 million to complete environmental assessment and cleanup activities to best position these properties for future reuse.

“The Uniroyal Redevelopment Parcel represents the fourth RiverMills parcel prepared for redevelopment by the city,” Director of Planning and Development Lee Pouliot said. “This long-awaited milestone is the result of focused efforts by the city with its state and federal partners to complete needed environmental work to best position this property for redevelopment. We anticipate these efforts will provide prospective developers with confidence that the environmental risks associated with Brownfield properties have been addressed.”

The RFP (Bid #23-15) is available through the city’s Purchasing Department.

Deputy Chief Gawron retires

CHICOPEE – Please join the Chicopee Police Department in congratulating Deputy Chief Jeffrey Gawron on his retirement. Gawron has served the City of Chicopee for over 35 years.

Gawron’s law enforcement career started in 1987 as a Chicopee Special Police Officer.

In 1988, he graduated from the 12th MPOC in Agawam Massachusetts and began working at the Chicopee Police Department 4 p.m. to 12 a.m. uniform patrol division.

In 1989, Gawron joined the Chicopee Police Honor Guard, which he was part of for 10 years.

In 1994, Gawron became a member of the Special Response Team as a patrolman and then later as a supervisor for over nine years.

In 1995, Gawron rose up the ranks to Sergeant, where he was street supervisor the uniform patrol division on the 12-8 a.m. shift. As Sergeant he later supervised on the 4 p.m. to 12 a.m. and the 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. shifts.

In 2009, Gawron was promoted to Lieutenant, where he supervised the 12 a.m. to 8 a.m. uniform division.

In 2011, Gawron was made acting Captain and commanded the 12-8 a.m. shift in uniform patrol division and then proceeded to command the 4 p.m. to 12 a.m. and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. shifts throughout this year.

In 2012, Gawron was promoted to Captain. In 2013, Gawron was assigned to the Narcotics Bureau and was in charge of Special Operations.

Between the years of 2014-2020, Gawron had been in charge of the 4 p.m. to 12 a.m. and then later on the 8 a.m. to 4



PHOTO AND STORY COURTESY OF THE CPD

Deputy Chief Jeffrey Gawron

p.m. shifts.

In 2020, Gawron commanded the Traffic Division, where he was responsible for overseeing firearm licensing, accident reconstruction, motorcycle division, honor guard, bike patrols, as well as being the designated Infectious Disease Control Officer, Court Liaison Officer, Liaison Officer for the Chicopee OSHA Committee and Liaison Officer for the Chicopee Local Emergency Management Agency.

From 2020 to 2021, Gawron served as Interim Chief of Police

In 2021, Gawron became the point of contact for the Chief. Gawron was in command of the C3 Divisions and also responsible for overseeing the Public Information Officer. Gawron developed the Police Emergency Action Plan.

Gawron has a Master’s Degree in Criminal Justice from Western New England University, a Bachelor’s Degree in Criminal Justice, from Curry College as well as an Associate’s Degree in Criminal Justice from Holyoke Community College. In 2023 Gawron Graduated the National Emergency Management Basic Academy through FEMA.

Police department to hold Youth Police Academy this summer

CHICOPEE – The Chicopee Police Department will be holding its Youth Police Academy again this summer and applications are now available. This is a great experience for kids aged 14-17 to come together and learn about law en-

forcement, team building and problem solving.

If you would like more information or have questions about the program please contact Officer Mark Hammon at Mhammon@chicopeepolice.com.



BELCHERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL CHOICE PROGRAM 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR

The Belchertown Public School District is now accepting applications for the following School Choice openings for the 2023-2024 school year:

Grade K	2	Grade 7	10
Grade 1	4	Grade 8	10
Grade 3	4	Grade 9	5
Grade 4	4	Grade 10	5
Grade 5	1		

The Belchertown Public Schools combine innovation and tradition to provide positive educational experiences for all of our students through quality programs, dynamic teaching and healthy relationships.

The deadline for submitting a **complete** application is 4:00 p.m. on **Friday, June 2, 2023.**

The selection of non-resident students for admission will be in the form of a random drawing when the number of requests exceeds the number of available spaces. There will be two drawings for this purpose. The first will take place on June 2, 2023, and in the event of unexpected additional openings, a second drawing will be conducted on August 4, 2023.

The application and guidelines can be downloaded at www.belchertownps.org or picked up at 14 Maple St., Belchertown, MA 01007.

The Belchertown School District does not discriminate in the admission of any child on the basis of age, sex, gender identity, race, religion, color, national origin, sexual orientation or ancestry, athletic performance, physical handicap, special need, academic performance, disability or proficiency in the English language in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

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EDITORIAL



Male ruby-throated hummingbird

It is almost May and May is the month ruby-throated hummingbirds usually return to this area.

Some people already put out nectar feeders in anticipation of their return. I will put out a nectar feeder this weekend. I usually see the males first, then the females.

The ruby-throated hummingbird is the only hummingbird found in Eastern North America.

These birds are only 3 1/2 inches long and are green. The male has a black head, iridescent red throat, which may appear black and a white breast and belly. The female is green with a whitish throat and underbelly. Eyes and bills are black.

Hummingbirds eat flower nectar, insects, spiders and sap from sapsucker drilled holes. They come to hummingbird feeders.

In spring, the male defends a territory of about 1/4 acre. In dive displays, he flies in a U shape, rising about 10 to 20 feet on both sides. It resembles the swinging of a pendulum. After mating, the female lays two white eggs in cup shaped nest of plant down, bud scales, covered with lichens, bound with spider's silk and placed on a small, horizontal limb.

Ruby-throated hummingbirds, both male and female, near migration, will temporarily defend a food source such as nectar feeders. They migrate 600 miles across the Gulf of Mexico, having stored enough food to make the crossing.

Hummingbirds make varied chips and twittering noises. Their wings make a whirring or humming noise, which is how they got their name. When I refill a nectar feeder and return to hang it out, I often hear their humming wings or I will see them perched on a nearby branch.

Nectar

I mix 1/4 cup white sugar to 1 cup water. The mixture should be brought to a boil to ensure all the sugar dissolves and to eliminate bacteria. Cool the mixture before setting it out. It also can be kept in the refrigerator for about a week. It is important to keep nectar feeders clean and change the mixture frequently. I prefer the nectar feeders that have a moat on top to fill with water to deter ants.

I have several larger birds, who drink water from the moat. I even have downy woodpeckers that drink nectar.

Nesting bluebirds

A Belchertown resident said he saw a nesting pair of bluebirds in his yard so he built a bluebird house and now the pair call the bird house home. He succeeded in his quest to attract bluebirds to his yard.

Pileated woodpeckers

The Belchertown resident also has pileated woodpeckers at his feeders. I often hear pileated woodpeckers calling or hammering away on a tree, but I rarely see one. The other day, I heard the call and looked up to see one fly from my yard to the woods across the street.

Ospreys

I received an email this week. The writer visited the site in Wilbraham where osprey had nested previously. He said, "I saw two osprey at a nest on a light pole. I don't think they are incubation eggs because one bird brought a stick to the nest while I was there and both birds left the nest which I don't think would happen if incubation had started."

He said for anyone wanting to go see this nest the best place to view the nest is from the Wilbraham Senior Center parking lot and park on the side of the lot facing the playing fields. There are stick nests on three light poles. He said, "The nest I saw the birds

GUEST COLUMN



April showers make for great transplanting weather

It was a lot of fun to take advantage of the overcast days this week to get some transplanting done.

Do you wonder why it is advantageous to undertake this task when it is cloudy, or even drizzling out? If your guess has to do with less stress on the plants, you are right on target.

Read on for more about what kept me busy and why!!

I hope I am smarting up some when it comes to homegrown seedlings. This year, instead of growing 300 tomato plants (yes, I was a little kooky last year) I downsized to just under 70.

Still enough for me to share but not so many that we have to have a brigade to get the many trays into the house each night that temperatures dip in my unheated greenhouse.

The tomato seeds were sown in the third week or March and were transplanted into 6 packs the second week of April.

Recently, they started to show signs that they were ready to be potted into bigger containers. Height was one give-away. Secondly, was a root ball that was pretty filled out but not quite root bound (roots swirling in a tight mass).

I lifted each plant from the cell of its 6-pack and positioned the plant on the bottom of a 4" pot and filled in with new potting soil.

Tomatoes are unique in that they will make roots up the stem.

After all the transplanting was done, I gave them a drink or fish emulsion/seaweed fertilizer to lessen any shock and provide them with a good boost.

Because it was overcast, I was able to do this right in the greenhouse and keep them in there without worry that the sun or heat would be too much for plants that recently had their

roots disturbed.

On occasion, when I've been forced to get transplanting done during a sunny stretch, I would immediately water the plants then place the trays of plants in the shade to recover for at least a day or two.

Now, a mention on temperature. Cloudy is one thing, and today with my greenhouse doors closed, 50 degrees outdoors meant a few degrees warmer inside.

I would not keep tomato plants outside if temperatures were colder than fifty or they will start to show signs of distress. They are much happier at 55 to 60 degrees.

So, for the next couple of weeks, (gasp) in and out they will go each day.

Without a greenhouse would mean moving them around your windows to catch the sun, or placing them back under the grow lights until temperatures moderate. At least I am not moving 300 this year.

Overcast skies were also helpful when it came time to re-do one of my perennial borders. I did a soil test on this particular garden last year and followed the recommendations to increase nitrogen (blood meal) and potassium (wood ashes).

It is neat that the wood ashes do double duty to get the pH a little higher as well.

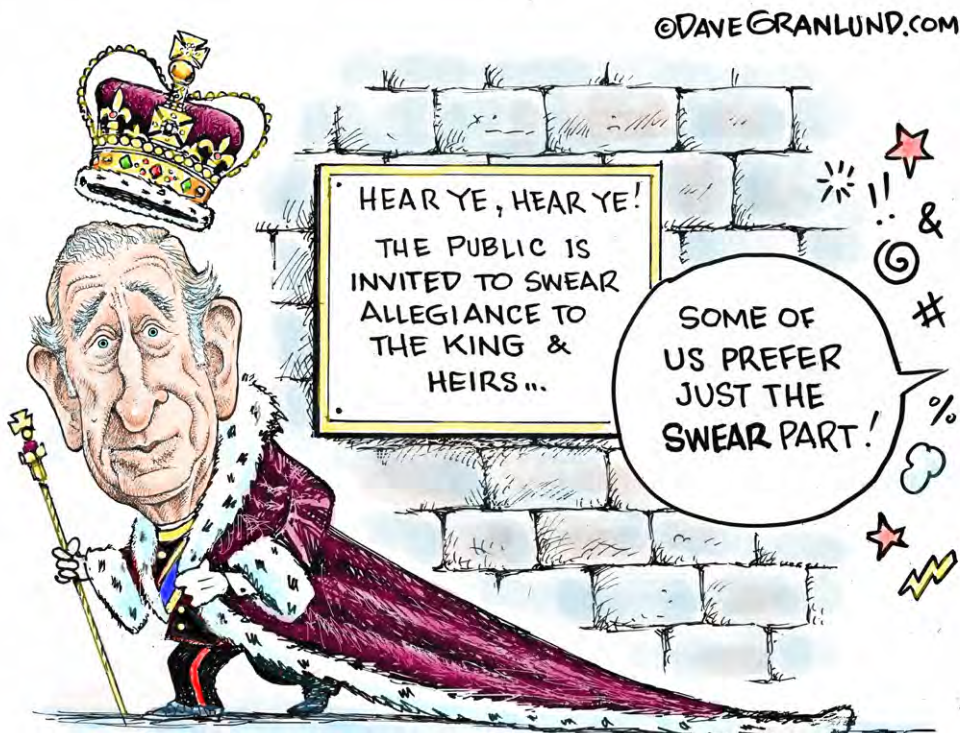
Once the amendments were mixed in, I began lifting plants from the old garden, dividing them up and replanting them in the new garden. Some of the plants were overgrown, hence the need for division.

Using a sharp shovel, I simply sliced them down the middle of the clump and if needed, divided the halves into quarters. Now lots of roots were severed in the process, so cloudy skies and the rain that followed really helped to settle the plants into their new locale without shock.

The garden is a collection of plants that butterflies love. I have a butterfly bush in the corner that is 3 years old. That one really frigid night we had where temperatures dipped into the negative double digits killed off top growth, but I am hopeful that growth will return from the crown.

Hopefully, I will see that over the next two to three weeks. What did you accomplish over these cloudy days?

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



at was the right most light pole as viewed from the Wilbraham Senior Center." I think I will take a road trip to Wilbraham.

Other birds

An Oakham couple saw the first grackle of the year last week. I had a male goldfinch in bright yellow plumage perched on my feeder

pole recently.

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

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.

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IN THE CITY

Cultural Council leads Clean Sweep



PHOTOS AND CAPTION COURTESY OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

CHICOPEE – Last Saturday, Chicopee residents, businesses, friends and neighbors came together for the third annual Clean Sweep by Chicopee Cultural Council across eight different areas of the city. A few hours and many helping hands makes a difference. Let's keep the momentum going and all do our part to "Stop The Drop" year round with the Mayor's Office.



Hatha Yoga classes to be offered in Chicopee

CHICOPEE – The Chicopee Parks & Recreation Department is offering a Hatha yoga class. The class is being offered on Wednesday Evenings 5-6 p.m. It will run from May 15 – June 7.

This class series is open to all levels of experience from those wanting to start, restart or maintain an ongoing yoga practice. It is designed to increase strength and flexibility in an accessible way. Focusing on providing a movement-based practice that can be used for stress management, can help boost circulation and will promote overall health and wellbeing.

All classes for both programs will be held at Chicopee River Mills Senior Center. Exercise Studio #17 room located on the second floor of the building at 5 West Main St., Chicopee.


This class is open to ages 15 and older. Instructor Caitlin Lavin has over nine years of teaching Hatha Yoga and over 14 years experiencing other various forms of yoga. The cost for a five-week session is \$70/Resident \$80/ Non-Resident or a drop-in fee of \$15/Residents \$17/ Non-Residents per class.

Space is limited so register now! To register go to www.chicopeerec.com.

OBITUARY

Death Notice

Barbara Ann Bozek,
84-years-old,
of Chicopee, died on
March 17, 2023.



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Neal announces \$1,000,000 for Elms College to expand programs

CHICOPEE – On May 2, U.S. Congressman Richard E. Neal joined Elms College President Harry E. Dumay to announce a \$1,000,000 earmark to expand the education and social work programs at Elms College.

The allocation was made possible through Congressionally Direct Spending from the Department of Education. Congressman Neal included funding for this project in the Fiscal Year 2023 spending bill that was signed into law on December 29, 2022.

“Western Massachusetts has a diverse socioeconomic landscape, and with that families who face a diverse set of challenges. Our region is fortunate to have some of the most capable educators and social workers who are willing and able to meet the needs of our children and their families, and institutions like Elms College are ensuring we continue to have the skilled workforce ready to answer the call for help,” Neal said. “Elms College has a rich history of educating a diverse student body, ensuring they are equipped with the tools needed to effect real change in their community. Congress has the fundamental responsibility to oversee the expenditure of the public purse, and I strongly believe that this investment will greatly benefit our region for years to come.”

“We are extremely grateful for Congressman Neal’s continued support of Elms College and higher education throughout the region. Congressman Neal’s support for higher education as chair of the House Ways and Means Commit-

tee was instrumental in helping many institutions across the nation weather the storm of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Elms College President, Harry E. Dumay, Ph.D., MBA. “The \$1 million in funding will be used to bolster our education and social work programs, while also providing scholarships for students in these disciplines.”

With this funding, Elms College will address community workforce development by expanding their education and social work programs. This expansion will include investments in the Center for Equity in Urban Education at Elms College, which was created to bolster educator talent and diversity through innovative programs that target existing and aspiring educators. Funding will also be used to invest in the college’s Master’s in Social Work program in an effort to address the shortage of social workers in the Greater Springfield community.

Under guidelines issued by the Senate and House Appropriations Committees, members of Congress requested CDS funding for projects in their state for Fiscal Year 2023. CDS requests were restricted to a limited number of federal funding streams, and only state and local governments, and eligible non-profit entities, were permitted to receive CDS funding.

This project is one of 15 CDS projects submitted by Congressman Neal, totaling over \$20 million in investments throughout the First Congressional District of Massachusetts.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHICOPEE COMP

CHICOPEE – Last weekend, students and staff from Chicopee Comprehensive High School braved the rain and cleaned up the school property. Participants included the National Honor Society, the Student Council, the girls’ lacrosse team and the boys’ track team.



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Sports

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Colts doubled up by Lions



LUDLOW – Last Friday afternoon, Chicopee Comprehensive softball was defeated at neighbor Ludlow 10-5. In the defeat, Hannah Poulin had two hits and drove in two runs for the Colts. Arianna Bird also had an RBI. Comp is now 4-7 on the season.

PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Olivia Vega slides into third.



Marissa Vasquez fields on the run.



Hannah Poulin reaches second safely.



Kayla Williams fires to the plate for Comp.



Arianna Bird throws to first for an out.

Comp suffers tough loss to rival Agawam

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

AGAWAM—Two days after losing a home match to Valley league rival Amherst, the Agawam boys' varsity lacrosse team got back on the right track again in another home league contest versus Chicopee Comp.

The Brownies, who held a 10-0 halftime lead, coasted to a 15-1 victory over the Colts at Harmon A. Smith Field, last Thursday afternoon.

"We played one of our best games of the season today, which we really needed, especially after not playing very well in our home loss to Amherst the other day," said Agawam head coach Joe Heney. "We really need to build some momentum because we'll be facing our league opponents for the second time."

The Brownies (4-6, 4-3), who also won the first meeting with Comp, 14-2, swept the season series for the first time in many years.

"We're going to play one game at a time, but our ultimate goal is to compete for a league title," Heney added. "We also want

See **COMP** page 8

Pacers defeated by Southwick 3-0

CHICOPEE – Last Friday afternoon, Chicopee boys volleyball suffered a 3-0 loss against Southwick. The Pacers were in every set till near the end, losing 25-21, 25-19, and 25-18. The Pacers are 0-12.



David Gonzalez starts a play off with a bump.



Jayden Rodriguez goes straight up with a set.

PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Ethan Vignato attempts a spike.



Bailey Kinney goes for a quick tip over the net

T-Birds make large donation to Rays of Hope

SPRINGFIELD – The Springfield Thunderbirds announced a donation of \$30,000 to the Rays of Hope as a result of proceeds from the live jersey auction during the T-Birds’ 6th Annual Pink in the Rink game on March 11.

Thunderbirds President Nathan Costa and Vice President of Sales & Strategy Todd McDonald presented a check to the Rays of Hope earlier this week inside the MassMutual Center. This year’s Pink in the Rink game set new records for total funds generated, and the MassMutual Center came out in full force with a sixth straight “Pink” night sellout crowd of 6,793.

Established in T-Birds’ inaugural season in 2016-17, “Pink in the Rink” serves as a kickoff to the Rays of Hope fundraising efforts each March to shine a light on breast cancer awareness outside of the traditional October awareness month. Each year, the fundraising efforts culminate in the annual Rays of Hope Walk & Run in October. Since the establishment of this staple night, the Thunderbirds have generated more than \$100,000 for the Rays of Hope Foundation, all of which stays local in Western Massachusetts in hopes of finding the cure.

Proceeds for this donation were raised primarily via the post-game

live jersey auction, as every Thunderbirds player had his jersey sold to directly benefit the Rays of Hope. In addition, Chris Hayes, General Manager of Oak View Group Hospitality, the food and beverage partner for the MassMutual Center, contributed toward the donation total through the sales of Pink Whitney beverages throughout the evening.

“Pink in the Rink once again proved to be one of the most special nights of our historic season,” said Costa. “We share in the Rays of Hope Foundation’s pride for our community and our fanbase for their steadfast support year in and year out. We want to congratulate the Rays of Hope on their 30th anniversary and are proud to continue such a meaningful partnership that celebrates so many brave women and men in Western Massachusetts who have not only survived breast cancer but also thrived in generating awareness through their Rays of Hope family.”

“We’re sending our signature big pink hug to the Springfield Thunderbirds and their fans for illuminating HOPE in our community,” said Kathy Tobin, Director of Annual Giving and Events for the Baystate Health Foundation. “As we kick off Rays of Hope’s 30th Anniversary, we reflect on those who have helped us

get to this moment. We may not have a cure for breast cancer yet, but we have made lifesaving breakthroughs in treatment and the research continues. Importantly we have a big extended family of support here in western Massachusetts. Thank you to the T-Birds for lifting our survivors up!”

Since its inception in 1994, Rays of Hope has raised over \$16.6 million to support the women and men living in western Massachusetts touched by breast cancer. Funds also support vital research at the Rays of Hope Center for Breast Cancer Research.

The T-Birds Foundation was established in 2018 with a mission of serving the Springfield community and the Pioneer Valley beyond every win and loss through a focus on providing and supporting initiatives in the areas of health and wellness, youth enrichment, and civil service. During the 2022-23 season, the T-Birds Foundation raised more than \$131,000 for charitable causes in Western Massachusetts.

This year’s Rays of Hope Walk & Run Toward the Cure of Breast Cancer will be held on Sunday, October 22. For more information, visit Baystatehealth.org/Raysofhope or call 413-794-8001.

Run for Rice’s 5K Road Race set for June 3

WILBRAHAM – The 11th annual “Run for Rice’s 5K Road Race” will be held on Saturday, June 3 at 9 a.m. This popular, family-friendly 5K road race begins at Christ the King – Epiphany Church, 758 Main Street, Wilbraham, and winds through a flat, fast course in surrounding neighborhoods, ending at Rice Fruit Farm across the street from the start. Pre-registration fee for runners and walkers is \$20, while day-of-race registration is \$25. Ages 18 and under registration is \$15 including day-of registration.

The first 150 registered runners by May 20 will receive our famous race t-shirt featuring the “Running Apple” logo, and all registered runners will receive a free Rice Fruit Farm ice cream with their bib number on day of race only. Cash prizes will be awarded in several categories, and all proceeds benefit the Rice Nature Preserve maintenance fund of the Minnechaug Land Trust.

Race day registration will be open from 7:30 a.m. until 8:45 a.m. On-line registration now available at RunSignUp.com, and paper registration forms can be downloaded at the Minnechaug Land Trust website www.minnechauglandtrust.org.

COMP from page 7

to be one of the four teams to play in the Western Mass. Class A. tournament, which would mean a lot to these kids. Playing in the Division 2 state tournament will give us another opportunity to play lacrosse.”

Agawam, who hasn’t captured a league title since 2014, entered the final month of the regular season in the middle of the Valley League standings. Wahconah Regional was sitting atop the league standings at the beginning of this week with a perfect 7-0 mark.

“We lost to Wahconah by one goal (7-6) the first time that we played them,” Heney said. “If we can play well and if we play together, we’re capable of competing with any team in our league. It just depends on our mindsets and how we show up for each game. The ball is in our court right now.”

While the Brownies are battling for a league title and the two postseason berths, the Colts entered May looking to get into the win column for the first time.

“Even though we haven’t won a game yet, we’ve improved a lot since our first game with Agawam,” said Comp first-year head coach Brandon Pavoni. “We’ve been working on the little things. I’m hoping that we can win a couple of games before the end of the regular season.”

Agawam sophomore Riley Jorgensen led the way offensively in last Thursday’s match with five goals and two assists.

“Riley loves to shoot the ball and it paid off in today’s game,” Heney said. “I thought he was really accurate, especially in transition. He did a great job of finishing. Scoring five goals is an outstanding achievement for any lacrosse player. We also had contributions from several other players. It was a total team effort.”

The trio of freshman Liam Grealis, freshman Brayden Federico, and junior Hayden Dupre scored two goals apiece in the second meeting of the regular season against the Colts.

Four other players scored one goal. The first quarter was played in a rain shower.

The wet weather didn’t slow down the Brownies attack very much, as they built a 4-0 lead a little more than four minutes into the match. Grealis scored a pair of goals during that span.

Jorgensen, who netted the Brownies final goal of the opening quarter, recorded a hat-trick with a pair of goals two minutes into the second quarter. Two more goals by Dupre gave the Brownies a 10-0 lead at the break.

The sun came out after halftime and Jorgensen began the third quarter by scoring his fourth goal.

A pair of goals by Federico extended the Brownies lead to 13-0.

With 3:15 remaining in the third quarter, the Colts finally broke the ice following an unassisted goal by junior Andrew Ferguson, which was his first goal of the regular season.

Agawam freshman goalie Jordin Agosto (9 saves) was hoping to post his first shutout in a varsity game.

He received plenty of support from the defense led by senior’s Jordan Stack, Matt Bernard, and Joe Liquori.

Junior Anthony Buoniconiti replaced Agosto in goal at the start of the fourth quarter.

Down at the other end of the field, Comp junior goalie Aidan Coulombe (9 saves) tried his best to keep the Brownies shot attempts from going into the net.

“Aidan has more than 125 saves this season,” Pavoni said. “He’s one of our captains, along with (sophomore) Shane Upham, (senior) Zack Canavan, and (senior) Kraig Geissler.”

Holding a 13-1 lead, the Brownies final two goals in the fourth quarter were scored by senior Hunter Emmons and Jorgensen.

Registration open for 2023 Bay State Games

WOBURN – Registration for the 41st annual Bay State Summer Games is now open. The 2023 Summer Games will include thirty sports with competitions from June 3 to July 29 at venues throughout eastern and central Massachusetts including Game On in Fitchburg, Boston Sports Institute in Wellesley, Union Point Sports Complex in Weymouth, and New England Sports Center in Marlborough. Bay State Games participants range in age from 5 to over age 75 and represent more than 300 Massachusetts communities as well as surrounding New England States in some sports. From grassroots participants to accomplished amateur athletes, the Bay State Games provide opportunities for the athlete in all of us.

Eight high school showcase sports will take place for a variety of sports, including baseball, basketball, field hockey, ice hockey, lacrosse, soccer, softball, and volleyball. Athletes currently in grade 8-11 who live or go to school in Massachusetts are eligible to attend regional tryouts during the month of June. These tryouts will determine teams

representing the various regions of the Commonwealth that will compete against each other in July. Check each sport page for specific eligibility requirements.

The Summer Games include a wide variety of individual sports including swimming, track & field, figure skating, pickleball, wrestling, weightlifting, archery, judo, badminton, and more. These sports are open to a wide range of ages and skill levels from youth participants to masters-aged athletes. Adaptive sport divisions in archery, swimming, and track & field are offered, as well. Bay State Games also organizes tournaments for pre-existing teams in girls lacrosse, rugby, and 6v6 field hockey.

The 2023 Summer Games will feature Game On in Fitchburg as the host venue for 8 sports. Bay State Games expects 1,500 athletes and their families to attend competitions at Game On during the second week of July. “We are excited to expand the roster of sports being held at Game On this year,” said Kevin Cummings, Executive Director of the Bay State Games. “This state-of-

the-art facility allows us to enhance the athlete and spectator experience and provide a true Olympic-style multi-sport atmosphere for our participants.”

An additional feature in 2023 is that in over a dozen sports, athletes who win a gold, silver, or bronze medal at the 2023 Bay State Games will qualify to participate in the 2024 State Games of America in San Diego, California. The State Games of America feature more than 8,000 athletes from over 30 different state games programs nationwide. To see the list of qualifying sports, please visit www.stategamesofamerica.com.

In addition to sports programming, Bay State Games offer college scholarships, a sportsmanship initiative, college internship opportunities, and a High School Ambassador program.

For more information on all sports in the 2023 Summer Games, links to online registration, and information on other programs, go to www.baystategames.org.

For questions, email info@bay-stategames.org or call 781-932-6555.

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IN THE CITY

CHICOPEE STUDENT from page 1

Hampden Charter.

"I think it's definitely game-changing," Mr. Sibilly said. "The amount of support and guidance that Tom has gotten has been tremendous."

Patrick Lewis, college and career readiness coordinator, is not surprised by Sibilly's accomplishments.

"Thomas has always been such a hard worker and dedicated, a role model. Earlier this year, he took it on himself to set up a time to speak to

younger students about the college process. He spearheaded that and it was a success and he was able to inspire the younger students," Lewis said. "For us at Hampden Charter, Thomas is a shining example of what we strive for, for all our students."

Director Robyn Nelson said Sibilly "showed great promise" when he arrived and later entered the honors program beginning in seventh-grade.

"Most middle schools don't have honor programs, but we do because

we see the need for students, especially if they want to go into the engineering or the biotech fields and to end their high school career by taking AP Calculus," Nelson said.

Chief Executive Officer Tarkan Topcuoglu said Sibilly "has always been a great contributor to this community" and beyond.

"We try to get them ready for the next chapter of their lives, and seeing it's happening is a great feeling and also showing that as an example to other people it can happen, and Thom-

as showed us it can happen," he said.

Mrs. Sibilly shared advice she heard from her grandparent for her message to parents: "I let my children be who they are."

"If you can find what your child wants and foster that and go seek out the resources, whatever they are, a STEM school, arts, every weekend at the library, go seek those resources, and whatever you can do for your child to foster what they want to grow, then they can grow to be what they want to be," she said.

CLEAN CITY from page 1

ever, ever throw litter on the ground."

"We have a finite amount of time on this planet, and I think we have to be very considerate for those who will be coming after us in preserving it and keeping it prestigious for all to enjoy," Vieau said.

Vieau said the initiative also applies to addressing public health.

"It's about having healthy neighborhoods," Vieau said. "How can we make this neighborhood a little healthier than it was?"

State Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield) lent his support to the initiative. While thanking the students, his colleagues and the city, Gomez said the cause is personal.

"This is something that is near and dear to my heart. We have to make sure that our roadways, our waterways and our parks are immaculate for the quality of life when it comes to our children, so with that, I wanted to come to make sure I lent my support on this effort and make sure, always and forever, we're going to keep a clean Chicopee."

Vieau then unveiled the banner alongside the students and presented them with a gift, thanking them for making the city "a little bit better than it was yesterday" through their contributions.

He then encouraged the city to "Stop the Drop!" in his closing remarks.

"Let's not litter. Take out more than you brought in when you go to the park," Vieau said. "If you see something on the ground, pick it up. The world's not your trash barrel, and I think this is going to really help make a difference."

He also thanked the team at Sign Dynamics for donating to the initiative.

Vieau added the city-wide Clean Sweep, recently held on April 29, will be done in a series, and was organized by the Cultural Council and Chamber of Commerce with coordination from Parks & Recreation and the Department of Public Works.

"The goal is to make, again, Chicopee a city that we're all really proud of and it's not just what we say, but what we do," Vieau said.

The ceremony then concluded with chants of "Stop the Drop!"

After the ceremony, the students joined Facilities Director David Rice in planting three Clean City Initiative signs outside City Hall, with additional signs placed throughout the city.

Vieau hopes the initiative inspires a movement and thanked city employees, including Parks & Recreation, for their support.

"I'm really excited about this initiative moving forward and I think it's



(L to R) Mallory, Cayla and Sophia pose with Mayor John Vieau during a tour of City Hall. The students from Litwin Elementary School and St. Joan of Arc School helped unveil the banner for the new Clean City Initiative and were honored for their contributions to the campaign.

something that's going to be successful. It starts off as an initiative, it's not a one-day thing. This is hopefully every day," Vieau said. "Thank you for having that Chicopee pride and thank you for all you do. Thank you for being here."

Mallory receives her gift from Mayor John Vieau as Cayla, Sophia, State Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield), City Council Vice President/Councilor-at-Large Robert Zygaroswki and Ward 9 Councilor Mary Beth Costello look on during the Clean City initiative banner unveiling at City Hall.



(L to R) Sophia and Facilities Director David Rice pose for a photo after placing a sign for Chicopee's Clean City Initiative outside City Hall after the banner unveiling ceremony.



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Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on May 5, 2023 at Interstate Towing, Inc the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicles.

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Chicopee, MA 01013

2009 Toyota Prius

VIN: JTDKB20U597822606
ROBERT WESLEY
191 GARFIELD AVE
Revere, MA 02151

2010 Mazda 5
VIN: JM1CR2WL6A0376977

Rashaira Garcia Figueroa
1080 Riverdale St
West Springfield, MA 01089

2013 Ford Fusion
VIN: 3FA6P0HR6DR389263

Marcus Ramirez
153 Marcus Garvey Blvd 9B
Brooklyn, NY 11206

2014 Chevy Colorado
VIN: 1GCHSCEA0F1275676

Gerald P Render Jr
161 Asselin St
Chicopee, MA 01020

2006 Subaru Forester

VIN: JF1SG65606H752740
Wilfredo Pastrana
2309 Main St Apt 1
Springfield, MA 01107

2013 Toyota Sienna Xle
VIN: 5TDYK3DC0DS395836

Yuehua Wu
1344 65th St fl
Brooklyn, NY 11219

2019 Toyota Sienna
VIN: 5TDKZ3DC7KS009590

Xiaorong Huang
228 Center St
Quincy, MA 02169

2020 Toyota Sienna Se
VIN: 5TDXZ3DC1LS043032

Wenrui Wu
12 Woodland Rd
Westfield, MA 01085

2021 Mercedes-Benz Sprinter

2500
VIN: W1Y4EBHY9MT059508
3YU LLC
277 S Main St
Fall River, MA 02721

05/05, 05/12, 05/19/2023

Job Connection

HELPING YOU FIND HELP



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Sunshine Village, a non-profit organization provides day habilitation and community services to individuals with developmental disabilities.

Sunshine Village is an employer of choice and a great place to work!

Job Title: Van Driver

Job Summary:

Provide transportation to individuals with Developmental Disabilities to and from our day programs

Route:

Palmer, Monson, Ware, Ludlow, Wilbraham area

Hours:

Part Time, approximately 20 hours
General hours (may vary): Monday – Friday
7:30am – 9:30am and 2:30pm – 4:30pm

Experience Required:

Must have experience driving individuals with disabilities (15 passenger van experience a plus)

Educational Requirements:

High School Diploma/ GED/or Equivalent

Other Requirements:

Ability to lift 30 lbs comfortably, a valid driver's license and clean driving record. Drug Screen, CORI, SORI and Fingerprint check required.

Salary: \$16.02/hr

Accepting applications:

Apply in person at 75 Litwin Lane, Chicopee, MA 01020.
AA/EOE. Sunshine Village is a great place to work!

CHICOPEE SAVES from page 1

Vieau said.

City Hall opened in 1871 and is one of the region's most historic structures. Prior to Phase I, however, it had been many years since significant work was completed on the building.

The project was brought about after structural damage to the building became apparent in 2014. Work began prior to and continued through the COVID-19 pandemic.

The highlight of Phase I was the restoration of the City Hall auditorium, which had been unused for nearly two decades prior to its transformation into what now has been described as one of the state's finest municipal meeting places.

Vieau said on May 2 that \$2 million of a loan order approved on June 25, 2018 went unspent. He also said that \$290,845 of a \$4 million loan used for Phase I was no longer needed and was therefore transferred to pay preliminary expenses of Phase II of the project.

Several City Councilors expressed that they were initially confused before Vieau issued the following explanation.

"Some questions came up as to why it's being put towards Phase II of City Hall. It's because the only place we can put it to is where it's been borrowed for that intended purpose," he said. "You can't return it because it's a long-term borrow. You can't put it in Free Cash because that would be illegal so the solution is to find another capital project with a longer useful life or a similar useful life."

Director of Planning and Development Lee Pouliot said the item was brought before the council because his staff has successfully closed out all the contracts and purchase orders affiliated with Phase I.

"Since Phase I is complete, and the bond authorization for Phase I was very specific to the scope there, we don't need to borrow any more funds," Pouliot said. "We've been working on the designs for Phase II. We're hopeful that there will be a Phase II of this project and based on what this money was originally borrowed for, it made sense for it to be rolled into the account for Phase II for use at a future date."

Vieau said the city has completed 40% of the design and engineering work necessary for Phase II.

Phase II work might include aesthetic upgrades such as the replacement of carpets and improvement/movement of offices. Vieau said previously that the second



STAFF PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

The city of Chicopee saved \$2 million on Phase I of the City Hall restoration project.

phase could cost between \$5 million and \$7 million, although that number is not concrete.

On Tuesday, he said he will communicate with the council as the building's restoration continues.

"We have every intention of working with the council moving forward," he said. "(We) want to make sure that you're informed moving forward as Phase II moves closer and closer to find out what the real number is; the cost estimate moving forward with Phase II and how we would potentially fund it."

Regarding their initial confusion, several councilors expressed gratitude that Vieau offered a clear description of his orders; one order addressed the \$2 million, and the other referred to the \$290,845.

"I want to thank you for your explanation," Ward 7 Councilor William Courchesne said. "Your transparency was perfect so now it's very understandable why we have to do what we have to do."

Ward 9 Councilor Mary Beth Costello said the council is always conscious of the city's finances and described the action as "a creative idea that's going to save money."

Ward 2 Councilor Shane Brooks anticipates the second phase and believes the city is positioned to do the job well, especially with the savings.

"I think it's reflective of the city's commitment to do things as cost effectively as possible. I'm actually happy to see this tonight because this will allow us to proceed with Phase II with the project and take \$2 million off the rolls for the residents of the city," he said.

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RiverMills Center announces May events

CHICOPEE – The RiverMills Center, Chicopee’s senior center at 5 West Main St., has announced the following upcoming events.

Everyday Life in Chicopee in the 1800s

The Council on Aging will host the presentation “Everyday Life in Chicopee in the 1800’s” on Friday, May 19 at 1 p.m. at the RiverMills Center.

Come join Chester Kobierski with the Chicopee Historical Society as he brings you back to take a look at what life was like in the villages for Cabotville (Chicopee Center) and Factory Village (Chicopee Falls) between 1800 and 1870. The presentation will consist of images of sites that are no longer around. Though this is a free event, you must register in advance at RiverMills Center or by calling 534-3698.

Laughter Is Medicine at RiverMills Center

The COA will host the presentation “Laughter is Medicine” on Monday, May 22 at 10 a.m. at the RiverMills Center.

Join the Hampden County Sheriff’s Department to discuss the importance of laughter, interpersonal communication and how these things contribute to good health and longevity. Though this is a free event, you must register in advance at RiverMills Center or by calling 534-3698.

Bigfoot Expert at RiverMills Center

The COA will host Bigfoot Expert Ronny LeBlanc on Tuesday, May 23 at 5 p.m. at the RiverMills Center.

Join Ronny LeBlanc from the hit Travel Channel Show “Expedition Bigfoot” and “Paranormal Caught on Camera” and author of “Monsterland: Encounters with UFO’s, Bigfoot and Orange Orbs” as he chats about his firsthand experiences with Bigfoot and the many stories and sightings of Sasquatch in Massachusetts’ very own Leominster State Forest. Light refreshments will be served. This event is open to the public. The cost is \$2 and you must register in advance at RiverMills Center.

The Importance of Mental Health at RiverMills Center

The COA will host River Valley Counseling Center on Wednesday, May 24 at 10 a.m. at the RiverMills Center.

Join Program Director Chelsea Parker LICSW and Neil Brick, LMHC, Clinical Director of the Chicopee CCBHC Program of the River Valley Counseling Center’s Chicopee Clinic, as they present on mental health issues on the rise, warning signs, resources available and why we all need someone to talk to. Although this is a free workshop, you must register in advance. The cost is \$2 and you must register in advance at RiverMills Center.

Upcoming events and announcements

St. Joan of Arc School students’ Annie Jr. production

CHICOPEE – The St. Joan of Arc School Performing Arts Club will present Annie JR. on Thursday and Friday, May 11 and 12 at 7 p.m. at the St. Rose DeLima Church Hall Stage in Aldenville. Tickets are \$10 and are available at the door. There is no dress code, but the cast will remind you that you are “never fully dressed without a smile.”

Based on the popular comic strip and adapted from the Tony Award-winning best musical by Tony Award-winners, Thomas Meehan, Charles Strouse and Martin Char-nin, Annie JR. tells the story of a spunky Depression-era orphan determined to find her parents.

“Annie Jr.” is presented through special arrangement with and all authorized materials are supplied by Music Theatre International 421 West 54th Street, New York, NY, (212) 541-4684, mtishows.com.

First Congregational Church to hold Cracker Barrel Craft Fair

CHICOPEE – The First Congregational Church of Chicopee, at 306 Chicopee St., will hold its Cracker Craft Fair on May 13 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event will feature crafts, raffles, a snack bar and great Mother’s Day gifts. Vendor spots are still available. Call 413-592-0396.

Women’s Golf Clinic

CHICOPEE – The Chicopee Country Club will again sponsor a Women’s Golf Clinic for three consecutive Mondays start-

ing May 8. Lessons are held from 6-7 p.m. at \$40 per person for the three sessions.

Lessons covered include the basic swing, chipping and putting among other instructions. This is a great opportunity if you’re new to the game to learn some basics or, for the avid golfer to get the winter rust out of the swing. Participants can register in person or call the pro shop at (413)594-9295 to sign up.

Chicopee Comp - Class of 1983 40th Year Class Reunion

CHICOPEE – SAVE THE DATE!! Saturday, Sept. 23 under the Pavilion at Moose Lodge 1849, 244 Fuller Road, Chicopee. All you can eat BBQ Menu. 4-10 p.m. Please keep watch on our Facebook Page: “Chicopee Comprehensive - Class of 1983” as all details will be posted there. Please pass on this information to all Classmates so all can attend.

RiverMills Center Transportation Services

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

Transportation service is available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Reservations must be made at least five business days in advance by calling 413-536-5733.

A \$15,000 grant from WestMass Eldercare has allowed the senior center to expand its transportation offerings.

NFPA and State Farm announce May 6, as Wildfire Community Preparedness Day

The National Fire Protection Association and State Farm announce that Wildfire Community Preparedness Day will be held on Saturday, May 6, 2023. The national campaign, which began in 2014, provides an opportunity for groups and individuals who live in wildfire-prone areas to come together on a single day to complete projects that can help make their homes and communities safer from wildfire. This year, the campaign is focused on what residents can do to help their home survive a wildfire.

Years of scientific research support the prescription of removing fuel sources from the area around the home - known as the “home ignition zone” - and is a key component to making a home safe from embers and radiant heat from wildfires. Simple, low-cost home improvement projects such as clearing dead leaves, debris, and pine needles from roofs and gutters, keeping lawns and native grasses mowed to a height of four inches, removing anything stored underneath decks or porches that could burn, and other similar

actions are being actively supported by NFPA and State Farm on Preparedness Day and can be easily undertaken by the majority of homeowners.

“The threat of wildfire is becoming increasingly prevalent and dangerous, posing greater risks to people and property than ever before,” said Lorraine Carli, NFPA vice president of Outreach and Advocacy.

According to the National Interagency Fire Center, some 71.8 million properties in the U.S. are at some level of risk from wildfire. This number is predicted to grow by 11 percent over the next 30 years. In the past five years wildfires have destroyed nearly 63,000 structures, the majority of which were homes. This number is poised to grow as increased wildfire activity encounters the substantial number of homes and communities located in wildfire-prone areas.

For more information about Wildfire Community Preparedness Day, project ideas, and free resources to download and share, including a Preparedness Day toolkit, please visit wildfireprepd.org.

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