

# Chicopee Register

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## CPD Chief Patrick Major retires

By Kristin Rivers  
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CHICOPEE - Police Chief Patrick Major has retired from the police department after 33 years.

His last day was Jan. 5. Major joined the police department in 1992, beginning as a reserve officer and then was sworn in as a full-time officer in 1997. After graduating from the police academy, he was assigned to the patrol division.

In 2003, Major was promoted to sergeant and then became a lieutenant in 2011, running the Narcotics Unit and the Crash Reconstruction Team. He also was commander of the Special Response Team and the Underwater Recovery Unit.

By 2021, Major was promoted to captain and assigned to the Detective Bureau and then, in 2022, promoted to chief.

Major explained his decision to retire.

"I'm a firm believer that change should be fairly frequent, especially in this line of work and I'm three and a half years in as chief here and we've been able to accomplish quite a lot and I'm comfortable with what we have done. After just turning 57 years old back in October, 20-year career in the military as well, I think it's time to



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

Police Chief Patrick Major has officially retired from the Chicopee Police Department.

enjoy some of my time going forward," Major said.

Looking back, Major said he was always interested in law enforcement since he was a little kid and his brother was also in the police department.

"So, put my name in the hat and was lucky enough to be selected. It's a fantastic career. For me, honestly, on my worst day when I look back on it, I don't think

I would have wanted to do anything else," Major said.

He will miss the camaraderie.

"That's the toughest part. You'll miss that camaraderie and the fun times that we've had, but I do plan to stay in touch with people up here and hopefully they'll do the same," Major said.

On what he's most proud of, Major noted the people.

"When I first started

as chief, our numbers were down as far as personnel, and working with the mayor and council, we've been able to get our numbers back up. We're not losing people to other departments like we had in the past, so getting the department on stable footing as far as personnel goes, that was my primary goal," Major said.

He added the job keeps expanding too thanks to the Real Time Information Center and additional officers for the C3 Units in Willimansett and the Traffic Bureau.

"Without the extra people, we wouldn't be able to do that. So that's, I think even for the next chief coming in, that's got to remain a top priority at all times, is to make sure you're keeping, recruiting and keeping that talent," Major said.

Major is also proud of the upgrades in technology.

"The president's report on 21st century policing, one of the pillars in that was technology and adding the body cameras, cruiser camera, the Real Time Information Center. That aids our investigative efforts and it also provides for transparency," Major said. "I think it's going to prove very worthwhile for not only our department, but for the public as well go

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TURLEY PHOTOS BY KRISTIN RIVERS

City Treasurer Marie Laflamme is sworn in by City Clerk Keith Rattell.

## Re-elected, new city officials sworn in

By Kristin Rivers  
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CHICOPEE - Newly elected and reelected city officials were sworn in on Inauguration Day at City Hall Auditorium on Jan. 5.

After a Thanksgiving Mass at St. Stanislaus Basilica, the festivities got underway with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Jenna and John Henry Vieau, the National Anthem performed by Sydney Benoit, the invocation and benediction led by Fr. Brad Milunski at St. Stanislaus Basilica, welcome remarks from

Kristopher Theriault—who served as master of ceremonies—performances by the Chicopee High School Jazz Band, City Clerk Keith Rattell administering the oath of office to the city officials, School Committee Members, City Council Members and Mayor John Vieau and the inaugural address.

The ceremony was in memory of City Council Vice President/Councilor-at-Large Robert "Bob" Zygarowski, who passed away last March.

The city officials sworn

See **CITY OFFICIALS** page 5



TURLEY PHOTO BY CHRISTINA GIOSCIA

Edward Walters-Zucco, regional director of Resident Care of The Arbors and The Ivy Assisted Living Communities, and Allyson Grammo, director of marketing, at the Brain Health and Dementia presentation on Jan. 5.

## Brain Health and Dementia presentation held at RiverMills

By Christina Gioscia  
Correspondent

CHICOPEE - The Arbors hosted a presentation to discuss brain health at the senior center on Jan. 5.

At the event were Allyson Grammo, director of marketing at The Arbors, and Regional Director of Resident Care, Edward Walters-Zucco, regional director of Resident Care at The Arbors and The Ivy Assisted Living Communities.

Walters-Zucco gave the talk and answered any questions attendees had throughout the presentation. Topics covered include what dementia is, food good for brain health, physical and mental habits to improve brain health and discussion on medical testing.

Walters-Zucco shared educational points about brain health and dementia as well as tips to keep good brain health.

"Dementia is a broad term used to describe a group

of conditions characterized by symptoms such as difficulties with memory, language, problem-solving, and other brain functions that affect a person's ability to perform everyday tasks. I like to use the Dementia Umbrella as a visual to describe how Dementia is just a broad term, and under the dementia umbrella are all the different forms of dementia, to include the most prevalent form, Alzheimer's disease. Other forms of dementia include Vascular Dementia, Lewy Body Dementia, Parkinson's disease and many more," Walters-Zucco said.

Walters-Zucco explained he's done many of these health talks.

"I have been doing health talks around Massachusetts and Connecticut for the last 15 years. I speak mostly at senior centers and health care facilities. I have spoken on

See **BRAIN HEALTH** page 8

## Chicopee celebrates Kwanzaa in flag-raising

By Kristin Rivers  
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CHICOPEE - Residents, community members, local elected officials and more gathered inside City Hall Auditorium on December 30, 2025, to celebrate Kwanzaa.

The festivities were hosted by The Kwanzaa Collective, with President Ayanna Crawford presiding, remarks from Mayor John Vieau and Superintendent Dr. Marcus Ware, The Kwanzaa Collective Member Maria Del Carmen Rodriguez leading a sound healing session, musical performances by Willie Naylor, Theresa Cooper-Gordon and Sam Bradley, executive director of the PAHMUSA Pan African Historical Museum in Springfield, giving a music and spoken word performance and more.

Savannah Roman, owner of SunRise Sweets, Wilhemina Humphries, a Chicopee Cultural Council member and Commission on Disability Member, Iris Crespo, a retired licensing specialist for the state and the Valley Opportunity Council, and Lesa Brantley, another member of the Chicopee Cultural Council,



Theresa Cooper-Gordon and Sam Bradley, executive director of the PAHMUSA Pan African Historical Museum in Springfield, do a music and spoken word performance.

cil, were also honored with community awards.

Kwanzaa, an African-American and Pan-African holiday, is observed for seven days from Dec. 26 to Jan. 1, celebrating African heritage and African-American culture.

Founded in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga, Kwanzaa focuses on seven principles: Umoja (Unity), Kujichagula

(Self-Determination), Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility), Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics), Nia (Purpose), Kuumba (Creativity) and Imani (Faith).

On Dec. 30, Nia—meaning purpose—is celebrated.

Vieau reflected on how the seven principles of Kwanzaa "encourage cooperation, responsibility, creativity and faith values that strengthen neighborhoods and our future."

"Kwanzaa is a nonreligious, inclusive observance that brings people together with the culture, tradition and a collective purpose. By proclaiming Kwanzaa Celebration Week, we honor the contributions of the African Diaspora and reaffirm our commitment to unity and mutual respect here in Chicopee," Vieau said.

Vieau also emphasized everyone is welcome in Chicopee, crediting Crawford for what he's learned about the celebration.

"I've learned so much over the last four years, thanks to you, and really en-

gaging me in what Kwanzaa means and what it's all about, so I'm grateful for that," Vieau said.

Crawford thanked Vieau and the city for "always opening its doors to diversity and cultural awareness."

Also, the Kwanzaa Collective members for their support in bringing understanding and education about Kwanzaa throughout the area in the last six years.

"We have been able to build an awesome group of people that have been dedicated to helping other cities and towns understand the principles behind Kwanzaa. That is Amherst, Greenfield, of course, Chicopee, Holyoke and Springfield, and there are other cities around Western Mass that have taken on the banner," Crawford said. "Also, in Worcester, we have some comrades there that have decided that they, also, want to engage with their community around Kwanzaa."

See **KWANZAA** page 6



The Kwanzaa Collective Member Maria Del Carmen Rodriguez leads the sound healing session in this close-up shot.

# IN THE CITY



City Clerk Keith Rattell swears in Ward 6 City Councilor Samuel Shumsky after being selected as the new vice president of the City Council.



City Clerk Keith Rattell swears in Councilor-at-Large Frank Laflamme as president of the City Council. This will be Laflamme's third term serving as president.

## Laflamme, Shumsky sworn in as City Council president, VP

By Kristin Rivers  
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CHICOPEE - After the inauguration of Chicopee's new and returning elected officials on Jan. 5, the City Council held a organizational meeting to elect their new president and vice president.

Held in the second-floor City Hall Conference Room, Frank Laflamme was unanimously selected as president and Ward 6 Councilor Samuel Shumsky was chosen as vice president.

This will be Laflamme's third term serving as president of the council, while Shumsky will be marking his first term as vice president.

Councilor-at-Large Jerry Roy was also sworn in by City Clerk Keith Rattell ahead of the reorganization, as he was away during the inauguration.

After Laflamme was chosen by all 13 councilors in a unanimous vote, there were several nominations presented for vice president.

Besides Shumsky—who was nominated by Ward 5 Councilor Joe Pasternak—Councilor-at-Large Jessica Avery nominated Ward 1 Councilor Abigail Arriaga and Ward 3 Councilor Susan Goff nominated Ward 7 Councilor William Courchesne.

The selections were done by voice vote, with each councilor saying the name of

the individual they wanted.

With multiple candidates vying for vice president, the winner had to receive seven votes, a majority vote amongst the 13 councilors.

After the votes were cast, Shumsky received eight votes, while Courchesne received three votes and Arriaga received two votes.

Then, Rattell swore in Laflamme and Shumsky to their new roles on the City Council, who both thanked their colleagues for selecting them and participating in the voting and nomination process, followed by offering advice to the new councilors who will now begin their terms.



City Clerk Keith Rattell reads the oath to swear in Councilor-at-Large Jerry Roy, who was attending the City Council Reorganization Meeting remotely on Zoom.

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### COA offers Powerback Rehab

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

Powerback Rehab To You is a mobile therapy program that brings care directly to you! Powerback Rehab will be at River-

Mills Center for appointments to help your recovery whether dealing with a recent injury chronic pain or seeking performance enhancement. These appointments are free.

This program is open to members 55 and older. There are limited appointments, so you must register in advance at RiverMills or by calling 534-3698.

## Chicopee Public Library hosts programs for kids and families

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

Saturday Playgroup will be held on Saturdays at 1 p.m. in January. We'll put out some extra toys in the play space. 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, Jan. 14 and 28 at 10:30 a.m. Moving and grooving for kids and their caregivers. Geared toward ages 0-5, but all are welcome!

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

The Kids Room Sewing Club will meet on Wednesday, Jan. 14, from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Learn basic stitches and practice skills by making fun projects. Recommended for ages six and up. Kids who are not familiar with using a needle and thread should attend with an adult. Teens are welcome.

Stop by for a Kids Room Craft on Friday, Jan. 16, from 2:30 to 4 p.m. It's an early re-

lease day for Chicopee Public Schools PreK-5. Beads and paper craft supplies will be available for crafty exploration.

Storytime will be held on Thursdays, Jan. 8 and 22 at 10:30 a.m. Storytime is for children ages 3-5. This program features about 30 minutes of structured circle time, followed by 15-30 minutes of a craft or activity. Circle time will include 2-3 read aloud books, rhymes, songs, and felt boards. Children will be encouraged to ask and answer simple questions and recognize things like shapes, colors, letters, and numbers.

The library Homeschool Meetup will be on Friday, Jan. 23 at Noon. This group meets once a month September - June for homeschooling families with kids of all ages to hang out, do activities and learn together. Different activities each month are planned by the group. This month we are reading and discussing fairy tales.

Terrific Twos will be held on Tuesdays, Jan. 20 at 10:30 a.m. Terrific Twos is for two- year-olds and their caregivers. This program features about 25 minutes of structured circle time, followed by about half an hour of semi-structured playtime. During circle time, we will sing songs, do rhymes, do some big movements, and

read 1 book. The book choice rotates between either a read aloud picture book or a group read of a board book. Playtime involves a choice of craft, activity, or play.

Unleash the ooze! Make Slime in the kids room on Tuesday, Jan. 27 at 4 p.m. Kids and teens can stop by the Activity Room to make their own small container of slime using three simple ingredients.

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

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

Anime Club will be on Wednesday, Jan. 21 at 3 p.m. Stop by for some fun crafts and activities themed after the hit series Demon Slayer!

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

Visit the library website for more info about all of the library's events! [www.chicopeepubliclibrary.org](http://www.chicopeepubliclibrary.org).

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## IN THE CITY

## Krampits, Labrie sign off from City Council seats

By Brendan Rooney  
Correspondent

CHICOPEE - Longtime City Councilors Frederick Krampits and Gary Labrie said their goodbyes to the days of public and civil service during the December 16, 2025 City Council meeting.

Succeeding Krampits is Joe Pasternak, and newcomer Doug Girouard—who previously represented Ward 8 on the School Committee—will fill Labrie's seat.

Krampits opened his thoughts by acknowledging his beginning of civil service, and recognizing those who came before, with many now long gone, but never forgotten.

"Board of Aldermen 2003, At Large was Jay Croteau, Lucille Wilmette, Donald Roy, Jim Tillotson, Ward 1 was Edward "Murph" Butova, Ward 2 was Ernie Mandrella, Ward 3 was Louise Molson, Ward 4 was Bill Zasky, Ward 6 was Keith Rattell, Ward 7 was George Morrow, Ward 8 was Rick Goyette, and Ward 9 was Brant DuBois. They had the faith in me to fill out the remaining term of my late father, and while it was a bittersweet moment, I can now see why my father loved helping and trying to help people," Krampits said.

Krampits then thanked the residents of Ward 5 for being appointed as Alderman and Councilor, where he worked alongside former Mayors Richard Kos, Richard Goyette, Mike Bissonette, and current Mayor John Vieau.

"So to close, thank you to those who mentored me, such as the late Dr. James Dowd, who was the assistant to the President at Springfield Technical Community College (STCC), which gave me confidence in the process to apply to be appointed, and thank you to all of you who supported in my campaigns for both Ward 5 Councilor, and City Collector," Krampits said. "I look back fondly at the times spent discussing politics in your living rooms and in your kitchens. I thank my friends and relatives who didn't even live in the city for

taking time off from their jobs to hold signs on election days and thank you to Agnes and Carla in our office. Agnes was in our office when I first started and has helped keep me organized through the years. Thank you to the hardworking employees of the various city departments who have helped me with my constituent issues and educated me about how things work in the city, whether it be technical or process issues."

Next, gratitude to family and loved ones.

"Thank you to my mom, whose love and support have helped me as a councilor. Thank you to my girlfriend Katie for her patience when I had to go to meetings," Krampits said. "I also want to wish Councilor Labrie a happy and healthy retirement. People would get us mixed up, so I would jokingly refer to him as my brother, which happened at other events besides at City Hall."

Krampits also acknowledged all the other civil servants who are retiring as well, such as outgoing City Collector Stanley Iwanicki, Outgoing City Auditor Sharyn Riley, Don Lamonthe, who served on the School Committee for Ward 7, and, most notably, Police Chief Patrick Major.

Krampits then reflected on what he has learned from his tenure in civil service.

"I figured I would pass this on to people coming back, and hopefully some of the new people coming on board: Always be open-minded. Sometimes, someone you normally would disagree with may offer a solution that is better than your own idea. Sometimes there is no good solution, just bad or worse," Krampits said. "Vote with your heart; always tell someone you will look into an issue and get back to them, even though you already know that the answer is it can't be done. If you tell them right away, they think you just don't care about their issue. And lastly, thank you to my past and current colleagues; it has been an honor and a pleasure to serve with you, and I wish you continued success. Thank



Fred Krampits



Gary Labrie

you to President Frank (La-Flamme) for his leadership of the Council, and I wish the incoming Ward 5 Councilor, Joe Pasternak, and the other new councilors coming in the best of success."

Outgoing Ward 8 Councilor Gary Labrie then shared his reflections, sharing after 12 years of service, he decided to retire.

"It was a good run, and I feel I got a lot accomplished," Labrie said. "I want to thank each and every member of the City Council, the City Clerk and his staff, the City Council Attorney, and our administrative assistants, Agnes and Carla; I have respect for each and every one of you. I also want to thank you, the department heads, and every city department that I have worked with to accomplish many projects and requests, and I've had a lot of them that allowed me to do my job effectively."

Labrie also acknowledged everyone he had the privilege to work with was "very professional," next reflecting on the late Councilor-at-Large James Tillotson and Vice President/Councilor-at-Large Robert "Bob" Zygarowski.

"They took me under their wings in 2014. When I first got on, they befriended me and taught me many valuable tools that helped me throughout the years. They also became good friends," Labrie said.

Labrie next thanked the residents of Ward 8.

"I also want to thank the residents for electing me to office for six elections, with four or five of those being contested, I don't remember if it was four or five, and I want to acknowledge that I had a great support team behind me, and I will always re-

member the countless hours they put in during my many standouts on election days, we had a lot of fun on those days," Labrie said.

Labrie then thanked his family and good luck wishes to the new incoming councilors.

"I wish them well," Labrie said.

#### Councilors reflecting on their colleagues

First to reflect was Ward 1 Councilor Abigail Arriaga.

"I want to wish our two departing councilors the best, and I appreciate all your help since I started on the council. And I know I was new and learning, but I appreciate all of your patience and what you have taught me," Arriaga said.

Next, Ward 9 Councilor Mary Beth Costello.

"I want to give a special thank you to Councilor Labrie and Councilor Krampits for all of their hard work and their guidance over the past four years that I served with them. They are both very professional people, and we can't thank you enough for their service," Costello said.

Echoing similar thoughts was Ward 4 Councilor George Balakier.

"Now comes the hard part, and I've been here for eight years myself, to where I remember when I used to be considered a newbie, but maybe not so much anymore, but when I came on, I had some experienced councilors, who I enjoyed serving with, serving on committees, getting an understanding of how the council works, and I really appreciated working with Councilor Labrie and Councilor Krampits and I'm going to miss these guys," Balakier said. "These are two sharp guys, and I'm sorry their time has come up, but life moves on, and these are two fine gentlemen who have dedicated many years to the city. They will be missed, and I want to wish them both many years of happy retirement and good health."

Ward 6 Councilor Samuel Shumsky said this.

"Gary and Fred, it's been an honor and privilege to serve with you, not only as a city councilor but also on the School Committee, and truthfully, if it wasn't for you two five years ago, when I came to the Planning Board, I don't think I actually be here, so thank you both for helping me on my journey," Shumsky said. "You took me under your wing, gave me a ton of guidance, a lot of mentorship, and a lot of knowledge that will last with me for a very long time."

Following Shumsky was Ward 7 Councilor William Courchesne.

"I want to thank you both for the last 10 years of our friendship and working around my midnight schedule, and giving me the meetings on the day that I could attend without having to go work afterwards, that was hugely appreciated," Courchesne said. "I think you guys were wonderful; I appreciate all of your support. I wish you the best in the future, and enjoy some free time, but it's great work that we do, and I'm sure you guys will go home blessed that you have done this for a long time, so again, thank you for everything."

Next to follow was Ward 3 City Councilor Susan Goff, who discussed the flux of changes set to arrive in the new year, while wishing Labrie and Krampits nothing but the best in their retirement.

"I would like to commend you both on the many years of service to Chicopee and its residents," Goff said. "You both exemplified what city councilors should be: professional, respectful, and accountable. You led by example with integrity and dedication, you have done the job you were elected to do, never once for political advancement or showmanship. You will be missed, I will miss you, and I thank you for all the help and guidance you gave me."

Following suit was Ward 2 Councilor Shane Brooks.

"Thank you, Fred, for all the help and support over the years, and it's been an honor and pleasure," Brooks said.

"Gary, remember to appreciate your time, and as the others (said), thank you."

Then, President/Councilor-at-Large Frank LaFlamme. "Fred and Gary, you have been my friends for many, many years; I want to note when I became president of the board, you both took some tough committees that were tough committees and you ran with them, and you faced the challenge head on, and you acknowledged it and did a great job," LaFlamme said. "You both have done so much for your wards and the entire city of Chicopee; you will be missed."

And finally, City Clerk Keith Rattell, who classified both Labrie and Krampits as the definition of "public service."

These remarks to Labrie.

"I want people to know and understand that public service is about the public and that's what these two gentlemen have done with their careers here in City Hall, they have served the public well, and they get it right, and it's always tough to see good people depart," Rattell said. "Gary, I wish you well in retirement. You have worked hard for Ward 8, you served the residents very well, you always had a list going of calls, complaints, concerns, you did it right, and I just want to wish you luck in retirement."

And, lastly, to Krampits.

"To Fred, you read a long list of Aldermen that I served with, long ago, and one of them was your dad, and I was honored to serve with your dad. He was a great man," Rattell said. "And I think all of those people on the list that you read off would allow me to say that on their behalf, he was a great man, and he was a good man to serve with, and I know at the time we were all proud to vote for you as his replacement, as he passed mid-term, and I'm sure your dad would be proud of you the way you carried on, and worked hard for the people of Ward 5, I'm sure that would have meant a lot to him."

#### MAJOR from page 1

ing forward."

Major also reflected on National Night Out, which has been recognized at the national level the last couple of years.

"It's outstanding and I don't think that would be possible if it wasn't for the relationship that our department has with the community. I think we have tremendous support from the citizens of Chicopee and the greater surrounding communities and a lot of that comes with buy-in from the other departments in the city as well. One thing that I've been able to see is it's truly a team effort. Not any one

department can do it on their own and I think, as I said before, the mayor and staff and the other elected officials are tremendously supportive of the police department and the other departments in the city," Major said.

The community support "means everything, absolutely everything."

"I think it's a two-way street. Obviously, we serve the public and the public, in turn, serves us as well with support, with information and, obviously, with providing resources, providing funding to get us what we need to do our jobs. Our department is firmly based in that community policing philosophy," Major said. "Besides Nation-

al Night Out, having the ice cream truck going around giving everyone ice cream, the bikes, the Cop on Top event. The other events like down in the Center with the Dominoes Tournament, so we're making a lot of inroads in relationships too."

Another success is more diversity in the police department from the personnel to the body cameras translating different languages to help officers speak with people with different languages and whose first language may not be English.

As for lessons, Major said, "People make mistakes."

"Understand that. Treat people fairly and compassionately. Don't expect things

to happen the way you're thinking they're going to happen. Always be prepared for change and never, ever forget the people working with you are your best resources," Major said.

Upon retirement, Major will head to Florida "and just decompress a little bit," thanking his wife for always supporting him.

"We just want to enjoy it while we still can," Major said.

Advice for his successor? Always challenge yourself and listen to and advocate for your people.

Major said this to his officers.

"It's been fantastic to work alongside you. The amount of respect I have for everybody in here just can't be stated," Major said. "I will miss everybody here in one form or another and I wish them all health and safety."

His message to the com-

munity was this.

"I hope that you think that I have served you well with what the department has done and what we're preparing to do going forward, and for those that may question that, I apologize if we didn't rise to that at times, but we always do our best to serve the public with respect and compassion," Major said.

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# IN THE CITY

## Habitat dedication celebrates a major milestone on the road to homeownership

By Brandice J. O'Brien  
Marketing and Communications  
Manager, Greater Springfield  
Habitat for Humanity

WEST SPRINGFIELD - Pedro and Damaris are one step closer to their dream of homeownership. On a blustery December afternoon, the couple celebrated the completion of the construction phase at their new Holyoke home. Also in attendance were city officials, community leaders, representatives from Holyoke Housing Authority (HHA), and Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity (GSHFH) staff, members from the Board of Directors, and volunteers.

Unlike previous Greater Springfield Habitat builds, this one came together through a unique collaboration with Holyoke Housing Authority and the University of Massachusetts' DesignBuild program. HHA donated a plot of land on Chestnut Street. GSHFH prepared the site and built the foundation. UMass DesignBuild professors and students designed and constructed the modular home, and oversaw delivery to the Holyoke site.

"This house is a testament to the very belief that this community values a collaboration between Greater 'Holyoke' Habitat for Humanity," Holyoke Mayor Joshua Garcia said in jest, "Holyoke Housing Authority, a longtime agency in the city that has transformed neighborhoods, and UMass. The very neighborhood we're standing in is a result from a cross trajectory of resources."

Pedro and Damaris's new home stands in the heart of Churchill Homes, a neighborhood reborn through a \$15-million HOPE VI grant awarded to the



SUBMITTED PHOTOS:

Pedro and Damaris at dedication/Pedro and Damaris in front of house at dedication: Pedro (left) and his wife Damaris stand in front of their new Chestnut Street, Holyoke, home at the Dec. 22 dedication.

Holyoke Housing Authority in 1996. What was once a neglected area has been thoughtfully transformed into a vibrant, family-centered community. Today, the neighborhood includes a mix of rental and homeownership opportunities, along with community centers that bring neighbors together.

Greater Springfield Habitat is proud to have contributed to this revitalization through earlier partnerships with the HHA by building a home at 365 Chestnut St. in 2013. GSHFH also built three additional homes adjacent to Pedro and Damaris's. They were made possible through the Community Preservation Act (CPA) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), funding during the COVID-19 pandemic to extend hope and stability during a time when it was needed most.

Pedro is a graduate of HHA's self-sufficiency program. But when he finished the classwork, there were no available homes on the market.

"This project was really done as a way to help support their self-sufficiency program," said Aimee Giroux, GSHFH executive director. "This allowed us to build a home specific to people, like Pedro, who were going through that program, which is a longtime commitment."

Matt Mainville, HHA executive director, who once served as the Hope VI coordinator, agreed.

"We at the Housing Authority are always excited to see vacant parcels become homes, particularly at a time when there's a huge demand in the Commonwealth for good housing," he said. "... we also recognize housing resources are limited, dollars for development are hard to acquire. So, when we're able to partner with Habitat, UMass, and the City, it's always a recipe for success."

The 575-square-foot modular home accentuates energy efficiency through double stud-

ded walls, lots of insulation, triple-glazed windows, and all-electric Energy Star-rated appliances and air-source heat pumps.

The UMass DesignBuild team met with Pedro and Damaris in late winter 2025 to discuss design aspects specific to their needs. As a result, the house has a U-kitchen and interior stairs to the basement.

The DesignBuild team conceived the home in spring 2025. Construction began in summer and the home was delivered in mid-November.

"I'm very anxious and grateful for everything that I've accomplished. I feel honor and want to say 'thank you' to all of the board of directors of all the agencies, and I'm very grateful that I'm here with you today," said Pedro through his inter-

preter Vivian Rodriguez, HHA Homeownership and Financial Education coordinator. "I hope to be successful in homeownership."

Pedro and Damaris currently live in a one-bedroom apartment and have complained about their unfriendly neighbors who they say makes their everyday life unenjoyable. The couple doesn't have children together, but have a large blended family. Pedro has two daughters from a previous relationship and seven grandchildren. Damaris has three children and five grandchildren.

The couple is expected to close on the house early in the New Year. To see more pictures and videos of the construction, visit [habitatspringfield.org/holyoke](http://habitatspringfield.org/holyoke)



Pedro and Damaris's new home on Chestnut Street in Holyoke.

### Chicopee Register TEAM

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Letters to the editor should be 250 words or less in length. No unsigned or anonymous opinions will be published. We require letter writers to include his or her town of residence and home telephone number. We must authenticate authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous or contain unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, defamation of character and offensive language. All unknown or alleged facts and quotations offered by the author need to cite credible, unbiased sources.

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

### WE CARE ABOUT YOUR NEWS!

The Chicopee Register welcomes submissions of news in or related to Chicopee and its residents. Our "People News," is filled with submitted engagement announcements, wedding announcements, birth announcements, your new baby or news about your 25th or 50th anniversary celebrations. Please e-mail correspondence along with a photo to [chicopeeregister@turley.com](mailto: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](mailto: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.

## TLC for overwintering plants



Have you taken a good look at your tender plants lately? Maybe you have a Gerber daisy, coleus, fuchsia or geranium that you are attempting to overwinter because you loved it so much this past summer.

Perhaps the flower color or leaf shade was perfect in a patio planter and you thought if you could get through the winter you wouldn't have to buy it new this spring. Or maybe you intend to use your overwintered plants as stock plants.

Soon you'll be taking cuttings and making your own new plants. Likewise, maybe you brought in some tender herbs in hopes of growing your own seasoning year round.

Whatever the case may be, closer examination of each plant at this point in the winter might be a smart idea.

What I have noticed almost across the board, especially with my Gerber daisy, fuchsia and geraniums is that there are a lot of older leaves turning yellow or showing discoloration. To me, that indicates that fertilizer is needed.

The fact that this coincides with the lengthening of the daylight hours is no accident. And all three plants have continued to bloom inside, which certainly has taxed their nutrient reserves.

I will start watering with half strength fertilizer twice a month now through mid March. I sure bet that old foliage will start to perk up and new growth won't be too far behind.

Don't push growth by fertilizing more than what I recommended or growth

could become lanky and weak - just what aphids are looking for.

Speaking of pests, if you notice distorted foliage, webbed areas or stippling on the leaves, take a closer look at your plants. There are many tiny bugs with mouthparts that suck plant juices. Even in your sunny window spider mite, mealy bugs, aphids or white fly might be becoming more active.

Spider mite cause webbing, and are usually indicative of hot, dry conditions. Dousing with cold water will really set them back.

Mealy bug show up as a cottony blob usually on growth tips or at the junction of leaves and stems. Rubbing alcohol on a swab applied directly to the blob will dissolve that protective layer and the insect underneath.

Aphids are usually green and congregate in clusters on stems or leaf ribs. White fly usually hang out on the underside of leaves. They fly around if disturbed.

Both insects are best stopped in their tracks by use of an insecticidal soap. Safer's Soap or M Pede as it's known commercially work well. I've even soaped up my plants using a mild dish detergent and hosed them off in the shower.

One pest in particular attacks the herb rosemary and is especially troublesome. I noticed stippling on the leaf tips and clear winged insects flying away

See **GARDEN** page 8

## My wife believes she can get a spouse benefit while I'm still alive; can she?

Dear Rusty:

A friend of my wife told her and she believes, she could receive a Social Security benefit based on my SS benefit that I'm currently receiving while I'm still alive. I told her she could only receive spouse survivor benefits. Is there any truth to what she now believes? Would you settle this issue for us please? Thank you.

Signed: Uncertain Husband

Dear Uncertain Husband: Well, surely I don't want to get in the middle of your marital discussion, but I'll be happy to explain Social Security's rules about your wife's eligibility for spousal benefits while you are both still living. And just for awareness for both of you, the rules about spousal benefits are one of the most confusing areas of Social Security.



Per Social Security's rules, a spouse (e.g., your wife) can receive a "spousal boost" from you - while you are still living - if the SS retirement benefit she is personally entitled to at her Full Retirement Age is less than 50% of the SS retirement benefit you are (were) entitled to at your FRA; full retirement age amounts are used to calculate living spouse benefits, regardless of when each of you actually claimed your Social Security.

So, if your FRA entitlement benefit amount is more than twice your wife's FRA entitlement benefit amount, she can, indeed, get a "spousal boost" from your record while you are both still living. The spousal boost is add-

ed to her own SS retirement amount and will be based on the difference between her FRA entitlement and half of your FRA entitlement. Thus, in this discussion, your wife may be correct - she may be able to get a spousal boost from you while both of you are living, depending on how your personal FRA retirement amounts compare. The best way for your wife to find out is to contact Social Security at 1-800-772-1213 to inquire and if she's eligible, also make an appointment to apply for her spousal benefit.

And to clarify your wife's options as your possible widow, a surviving spouse can also get a survivor benefit if their marital partner passes away, but only if the deceased

See **SOCIAL SECURITY** page 8

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# IN THE CITY

## 2026 Shining Stars recipients announced by Chicopee Chamber of Commerce

CHICOPEE - The Chicopee Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce the recipients of its 2026 Shining Stars, recognizing individuals whose exceptional contributions strengthen and inspire our community. This year's honorees are Al Picard as the Ernest Laflamme Jr. Citizen of the Year; HB Real Estate as Business of the Year; Lorraine's Soup Kitchen & Pantry as Nonprofit of the Year; and Heather Leclerc at Volunteer of the Year.

### Ernest Laflamme Jr. Citizen of the Year: Al Picard

For decades, Al Picard has embodied what it means to serve one's community with heart, consistency,

and unwavering commitment. Professionally, he devoted 40 years as an educator with Chicopee Public Schools, shaping countless students' lives. As a volunteer leader, Al has volunteered for more than 20 years at Lorraine's Soup Kitchen & Pantry, including service as Board President, and eight years with the Friends of the River-Mills Center, where he also served as President. Additionally, he has served on the Chicopee Veterans' Services Office Board, the Charter Review Board, and the Board of Directors for the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

### Business of the Year: HB Real Estate

Founded in 2021, HB Real Estate

has quickly become one of Chicopee's standout real estate brokerages. Since opening with 12 agents, the firm has expanded to 31 agents across offices in Chicopee and Wilbraham. Known for its highly personalized, relationship-driven approach, HB Real Estate provides exceptional representation for both buyers and sellers, living its motto: "Selling Homes One Relationship at a Time."

HB Real Estate is also deeply community-minded, supporting local nonprofits including Kane's Crusade, the Chicopee Queer Consortium, Alianza DV Services, Rick's Place, and Lorraine's Soup Kitchen & Pantry. The firm frequently hosts and

participates in local events, such as its upcoming Holiday Author Stroll benefiting the Bellamy House Association.

### Nonprofit of the Year: Lorraine's Soup Kitchen & Pantry

Serving Chicopee since 1980, Lorraine's Soup Kitchen & Pantry has been a lifeline for residents facing food insecurity. What began as a small volunteer-led effort offering peanut butter and jelly sandwiches has grown into a vital community institution providing hot meals, groceries, and essential services to thousands of families each year. Renamed in 2001 to honor longtime director and 2013 Shining Stars Citizen Lorraine Houle,

the organization continues her legacy of compassion and dignity.

Now operating from its modern Pendexter Avenue facility—donated with support from Callaway Golf—Lorraine's offers year-round meal service, a robust food pantry, holiday programs, monthly health clinics, and social service referrals. In 2021, the organization expanded its reach by launching a Mobile Pantry with weekly neighborhood stops. Under Executive Director Kim Caisse, a long-time volunteer and community advocate, Lorraine's has strengthened its presence and partnerships across Chi-

See **SHINING STARS** page 6



Kristopher Theriault served as master of ceremonies on Inauguration Day.



City Assessor Brian Suchy is sworn in by City Clerk Keith Rattell.



City Collector Sandra Peret is sworn in by City Clerk Keith Rattell.

### CITY OFFICIALS from page 1

in were Treasurer Marie Laflamme, City Collector Sandra Peret and City Assessors Laura McCarthy and Brian Suchy.

The School Committee members sworn in were At-Large Representative Robert Cantin, Ward 1 Representative Deanna Rousseau, Ward 2 Representative David Barsalou, Ward 3 Representative Jason Dout, Ward 4 Representative Diane Trela, Ward 5 Representative Grace Schofield, Ward 6 Representative Carlton "Sonny" Brooks Jr., Ward 7 Representative Rafael Nazario Jr., Ward 8 Representative Susan Constance Theresa Lemieux and Ward 9 Representative Ronald Benard.

The City Council members sworn in were Councilor-at-Large Frank Laflamme, Councilor-at-Large Jerry Roy, Councilor-at-Large Joel McAuliffe, Councilor-at-Large Jessica Avery, Ward 1 Councilor Abigail Arriaga, Ward 2 Councilor Shane Brooks, Ward 3 Councilor Susan Goff, Ward 4 Councilor George Balakier, Ward 5 Councilor Joe Pasternak, Ward 6 Councilor Samuel Shumsky, Ward 7 Councilor William Courchesne, Ward 8 Councilor Douglas Girouard and Ward 9 Councilor Mary Beth Costello.

Laflamme was later selected as president and Shumsky as vice president in the City Council's organizational meeting after the inauguration.

### Inaugural Address

Vieau said, "It felt right to dedicate today's ceremony in memory of Zygarowski, calling him 'my colleague and my dear friend,' and noting son, Ryan Zygarowski, in the audience.

"Bob proudly served the city of Chicopee for 51 years with honor, valor and integrity. The true epitome of public service. May he rest in peace. Please know this about Bob. His legacy is woven into this



Ward 9 School Committee Representative Ronald Benard, Ward 7 School Committee Representative Rafael Nazario Jr., Ward 6 School Committee Representative Carlton "Sonny" Brooks Jr., Ward 5 School Committee Representative Grace Schofield and Ward 4 School Committee Representative Diane Trela take the oath of office.



Ward 1 School Committee Representative Deanna Rousseau, At-Large School Committee Representative Robert Cantin and Ward 8 School Committee Representative Susan Constance Theresa Lemieux are sworn in.

fabric of our city and he'll never be forgotten," Vieau said.

After congratulating Laflamme, Suchy, McCarthy and Peret and saying he looks forward to working with them, Vieau thanked Police Chief Patrick Major for his many years of service as he's retiring from the police department.

"I want to say thank you, Chief, for over three decades of dedication to law enforcement and to protecting the city we love," Vieau said. "Chief, we have been through

so much together and I'm grateful not just for your leadership, but for your friendship and I want to wish you the very best in retirement."

He then spoke to the School Committee and City Council members.

"I look forward to working with both of you as groups

and I just want us to continue striving to be the best Chicopee that we can be, so I'm looking forward to that," Vieau said.

After thanking his family, friends and team for their support, Vieau reflected on his goals for his fourth term, from affordability—with the city having been recently named Most Affordable City by Family Destinations Guide—and public safety to strong, collaborative relationships and working together.

On affordability, Vieau also noted Chicopee Electric Light's impact through affordable electricity rates for residents and Crossroads Fiber.

"We've maintained our Stabilization Fund and we continue to earn one of the highest bond ratings in the region and we're always looking at creative ways for funding opportunities like grants, earmarks and innovative partnerships. While other communities pursue Proposition Two and a Half overrides, Chicopee funded its 2026 budget below the levy limit," Vieau said. "We also have continued that tradition since I've been mayor of \$3 million dedicated to tax relief out of free cash, and that's something that we can all be very proud of, and it's because of the prudent fiscal management that this community—and it's not because of me—but this financial team."

As for prior successes, Vieau cited reopening the former Central Library as The Hub at Market Square, securing permanent space for the school administrative

offices—which will move them from Dulong Circle to Exchange Street—restoring Abbey Brook at Sotz Park with other improvements forthcoming, upgrading Sarah Jane Sherman Park, completing phase two of city hall renovations and working on a new Anna E. Barry Elementary School.

On public safety, Vieau emphasized adding more first responders, community policing, the Real Time Information Center, improving pedestrian safety, the Safe Streets for All Grant and Vision Zero.

"That means zero traffic deaths and serious injuries, recognizing that humans make mistakes and are vulnerable, recognizing the need to prevent crashes and minimize harm. But we all have to do that and we all have to work together. It's not just the police, it's not just the elected officials, it's the community as a whole," Vieau said.

After applauding Superintendent Dr. Marcus Ware's work on education, Vieau noted other successes such as the senior center and the relationship with Westover Air Force Reserve Base, with another goal focusing on economic development, retaining talent and attracting opportunity.

"This city is something very special and it's because of all the people here in this room and all those who work here. It's something we should all be very proud of. So please, never lose your Chicopee pride and help me promote it," Vieau said. "God bless all of you and God bless this beautiful city we all love."

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# IN THE CITY

## Events & announcements schedule

### First Central Bible Church Announces Programs for Children and Youth

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

#### Sunday Morning

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

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

#### Wednesday Evening

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

ter on the church website at [www.firstcentral.church](http://www.firstcentral.church).

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

First Central Bible Church, located at 50 Broadway Street, Chicopee, exists to glorify God by making and maturing disciples of Jesus. Sunday service is held at 10:30 a.m. All are invited to join us in worship, prayer, learning from the Word, glorifying God, and feeling the warmth of fellowship. For more information, please visit [www.firstcentral.church](http://www.firstcentral.church).

#### Volunteer Drivers Needed

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

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

### Winter Gym Time at Szetela School

CHICOPEE - Winter Gym Time will be taking place at Szetela School.

Drop-in playtime with friends in the gym!

Children build strength, coordination and confidence through playful movement. Using games, obstacle courses, music and imagination, children jump, balance, stretch and move in a safe environment!

They take place on

Wednesdays from 4 to 5 p.m. on Jan. 21, Jan. 28, Feb. 4, Feb. 11, Feb. 25 and March 4. For information, call Shane at 413-310-1632.

The programs are offered by the Holyoke Chicopee Family and Community Program.

Funded by the Coordinated Family & Community Engagement Grant from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.



A group photo of local elected officials, staff for state elected officials, members of The Kwanzaa Collective and more at the kinara, the candleholder for Kwanzaa.

### KWANZAA from page 1

Lamari Jackson, legislative aide for State Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield), said that Kwanzaa has been celebrated beyond the weeklong celebration, citing African-American identity, culture and African-American love "for our community, within ourselves and what we extend to other cultures and communities as well."

"This week, which we use to reflect, celebrate, that is just something that is brought to a nationwide, worldwide perspective. Like that way, everybody else can also see what we bring to the table. But, don't let this just be a week that we celebrate Kwanzaa, don't let this be a week that we celebrate these principles. Carry this on a yearly acknowledgement and keep it closer to your chest," Jackson said.

Jennifer Pickering, district director for State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow), said there are many diasporas and the African-American experience "has been incredible."

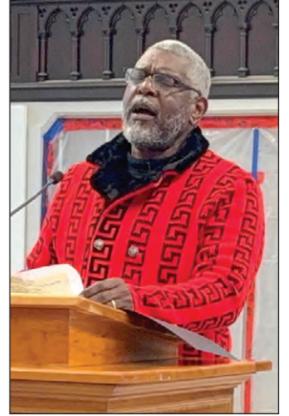
"I love the idea of Kwanzaa because it helps bring that unity for all of the people who have traveled and continue to travel to build a life and a community that they want



Superintendent Dr. Marcus Ware reflects on what Kwanzaa means to him.



Ayanna Crawford, president of The Kwanzaa Collective, provides remarks.



Willie Naylor performs "Life Every Voice and Sing."

and that they represent on a daily basis," Pickering said. "It has been my honor and my pleasure to have grown up in African-American neighborhoods, schools and with leaders and mentors in my own education and I'm delighted to be here."

Ware reflected on Naylor's performance of "Lift Every Voice and Sing," as he heard the song as a child in church, stressing the importance of the celebration's roots. He also noted how out of 6,800 students in the school district, 48% hail from a Hispanic or Latino background, which has the experience of the African-American experience.

"Nearly 50% of our student body exists through African-American roots and so, it's a nice thing to reflect upon that and I'm proud that I'm here to speak on behalf of it," Ware said. "I thank the mayor for always welcoming me on days like this and as I think about purpose and into a new year, I think that one of the things that I'd like to take back as superintendent is remind us that we don't usually celebrate it today, but we have to carry it forward day on and day on."

After Vieau presented the mayor's proclamation to Bradley, Crawford, Del Carmen Rodriguez and Anna Muhammad unveiled the Kwanzaa flag to conclude the festivities.



Savannah Roman, owner of SunRise Sweets, smiles as she's presented the community award by The Kwanzaa Collective.



The Kwanzaa Collective President Ayanna Crawford and The Kwanzaa Collective Members Anna Muhammad and Maria Del Carmen Rodriguez applaud after unveiling the Kwanzaa flag.

### SHINING STARS from page 6

copee, remaining a steadfast source of hope for those who need it most.

#### Volunteer of the Year: Heather Leclerc

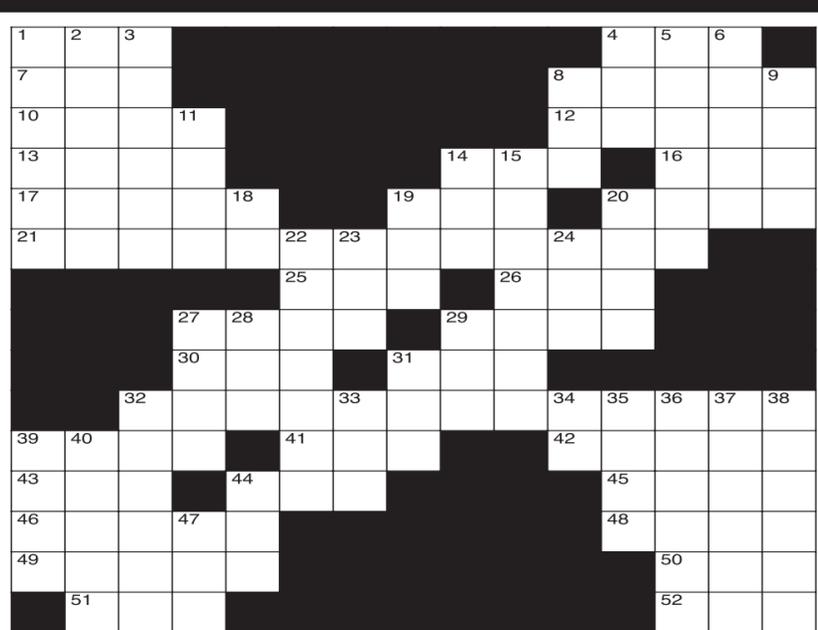
For years, Heather Leclerc has been one of the Chamber's most reliable, energetic, and enthusiastic volunteers. A longtime member of the Shining Stars Events Committee, Heather has played a key role in shaping and elevating one of the Chamber's most celebrated annual traditions. In 2023, when the Chamber revived its Member Relations Committee, Heather stepped up as Chair-bringing new energy, structure, and community-minded leadership to the group. Under her guidance, the committee has become a vital connection point for member engagement, support, and out-

reach. Heather's dedication is rooted in genuine care for the Chicopee business community and a willingness to show up, help out, and lead by example. Her warmth, creativity, and commitment make her an indispensable part of the Chamber family and a well-deserving Volunteer of the Year.

The Chicopee Chamber introduced Shining Stars in 1985 when Ernest Laflamme Jr. was recognized as the first Citizen of the Year. Since then, the Chamber has paid tribute to an extraordinary Citizen, Business (since 1989), Volunteer (since 1993), and Non-profit (since 2014) at its annual Shining Stars event. Recipients are selected by a Nominating Committee chaired by Ernest Laflamme, Jr. and comprised of Carol Campbell of Chicopee Industrial Contractors, Theodore Hebert of Teddy Bear

Pools, City Treasurer Marie Laflamme, Michael Siddall of Siddall & Siddall, P.C., and Jeffrey Sattler of Liberty Bank. The Chicopee Chamber believes it is important to honor the people and the organizations who provide vital services to our community. In 2025, the Citizen of the Year recognition was renamed in honor of Ernest Laflamme Jr.

The 41st Annual Shining Stars Gala takes place Friday, February 27, 2026 from 6 to 10:30 p.m. at the Castle of Knights on Memorial Drive. The Chamber invites its membership and the public to come celebrate this year's Shining Stars and their impact in the community. Tickets are \$75/person and are on sale now. To purchase tickets or inquire about sponsorships, visit [www.chicopeechamber.org](http://www.chicopeechamber.org) or call the Chamber at 413-594-2101.



#### CLUES ACROSS

- Former CIA
- Language
- Constrictor snake
- Demand
- Rich man
- Short-tailed marten
- Zoroastrian concept of holy fire
- Superconducting super collider
- International group of countries within the Americas
- Sacred state for Muslims
- Shock therapy
- Engrave
- Localities
- Paddle
- Periodical

- Dishonestly gained money
- Gain possession of
- Actor DiCaprio
- High schoolers' test
- Mr. October
- Sign of healing
- One's grandmother
- Entrap
- One who simultaneously buys and sells
- Francisco
- Web-based data provider of marine life
- Type of snake
- Dark mark or stain
- Member of the Sali

- Former measure of length
- CNN's founder
- Witness
- Acquire
- Console
- Hunting expedition
- Pie \_\_\_ mode
- Simple shoes for peasants
- Eurasian shrub
- Reciprocal of a sine
- Work together in harmony
- Grenade
- File extension
- Minute pores in a plant
- Medal of Honor
- Make a mistake
- Advance slowly, as

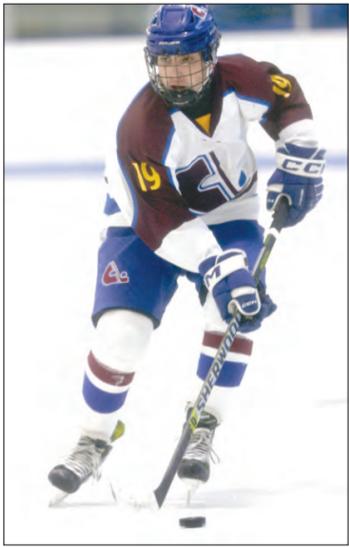
- if by inches
- Sandwich meat
- An awkward stupid person
- Strong tree
- Commoner
- Electroencephalograph
- Mahal
- Congressman
- Disorderly crowd
- 007's creator Fleming
- Atomic #55
- Part of a door
- Short-tail martens
- Baltimore ballplayer
- Cuddle
- Gang in "The Outsiders"
- Of Croatia
- Body cavity
- Get free of

# SPORTS

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Logan DeJesus keeps the puck close.

## Hurricanes, Pacers battle to draw

HOLYOKE – On Saturday, Dec. 27, Amherst Regional hockey, which co-ops with Pathfinder Tech took on division rival Chicopee, which is also a multi-school co-op. The two teams slugged it out and finished in a 4-4 draw. For Amherst, Graham Arguin had two goals while Sawyer Ferro and Landon LaCrois had the single goals. Chicopee got two goals each from Anthony Bonafilia and Aidan Nadeau. Amherst is now 3-4-1 while Chicopee is just 0-4-2.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM



Landyn Klein heads up the ice.



Griffin Stefanik tries to make a play.



Owen Buchanan eyes the goal as he heads into the offensive zone.



Aiden Nadeau heads for a shot on goal.



Landon Johnson passes the puck up the ice.

## Pacers break losing streak against Amherst

CHICOPEE – On Monday night, the Chicopee High School girls basketball team took down Amherst Regional 46-35 to bust a four-game losing streak. The Pacers got off to a great start, going up 18-8 and 28-12 at halftime. The Pacers then struggled heavily in the third quarter, limited to just one basket in the entire frame. But their defense remained strong and Chicopee did not relinquish the lead.

The Pacers would rebound and finish strong in the final frame, maintaining

a double-digit lead. Kiyah Price led the Pacers with 20 points. Cassidy Pytel chipped in 13 points and Sophia Moreira added 10 points for the home team.

Chicopee improved to 2-4 on the season. The Pacers won their opener against Comp and then lost four straight before the Amherst win. Coming up, the Pacers will travel to East Longmeadow on Friday, Jan. 9 at 7 p.m. They are next home on Tuesday, Jan. 13 against Belchertown at 7 p.m.

## Bruins snap T-Birds winning streak

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – The Springfield Thunderbirds (12-13-4-2) suffered another gut-wrenching defeat late in regulation, 3-1, against the Providence Bruins (23-6-1-0) on Sunday inside Amica Mutual Pavilion.



Springfield's power play got two early reps in the first four minutes of play, and the man advantage capitalized as Matt Luff unleashed his team-leading 11th of the season at 4:32 of the period, making it a 1-0 game off set-ups from Dillon Dube and Samuel Johansson.

The Bruins had a wonderful shift following Luff's goal that nearly tied the score, highlighted by a Victor Soderstrom point shot that rang the post behind Vadim Zherenko.

Eventually, Providence would get even as they also struck on their

second power play of the period, as Dans Locmelis beat Zherenko from the left circle at 13:35 after a Fabian Lysell one-time attempt careened right to the waiting rookie winger.

The Bruins' defense suffocated the T-Birds' attack in the middle period, keeping the visitors to only two shots on net, but Zherenko was tremendous in his own right, denying all 10 Providence shots in the period. Among Zherenko's best pieces of work was a clutch stop on a low-slot tester from Locmelis.

The 1-1 stalemate carried all the way into the game's dying minutes, but for the second time in three meetings in Providence, the Bruins found a way to break the tie late in regulation when Frederic Brunet uncorked a slapper

See T-BIRDS page 8

## Comp takes down Holyoke for fourth straight

CHICOPEE – Last Monday evening, Chicopee Comprehensive boys basketball hosted Holyoke for a league matchup and remained undefeated with a 76-48 win. Brody Fay led the team with 20 points and Jacoby Haney had 15 points. Xavier Kleps added 13 points for the Colts. Michael Medina would score 13 to lead the Knights, who are just 1-4 to start the season.



Modesto Galindrez sends a long three-point attempt away.



Xavier Kleps takes the near half-court shot.



Brody Fay gets the open layup.



Gabriel Pluta tries to shoot before a block.



Jacoby Haney attempts to overcome a guard as he shoots.



Elijah Kleps heads for the hoop.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

# PUBLIC NOTICES

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Probate and Family Court  
Hampden Division  
Docket No.  
HD26P0010EA  
Estate of:  
Anthony Martin Cote  
Also Known As:  
Tony Cote  
Date of Death:  
December 16, 2025**

**INFORMAL PROBATE  
PUBLICATION NOTICE**

To all persons interested in the above captioned estate, by Petition of Petitioner **Denise Mitchell of Springfield, MA.**

**Denise Mitchell of Springfield, MA** has been informally appointed as the Personal Representative of the estate to serve **without surety** on the bond.

The estate is being administered under informal procedure by the Personal Representative under the Massachusetts Uniform Probate Code without supervision by the Court. Inventory and accounts are not required to be filed with the Court, but interested parties are entitled to notice regarding the administration from the Personal Representative and can petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including distribution of assets and expenses of administration. Interested parties are entitled to petition the Court to institute formal proceedings and to obtain orders terminating or restricting the powers of Personal Representatives appointed under informal procedure. A copy of the Petition and Will, if any, can be obtained from the Petitioner. 01/09/2026

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

Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on January 9th, 2025 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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North Stonington, CT 06359

2009 Ford Focus  
VIN: 1FAHP34N19W127412  
Sheikh Faisal  
1215 Wilbraham Rd.  
Springfield, MA 01119

2007 Chevrolet Uplander  
VIN: 1GNDU23W17D213549  
Jamal Williams  
68 Lakevilla Ave.  
Springfield, MA 01109  
2015 Toyota Corolla  
VIN: 2T1BURHE7FC329410  
Dervish Bojka Jr.  
5 Ridge Rd.  
Wallingford, CT 06492

2019 Hyundai Elantra

VIN: 5NPD84LF5KH411644  
Yvette Ryles  
54 Taylor Drive  
Hartford, Ct 06106  
2005 Scion Tc  
VIN: JTKDE177250006846  
Lisa Lopez  
60 Ball St., Apt. 2  
Yonkers, NY 10701  
12/26/2025, 01/02, 01/09/2026

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

Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on January 16th, 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.

2011 Honda Accord  
VIN: 1HGCP2F38BA126935  
Anastasia Beckles  
49 Taylor Ave.  
Brockton, MA 02302

2009 Toyota Yaris  
VIN: JTDKT903195252595  
Shabir Haidari  
760 Main St.  
West Springfield, MA 01089

2011 Ford Crown Victoria  
VIN: 2FABP7EV9BX150412  
Jeffrey & Adrean Germann  
320 Foxridge Ln.  
Hubert, NC 28539

2007 Honda Accord  
VIN: 1HGCM56427A099998  
Thomas Troughton  
14 Cora St.  
Enfield, CT 06082

Moped  
VIN: HZ2TCDM41S1006347  
Lisa Beardmore  
282 Pleasant St.  
Lunenburg, MA 01462  
01/02, 01/09, 01/16/2026

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

Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on January 23rd, 2026 at Interstate Towing, Inc the following Motor Vehicles will be sold at private sale to satisfy our garage keeper's lien thereon for storage, towing charges, care and expenses of notices and sale of said vehicles.

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VIN: 1G1ZC5E00CF325665  
Hector Mateo  
64a Osgood St., Apt. 41  
Springfield, MA 01107

2016 Bmw 428xi  
VIN: WBA3N9C50GK248609  
Ryan Reeves  
115 S Shore Rd.  
Hinsdale, MA 01235

2013 Kia Optima  
VIN: 5XXGM4A74DG126999  
Valerie Delgado  
10 Nonotuck Ave., FL. 1  
Chicopee, MA 01013

2008 Wabash National Corp  
Base  
VIN: 1JJV532WX8L148636  
Favoree Services Inc.  
24 Kenmar Dr., 226  
Billerica, MA 01821

2002 Toyota Rav4  
VIN: JTEGH20V726002354

Luz Lebron  
1678 Northampton St., Apt. 1  
Holyoke, MA 01040  
2006 Nissan Sentra  
VIN: 3N1CB51D76L543561  
Aldo Avellan  
34 Gould Road  
Ware, MA 01082  
01/09, 01/16, 01/23/2026

**Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts  
The Trial Court  
Probate and Family Court  
Hampden Probate and  
Family Court  
50 State Street  
Springfield, MA 01103  
Docket No. HD21P2402PM  
In the matter of:  
Jerome R Roy  
Protected Person/Disabled  
Person/Respondent  
Of: Chicopee, MA  
CITATION GIVING NOTICE  
OF CONSERVATOR'S  
ACCOUNT**

To the named Respondent and all other interested persons, you are hereby notified pursuant to Rule 72 of the Supplemental Rules of the Probate & Family Court, that the **First** account(s) of Michael J Roy of Belchertown, MA as Conservator of the property of said Respondent has or have been presented to the Court for allowance.

**You have the right to object to the account(s).** 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 **01/22/2026**. This day is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline date by which you have to object to the account(s). If you fail to file the written appearance and objection by the return date, action may be taken in this matter without further notice to you, including allowance of the account(s).

Additionally, within thirty days after said return day (or within such other time as the Court upon motion may order), you must file a written affidavit of objections stating the specific facts and grounds upon which each objection is based and a copy shall be served upon the Conservator pursuant to Rule 3 of the Supplemental Rules of the Probate & Family Court.

You have the right to send to the Conservator, by registered or certified mail, a written request to receive a copy of the Petition and account(s) at no cost to you.

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

Witness, Hon. **Barbara M. Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.

Date: December 24, 2025  
**Rosemary A. Saccomani**  
Register of Probate  
01/09/2026

# IN THE CITY

## Polish Junior League of Massachusetts launches Annual Scholarship Offering

REGION – The Polish Junior League of Massachusetts has announced its annual scholarship program for students of Polish heritage.

The League will be awarding scholarships to undergraduate students, and one scholarship will be granted to a graduate or returning student. In addition to the Undergraduate Scholarship program, there are two memorial scholarships, the Helen Weber Scholarship and the Josephine Karwoski Memorial Scholarship, each offering a focus on specific areas of study.

The scholarships and services provided by the Polish Junior League would not be possible without funds raised through the League's Annual Fashion Show and public donations. By contributing, individuals, busi-

nesses and corporations are helping to expand the level of awards and positively affect students.

Sheryl Mardeusz, president of the Polish Junior League says, "we are proud to continue helping graduate and undergraduate students throughout New England and are extremely pleased to be able to help even more individuals pursue their educational goals."

To be eligible, applicants, in addition to being part of the Polish community, must have a permanent address in the Western Massachusetts counties of Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden or Hampshire. Applications can be received after January 2, 2026 with an application deadline of May 1, 2026 and scholarship criteria can be found on the League's web-

site [polishjuniorleaguema.org](http://polishjuniorleaguema.org).

For 87 years, the Polish Junior League of Massachusetts, a nonprofit organization of women developed as civic leaders, has made a demonstrable impact on their community. True to its mission, the League has worked diligently to help students obtain the best education, so they may contribute to enhance the social, cultural and political fabric of civil society.

\*Scholarship Program Key Information

Applications can be submitted between January 2, 2026 and May 1, 2026

Permanent address in Western MA counties of Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden or Hampshire

Enrolled in sophomore year (36 credits minimum)

### BRAIN HEALTH from page 1

many different health related topics, but I specialize in Dementia Care, and most of my talks over the past three years have been dementia-related. I find it is the topic that is wanted the most, as Dementia and Alzheimer's disease touches so many people's lives," Walters-Zucco said.

He also stressed bringing awareness to Alzheimer's Disease.

"Alzheimer's Disease is a public health crisis, and the numbers are expected to double or triple over the next 25 to 50 years. The aging U.S. population, especially Baby Boomers, means more people are developing Alzheimer's; numbers could hit 13 to 16 million by 2050," Walters-Zucco said. "There is such a thirst for education and information regarding brain health, memory care, dementia and Alzheimer's. I provide usually three to four presentations a month, and we are going to be offering dementia support groups at

many of our locations, including Chicopee, through 2026."

Walters-Zucco added he's got more talks in the works this month and shared what seniors can do to support their brain health.

"My next two talks will be Jan. 14 at The Arbors at Stoneham, and then Jan. 16 for the 16 Acres Golden Agers in Springfield," Walters-Zucco said. "Some of the best things people can do for brain health is socialize. Stay social and engaged, try new things and learn new things. We are never too old to learn something new. Stay active, exercise is so important for brain health, a daily walk can go a long way. Add as many antioxidants as possible to your diet, nice colorful plates with green leafy vegetables and berries, especially blueberries."

Grammo shared with us why these discussions are so important and what other resources The Arbors offers.

"We just really love to provide resources for people in our community, not just

within the walls of our building but also all around. We like to go out to new senior centers and provide education and resources that can help. That's really what we love to do to just help people and guide them on their journey," Grammo said.

Grammo added the presentation was one of many things The Arbors likes to bring to the senior center.

"We do talks like this, we do fun things too. We'll come out to the senior center to run crafts, cooking demonstrations, that sort of thing. We have 9 assisted living communities in Massachusetts and Connecticut, the Arbors and the Ivy," Grammo said. "That really is a place where people can move to get socialization, meals, house-keeping, and the support of terms of care that they need."

Grammo also shared an upcoming event being hosted at The Arbors called, "Downsizing and Decluttering Seminar" on Jan. 29 at 5:30 p.m. This seminar will cover ways to downsize and prepare to move to senior living.

### SOCIAL SECURITY from page 4

spouse's current benefit at death was more than the surviving spouse is already receiving. The surviving spouse receives the higher amount, instead of their own smaller Social Security retirement benefit.

But here is an important thing to know: Whenever any Social Security benefit (including a spousal or surviving spouse benefit) is claimed before the recipient's Full Retirement Age, the payment amount is

permanently reduced, both spousal and survivor benefits do not reach maximum until the recipient's Full Retirement Age. And just to complete the picture for survivor benefits, a surviving spouse is also entitled to a one-time, lump-sum death benefit of \$255 if their marital partner dies, in addition to any other benefit they are entitled to.

*The Association Mature Citizens Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or*

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

**Please check the accuracy of your legal notice prior to submission (i.e., date, time, spelling). Also, be sure the requested publication date coincides with the purpose of the notice, or as the law demands. Thank you.**

**Support the local businesses that support your local newspaper. Let them know you saw their ad in the Chicopee Register**

### T-BIRDS from page 7

that eluded Zherenko with just 1:11 remaining.

The T-Birds offense, which managed only 17 shots all night and just seven after the first period, could not get an equalizing response, and Riley Tufte polished off the night

with an empty-netter just 13 seconds after Brunet's game-winning goal.

With their win streak snapped, the T-Birds were on the road on Wednesday, looking to start a new one as they visited the Utica Comets for a tussle at Adirondack Bank Center.

### GARDEN from page 4

when I brushed by the plants. After placing sticky yellow monitoring cards nearby I learned it was leaf hoppers!

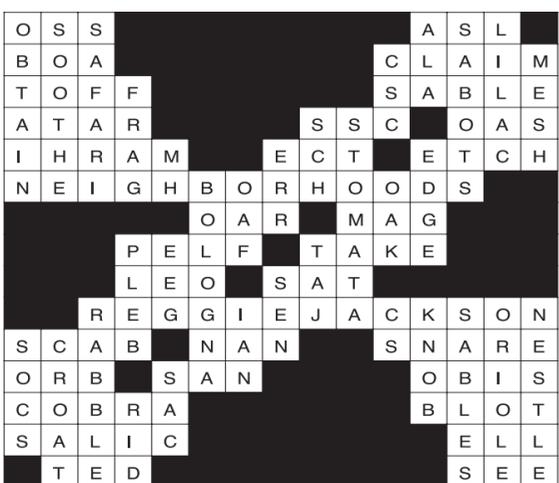
As carefully as I could I doused them to the point of run-off with insecticidal soap. I will have to be careful here, because tiny 3 mm size, wedge-shaped (adult) insects can transmit viruses from plant to plant.

I'll put out new monitoring cards near the rosemary plants to check if the population is decreasing.

Regardless, I am glad I caught this situation early.

With the pests under control and a proper fertilization regiment, these plants will be in great shape come springtime, and ready for new adventures in the landscape.

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



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Email:jamie@turley.com

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All brick, block, stone, concrete. Hatchway doors, basement windows, chimneys rebuilt & repaired, foundations repaired, basement waterproofing systems, sump pumps. BBB+ rating. Free estimates. Lic #14790. Call **(413)569-1611, (413)374-5377**

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**AAA-TROM'S TREE SERVICE PROFESSIONAL SERVICE.** Residential removal of trees. Free estimates, Fully insured W/Workman's Comp. Remove them before the wind takes them down. Cordwood, stump grinding. Call **413-283-6374.**

**DL & G TREE SERVICE** - Everything from tree pruning, tree removal, stump grinding, storm damage and brush chipping. Honest and Dependable. Fully insured. Now offering a Senior Citizen and Veteran discount. Call today for free estimate **(413)478-4212**

**JUNK REMOVAL**

**A Call We Haul FAST REMOVAL**  
Junk, Appliance, Cleanouts.  
We load it & take it.  
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CREDIT CARDS ACCEPTED

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Finish Carpentry • Framing • Drywall • Painting • & more!  
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**HELP WANTED**

**CANNABIS CULTIVATION AND PRODUCTION MANUFACTURING FACILITY (Holyoke)**

Holyoke Wilds LLC, a licensed cannabis cultivator and product manufacturer in Holyoke, MA, is seeking reliable individuals for general cultivation and product manufacturing positions. Duties include assisting with plant care, trimming, cleaning, product manufacturing, and other general tasks within the facility.  
**Start Date:** Within the next few weeks to months  
**Pay:** Varies based on experience. Ranges from \$16 to \$20 per hour.  
**Requirements:** Applicants must be 21 or older and eligible to work in the United States. Background checks are required under state cannabis regulations.  
Interested candidates should email **holyokewildsjobs@gmail.com** with their contact information and brief work history.  
*Holyoke Wilds LLC is an equal opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or veteran status.*

**HELP WANTED**

**LUDLOW PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT PARA-EDUCATOR.**  
Submit resume and letter of intent to: **www.schoolspring.com**

**AUTO**

**CASH FOR JUNK AND REPAIRABLE CARS**  
**FREE TOWING FAST SERVICE CASH PAID AS IS CALL OR TEXT 413-219-6839**

**Classified Advertising DEADLINE FRIDAY AT NOON**

## FILL OUT AND MAIL THIS MONEY MAKER

MAIL TO: Classifieds, 24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069 DEADLINES: **FRIDAY AT NOON**  
or call: 413-283-8393

CATEGORY:			
1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20
21	Base Price \$26.50	Base Price \$27.00	Base Price \$27.50
22	Base Price \$28.00	Base Price \$29.00	Base Price \$29.50
25	Base Price \$28.50	Base Price \$29.00	Base Price \$29.50
26	Base Price \$29.50	Base Price \$30.00	Base Price \$30.50
27	Base Price \$30.50	Base Price \$31.00	Base Price \$31.50
28	Base Price \$31.50	Base Price \$32.00	Base Price \$32.50
29	Base Price \$32.50	Base Price \$33.00	Base Price \$33.50
30	Base Price \$33.50	Base Price \$34.00	Base Price \$34.50
31	Base Price \$34.50	Base Price \$35.00	Base Price \$35.50
32	Base Price \$35.50	Base Price \$36.00	Base Price \$36.50
33	Base Price \$36.50	Base Price \$37.00	Base Price \$37.50
34	Base Price \$37.50	Base Price \$38.00	Base Price \$38.50
35	Base Price \$38.50	Base Price \$39.00	Base Price \$39.50
36	Base Price \$39.50	Base Price \$40.00	Base Price \$40.50
37	Base Price \$40.50	Base Price \$41.00	Base Price \$41.50
38	Base Price \$41.50	Base Price \$42.00	Base Price \$42.50
39	Base Price \$42.50	Base Price \$43.00	Base Price \$43.50
40	Base Price \$43.50	Base Price \$44.00	Base Price \$44.50

**Quabbin Village Hills**  
Circulation: 50,500

**Hilltowns**  
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**Suburban Residential**  
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Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number of Weeks: \_\_\_\_\_ X per week rate = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Credit Card:  MasterCard  VISA  Discover  Cash  Check# \_\_\_\_\_  
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**ALL REAL ESTATE** advertised herein is subject to the Federal Fair Housing Act, which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation, or discrimination because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or intention to make any such preference, limitation, or discrimination." We will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. All persons are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised are available on an equal opportunity basis.

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# DL&G TREE

Tree Removal



Structural Pruning



Crane Service



Storm Damage



Stump Grinding



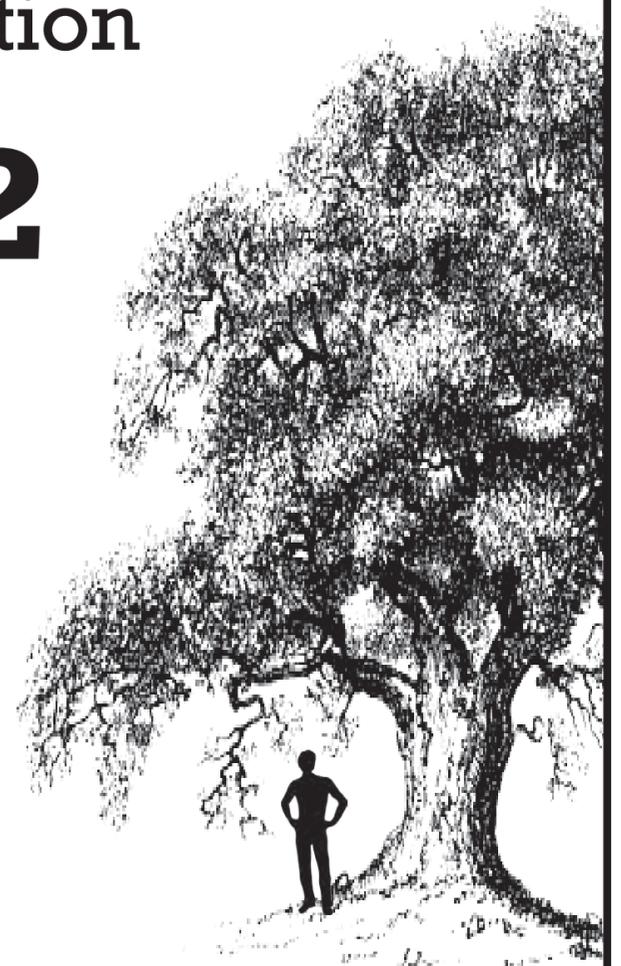
Lot Clearing



Give us a call for your free estimate and tree evaluation

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# DL&G TREE



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