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COMMUNITY

Ret. Officer Mark Wilkes reflects on recovery one year after heart attack

First responders also share their story

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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CHICOPEE - Ret. Officer Mark Wilkes is forever thankful to the first responders who saved his life after his massive heart attack last year.

On March 12, 2023, Wilkes suffered a heart attack after taking part in the Battle of the Badges and was hospitalized for 175 days, enduring additional health struggles and was revived twice.

Since then, the community has rallied behind him through charity events at Leadfoot Brewing and the Portuguese American Club, umbrella sales at the Rumbleseat Bar & Grille, a charity golf tournament at the Chicopee Country Club and window decals with the character Shrek, a nickname Wilkes went by, available



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

Firefighter Drew Bzoska, Retired Police Officer Mark Wilkes holding his commemorative jersey from the Chicopee Fire Department and Firefighter/EMT Val Stein smile for a group photo on March 27.

for purchase at the police station.

Wilkes retired from the police department on March 8 after 23 years and recently served as the guest of honor at this year's Battle of the Badges, dropping the ceremonial first puck and receiving a commemorative jersey from the fire department and a sweatshirt from the Boys & Girls Club.

Firefighter Drew Brzoska said he and Firefighter Brandon Haden were on the ambulance and picked up Firefighter/EMT Val Stein at the fire station, receiving support from the fire and police departments and private ambulance companies.

"(The) private ambulance company, National Ambulance, they heard everything that was going on over the radio, so they cleared up from Baystate and we picked them up too on the way to the hospital," Brzoska said. "And then we got there, Baystate was

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COMMUNITY

Chicopee ready for school through Third Annual Back to School Event

By Amanda Munson
Correspondent

CHICOPEE - With haircuts, school supplies, backpacks, and much more at the Third Annual Back to School Event held at Rivers Park on Aug. 25, families were in abundance, gathering tickets for free items all day, preparing their kids for the start of the school year.

Starting this event was Ricardo Diaz, owner of Faded Barber Lounge, who was the mastermind behind wanting to hold an event for kids and families, wanting to make the process of going back to school a bit easier.

"It is a big team effort. The support has been amazing, every year we do it at the end of the event, there are more people who want to get involved. Asking what they can do for the next one," Diaz said.

Senior class president and part of the National Honors Society at Chicopee Comp is Taelly Viafara, who volunteered at the backpack station, who talked about getting involved in the



TURLEY PHOTOS BY AMANDA MUNSON

From the left, an attendee gets a fresh cut by Ricardo Diaz, owner of Faded Barber Lounge, while posed with another attendee next to Mayor John Vieau.

community.

"I was contacted by one of my teachers who suggested this event thinking this may interest me. There is a big diversity of people coming out today, it's so refreshing to see how many kids

are excited to go back. I am so excited to go into senior year but also nervous, maybe a little sad," Viafara said. "I've grown up in Chicopee all my life and it's a good community to be in."

Mayor John Vieau visited each booth and expressed gratitude to those who came, helped out and made this a successful event.

"We want to make sure that everyone is prepared to go back to school, having the opportunity to get a haircut, visit a hairstylist, free food, ice cream, backpacks and supplies for school. That's what this is about. What Chicopee does best is coming together as a community and making sure that we are prepared to go back to school, we are here for you," Vieau said.



Volunteers from Chicopee Comp were handing out backpacks full of back to school supplies during the Third Annual Back-to-School Event at Rivers Park in Chicopee.

COMMUNITY



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

Soso Tautalatasi performs a fire dance during the Polynesian Show at the RiverMills Senior Center on Oct. 10.

Aloha from the Polynesian Show at RiverMills

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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CHICOPEE - The community gathered at the senior center on Oct. 10 for the Moki-hana-Hawaii Calls Polynesian Show, bringing back fond memories of the Hu Ke Lau to its attendees.

Mayor John Vieau, who was later brought out as The Big Kahuna during one of the dances, shared, "Welcome back to the Hu Ke Lau!"

"There's nothing better than revisiting our past, especially on a night like tonight here, and having an opportunity to--what I call--step back in time and go back to the Polynesian show and have it right here with some of the original cast members," Vieau said.

Atoa Ripley shared he,

Lou Arasate and Vieau got together three months earlier to plan the event, thrilled with the turnout and, also, thankful to the senior center for their support.

"We were happy about that. It reminds us of the Hu Ke Lau back in the day," Ripley said.

Michael Wilk, the president of the Friends of RiverMills Center, was ecstatic about the show, sharing it brought back memories for many people, including himself as he had worked at the Hu Ke Lau when he was 14 years old washing dishes and, later, a busboy and doing lights for the shows.

Wilk misses the family the most, especially the Yee

See **POLYNESIAN SHOW** page 2

A Year and Then Some

Hello to the hometown as we enter 2025! It's been another year of excitement and some big events in Chicopee, ranging from major anniversaries to residents speaking out on the issues that mean the most to them, our Year in Review has something for everyone.

It, also, has been a time of transition at this paper as you all know. My predecessor, Dalton Zbierski, departed his post and I stepped in as editor, a respon-

sibility I take seriously, even more so where the hometown is concerned.

Since taking over, you all have embraced me with open arms and rallied for my success, and that means the world to me. We, also, welcomed a rising star in Amanda Munson this summer, whose enthusiasm, positive energy, passion for writing and eagerness to learn and grow have been a fantastic addition, forging quite the dynamic duo between the two

of us.

As we look back on 2024, let us remember that in times of excitement, sorrow, anxiety and uncertainty, there is still joy and good to be found. Whether it's an event at the RiverMills or the library, a flag-raising to honor heritage, culture or causes that mean the most to the people of Chicopee or getting involved through charitable events or talking with local officials, there's so much happening that

shows the many threads that make Chicopee what it is today.

Through this past year, you—our loyal readers along with new some faces—have stayed connected as we step out into the field and do what we do best. As I said in my welcome letter, you guys make this paper. We just take care of the rest.

Enjoy looking back on 2024, and cheers to another year together.

Dalton Zbierski says farewell and thank you for the memories

To the residents of the city of Chicopee

After serving as editor of the Chicopee Register for the past three years and covering the city since 2018, this will sadly be my last edition. I've made the difficult decision to move onto a television station in Connecticut, where I will be able to fulfill a lifelong dream of delivering news in my home state as a producer.

What a ride these past six years have been; I wouldn't trade them in for anything. Covering news in Chicopee has always been a privilege and a positive experience. I cherish every interaction I've been fortunate enough to have with the residents of this tremendous and unique city.

Thank you to the countless people who have made this job special. When I began covering Chicopee, I was just 23, and in many ways, I was still a kid. Over the years that have passed, I've grown, and I've been fortunate enough to watch the city grow as well.

Today, I'm familiar enough with Chicopee to know that its future is bright, and I look forward to seeing what tomorrow will bring.

Taking my place as editor is Kristin Rivers, a Chicopee resident who has served as a staff writer for the past year, covering her home city. Kristin is incred-



Dalton Zbierski

ibly passionate and will bring renewed energy to the position. I assure our readers, you are in excellent hands.

Quickly, I'd be remiss not to thank Pat and Keith Turley for giving me the opportunity, and a huge thank you to

Maryann Dunbar, our paginator who does a phenomenal job each and every week.

When it comes to covering news in Chicopee, from mayoral inaugurations to Colleen Coronation Balls to high school graduations, I've enjoyed every minute of it... And I think I spent so much time writing in the Panera on Memorial Drive that I should have probably paid rent... So, from City Hall to the public library to Szot Park and everywhere and everyone in between, Chicopee will forever have a place in my heart.

It has been quite the journey, and I am forever indebted to our great readers. Be well my friends and keep picking up The Chicopee Register, I promise you won't be disappointed.

Words can't describe how thankful I am for the way you embraced me. Take care!

-Dalton Zbierski

WILKES from page 1

all ready to continue care."

Stein said seeing Wilkes in the ambulance was a different experience.

"I've always seen him on calls and when it became an emergency, we just stepped into the job," Stein said.

Moving forward, Wilkes hopes to be an inspirational speaker.

"If I can be an inspiration to people, that's what I would like to do," Wilkes said. "Maybe talk to academy classes or even people that are having a bad day to say, 'Hey, look what I went through. You can make it. Day's not that bad.'"

Kristin Rivers, the Chicopee Register's newest editor, shares her welcome message

Hello to my hometown of Chicopee!

I am so honored to be your editor for the Chicopee Register and continue covering the stories that mean the most to you. I'd like to thank Dalton Zbierski for all that he has taught me and his mentorship as I take on this new responsibility and continue delivering the local news and stories that matter to us. Everything done this past year has been a true team effort and it's one that I don't take for granted. I know, also, Dalton has made the hometown proud with all he has done during his tenure.

In writing for this paper in the last year, I have gained a newfound appreciation for Chicopee. Whether it's covering a City Council meeting, an event at the library or senior center or doing a story on a business grand opening or flag-raising ceremony, I have seen firsthand how much the hometown has grown in making everyone in Chicopee feel they have a place to call home while, also, making



Kristin Rivers

sure the top issues concerning residents are addressed and spoken about.

There's also another thing that stays with me that makes this work even more worthwhile.

"Thank you for getting our message out."

As I close this letter, I want to make sure this is reiterated. You all make this paper what it is today because it is your paper. All I simply do is help tell the stories, share the facts, gather the information and research and bring to life the visions you each have.

I hope as your new editor I can continue this work, while also making a bigger impact.

I look forward to our continued work together because we're only just getting started.

-Kristin Rivers

POLYNESIAN SHOW from page 1

family.

"They're an amazing family and that's what I remember the most. How much they did for the city and brought people together and the events and just the bonding. Great family, great family," Wilk said.

Mokihana Ripley was glad to do the show.

"I just love the smile on the people's faces. Even their eyes, even their eyes were smiling. I love the response to the dances and the music. I just love the reaction that I saw," Ripley said.


Ripley's message to the community--along with gratitude for their support--was this.

"I just want them to keep up their island spirit," Ripley said.

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Sponsored by the Western Mass Fly Fishermen starting January 9th, 2025.
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Thursday nights for 8 weeks from 7PM to 9PM.
 The classes are open to the public with children 10 years and up being accompanied by an adult. Classes are geared to the beginner or novice. Course materials and tools will be supplied!
Space is limited.
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For more information visit <http://wmffclub.org>

Correction:

In our Dec. 27 story regarding the farewell of Communications & Special Projects Manager Chloe Soto from the City of Chicopee, there was a clarification received regarding the communications director role.

The position will be posted publicly so anyone would be free to apply for the position.

We apologize for the error and confusion.

NOTICE

ERRORS: Each advertiser is requested to check their advertisement the first time it appears. This paper will not be responsible for more than one corrected insertion, nor will be liable for any error in an advertisement to a greater extent than the cost of the space occupied by the item in the advertisement.

YEAR IN REVIEW

JANUARY

Mayor John Vieau sworn in on New Year's Day



TURLEY PHOTO BY DALTON ZBIERSKI

Mayor John Vieau, centered, surrounded by newly sworn in members of the City Council as well as city employees.

Offers insight into direction city will take in 2024

By Dalton Zbierski
Editor
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CHICOPEE – Mayor John Vieau was sworn in for his third consecutive term during a well-attended ceremony on New Year's Day.

"It really is a beautiful morning in the city of Chicopee," he said.

Much has changed since Vieau first entered office in January 2020, and the most recent change involved the location of the inauguration, which occurred in the City Hall Auditorium for the first time in decades.

"I don't think it gets much better than this," he said. "This beautiful, state-of-the-art, multi-functioned space hosts City Council and School Committee meetings and special events. Now, once again, it's capable of hosting our municipal inauguration ceremony."

Vieau extended his congratulations to the members of the City Council and the School Committee, who were also sworn in during the Jan. 1 ceremony, and thanked members of Team Vieau, his campaign committee.

"As I was preparing for today, I reflected on how I got here. When you run for mayor, you need a team. My team started

with family and friends and has grown into something very special," Vieau said. "I am thankful and blessed to have the support of the most talented and incredible people who hold the same vision of our city that I do. Thank you for believing in me."

Vieau also shared advice he received from U.S. Congressman Richard Neal.

"A very wise man once shared with me that the highs and lows of being mayor come very quickly. Enjoy the highs and challenge yourself with the lows. The man also told me being mayor was the most gratifying position he ever held. Boy was he right," Vieau said.

Vieau acknowledged that there are challenges ahead but is convinced Chicopee is a safe, happy place to work, live and raise a family. He said his goal for 2024 is to simply work together.

These include reactivating the central library, getting the Uniroyal property back on the tax roll, Phase II of City Hall improvements, the opening of the Post-9/11 and Service Dog Memorial Park, improvements to Szot Park and the building of a new Barry Elementary School, which Vieau considers to be a legacy project.

"My promise is simple. I will work hard and do what's best in the best interest of those who live here, popular or not, with the taxpayers always in mind," he said.

For those who didn't vote for him, Vieau hopes to earn their trust in the next two years.

CPD to implement FUSUS Real Time Crime Center

Chicopee will be first city in state to use FUSUS

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
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CHICOPEE - The police department is planning the implementation of the FUSUS Real Time Crime Center.

The technology, approved by the City Council on Nov. 9, 2023, operates as a cloud-based real-time crime center. It enhances law enforcement agencies by utilizing license plate recognition cameras, surveillance videos, floor plans and other informational databases to help officers respond to emergencies in a more rapid and efficient manner.

Chicopee is the first city in the state set to use FUSUS.

Deputy Chief Eric Watson explained that the beginning phases include plans for training and figuring out the location of the real-time crime center.

"Once we have the space and we can staff it, it will be up and running without trying to figure it all out. So that is our end-goal is to start that," Watson said.

Watson said they are referring to it as a next-generation neighborhood watch program called Connect Chicopee, build-

ing upon the National Crime Prevention Council with McGruff and the Neighborhood Watch programs.

"It's essentially a technologically advanced neighborhood watch program, so businesses and residents will be able to register their cameras," Watson said.

Watson said people would be able to curate their cameras, with options including sharing only during an emergency and choosing what cameras they want to share.

Registering the cameras would be voluntary, with set policies in place.

"So, they don't have to worry about people looking at their cameras," Watson said. "But they can feel comfortable knowing that they're only sharing when there's an emergency."

Watson thanked Mayor John Vieau and the City Council for their support, adding the community has already expressed interest in participating.

"They're already reaching out to us and asking us how they can partner with us, and we're getting there. We'll make that very known when we're ready to really get out there, but it's interesting that they're already reaching out and asking how they can help," Watson said.

To learn more, visit FUSUS.com.

In December 2024, it was renamed the Real Time Information Center.

FEBRUARY

Funding approved for old library renovation project



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DALTON ZBIERSKI

City Council approved funding on Jan. 30 to renovate the old Central Library in Chicopee Center.

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
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CHICOPEE – During a special Jan. 30 meeting, City Council approved funding to renovate the former Central Library on Springfield Street.

The former library, located in downtown Chicopee, was built in 1913 and later vacated in 2004 when the city built a new library on Front Street.

Planning Director Lee Pouliot explained the project "envisions this building becoming a highly flexible programming space" intended to allow the city to utilize it for its needs, work with community partners and "have it become familiar again in the neighborhood and throughout the city."

On funding sources, Pouliot said there's a state earmark of \$500,000 from last fiscal year, \$3.5 million in ARPA Funds set aside, \$125,000 supporting the schematic design and a bid specifications package completed at \$824,068.

A total of \$2,675,932 of project funding remains.

"And of course, there's the existing bond of \$750,000 from 2019," Pouliot said.

The project budget is \$10,778,985, with a shortfall of \$6,853,053.

Pouliot anticipates the project would

take 10 months to complete, with two months for project closeout.

Mayor John Vieau said a lot of time was spent on how to creatively fund the project.

"You look at how the space has been dormant for so long and using ARPA Funds, one-time funds, for the entire community to benefit, we felt that this is probably the most appropriate way without putting a very large burden on the taxpayers of Chicopee," Vieau said.

Ward 4 Councilor George Balakier was pleased with the presentation.

"So, I think that's an excellent use of monies and funds, so this way here we won't be burdened with either through the taxpayers or through bonding, so I like the idea, mayor and Lee, and I'm in favor of this project," Balakier said.

Councilor-at-Large Tim Wagner expressed caution like Ward 5 Councilor Frederick Krampits, citing the dollar amount if the project does not succeed and the city acting as a landlord, a reason why City Council rejected the School Department from purchasing the former Mass-Mutual building on Memorial Drive in 2023.

"I'd like to see it redeveloped for sure, but just a lot of questions that got to be asked about it," Wagner said.

Abbey Brook Restoration in Szot Park is making progress



TURLEY PHOTO BY DALTON ZBIERSKI

The three-phase, \$17 million project to restore Abbey Brook in Szot Park is progressing.

Three-phase, \$17 million project could take 5-7 years

By Dalton Zbierski
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CHICOPEE – State officials traveled from Boston to Szot Park on Tuesday morning to tour the construction site that

exists as the city eliminates multiple dams and restores Abbey Brook.

The three-phase, \$17 million project could take between five and seven years to complete, GIS Coordinator Michelle Sarterre estimated. Phase I, involving the removal of the Lower Bemis Pond Dam and restoration of lower Abbey Brook, will be complete by summer's end.

See **SZOT PARK** page 5

GUEST COLUMN



By Ellenor Downer



American wigeon

I received an email from a Brimfield resident on Dec. 15.

He said he checked out a pond in Ludlow in preparation for doing the Christmas Bird Count with the Allen Bird Club. He said, "My wife and I have been covering the town of Ludlow since 1989 and did my first count with the club in the late 1970s."

He saw four American Wigeons. He said, "Males with white crown/forehead and female with gray head brown body was swimming with the males. The male's white spot was very visible even to the unaided eye."

The American wigeon is 21 inches long. The male has a white forehead and crown, gray head and a green iridescent patch through the eye. The male has a white spot before the tail, which the Brimfield mentioned in his email.

The female has brownish sides, grayish head and sides, a dark eyespot and light gray bill with black tip. The female wigeon lays six to 12 white eggs in a grassy nest. The nest is concealed in rushes, sedge or under tree clumps.

American wigeons feed on pond weeds, milfoil, wigeon grass, wild celery and eelgrass. They may eat vexation stirred up by diving ducks such as canvasbacks. They summer on lakes and marshes and winter on wet meadows, lakes and protected coastal waters. They are usually found in small flocks. During courtship competing males give whistling calls and lift folded wings nearly vertical above their back. Males give soft descending three syllable whistles.

Other birds

Other birds seen by the Brimfield resident at the Ludlow Reservoir were 63 Canada geese, six mallards, 83 hooded mergansers, 161 common mergansers, one ring-billed gull, three common loons and one bald eagle flew directly overhead just above the tree tops. Other birds were two American crows, two tufted titmice and two dark-eyed juncos.

Hooded mergansers

I received an email from a woman on Dec. 14. She said, "The ponds on Brook Road in West Warren have more treasures. Two days ago I saw a pair of hooded mergansers. I sat and watched for several minutes and they spent most of the time under water."

Bird at feeder

I received an email from a woman on Dec. 20. She wrote, "I have spotted a bird I believe to be a yellow warbler coming to my feeder. My knowledge of the bird is that it migrates south or the winter." She sent a photo, but the bird was eating so the beak and head were not visible. It had two white wing bars, olive color and some yellow. It may be a male American goldfinch in winter plumage. They do spend the winter here and retain some of their yellow feathers.

Loon fact

Most of the fish loons catch are small enough to be swallowed whole when they're still underwater. However, when a loon captures a larger fish, it may need to return to the surface to subdue it before it is able to consume it. Loons may slap a fish against the surface of the water or repeatedly drop and recapture it until the fish stops struggling and is

See **BACKYARD** page 7

GUEST COLUMN



by Roberta McQuaid

A Christmas card gardening question

My long-time friend Jane sent a column request via her Christmas card!

"I still read your columns, Roberta. I like the folksy way you write! Can you please provide some tips on keeping my Poinsettia healthy?"

So, out of the archives comes this column, devoted to Jane and you guessed it, the poinsettia.

Every Christmas the poinsettia takes the stage, front and center, in grocery and box store displays. The deep red bracts lure buyers to make them part of their holiday decorating.

Pretty? For sure, but without proper care, the plant won't have a chance past New Year's Day.

Let's learn what we can do to keep this favorite looking its best throughout the holiday season and then some.

It's important that you start off with a healthy plant. Choose a poinsettia with dark green foliage all the way to the soil line. Color should completely cover the bracts on the upper portion of the plant.

Avoid plants whose flowers (located in the center of the bracts) show pollen. If pollen is evident, the plant is old.

Be wary of those that are displayed in plastic or paper sleeves or even those that are elbow to elbow. Poinsettias need room to spread out, and the longer they are cramped, the more likely it is that their quality will be impacted.

Wilted plants are also best avoided, as this may indicate more than dry soil alone.

Poinsettias are cold sensitive. I was aghast when an out of town florist delivered these to me without a proper covering!

Temperatures under 50 degrees for even a few minutes can damage the plant. Therefore, insert into a bag or protective sleeve for the ride home from the store and do not leave in an unheated car while you run other errands!

Once home, position the poinsettia in a location where it will receive indirect light for at least six hours a day. Avoid drafts, warm or

cold, and place far enough away from windows to prevent the foliage from touching cold glass.

Chances are if you are comfortable inside, your poinsettia will be as well. Temperatures from 65-70 degrees during the day to around 55 at night will extend its life.

Check the plant often to see if it needs water. If the soil is dry, water until droplets leak through the drainage holes in the pot. Saucers shouldn't accumulate water. Dump the excess out after each watering so the plant won't reabsorb it and become waterlogged.

Soil that remains soaking wet is likely to cause root rot. A visual indication of this irreversible disease is curled, wilting foliage and bracts. Hold off on fertilizing the plant while it is in bloom.

It's unfortunate that few people keep their poinsettias past the holiday season. My mom tries for repeat bloom each year with varying degrees of success. This year, some bracts are just starting to turn red!

Here's what to do if you'd like to try it: In early April cut back the plant to eight inches. Fertilize with an all purpose houseplant fertilizer once a month.

New growth should appear by the end of May. After the danger of frost has passed, move the plant outdoors. Continue to water but increase fertilization to every

two weeks.

Pinch plants in late June or early July to promote bushy growth. At this time you may also wish to repot the poinsettia. Select a pot one size larger, filling around the root ball with a good potting soil.

Bring the plant indoors as temperatures fall.

The poinsettia is photoperiodic, and long nights of uninterrupted darkness encourage it to bloom. In greenhouses, growers go to great lengths to withhold light, as even small amounts can delay or stop the plant from setting bud.

At home, putting the plant in the closet for 14 hours each night is your best bet. Most people get on a 5p.m.-8 a.m. schedule beginning on Oct. 1 and continue it for eight-10 weeks until color shows on the bracts.

Night temperatures should be no higher than 70 degrees or flowering may be delayed.

Regardless of whether you enjoy the poinsettia for the season or longer, may its colorful bracts brighten your holiday!

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



Air traffic controller shortage & holiday travel...



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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YEAR IN REVIEW

SZOT PARK from page 3

Phase II will include the replacement of the Front Street culvert and “daylighting” the underground section of the brook while Phase III pertains to the removal of the Upper Bemis Pond Dam and further restoration of Abbey Brook.

Szot Park sits on nearly 70 acres of land, and almost half of it is covered within Abbey Brook’s confines, said Benjamin Strepka, director of Parks & Recreation. Beyond improving safety, the project has added benefits.

“While we do have a robust park system with over 30 parks (in Chicopee), we are lacking in passive recreation areas. So, this (allows for) having trails and paths through a natural area where people can come and enjoy nature,” Strepka said.

Mayor John Vieau embarked on the

muddy tour of the construction site alongside Rebecca Tepper, the state’s Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Undersecretary for Environment Stephanie Cooper and Tom O’Shea, commissioner of the state’s Department of Fish and Game.

“First, I think it’s best for us to always work together,” he said. “It’s a collaboration and a team effort and, hopefully, the end result is something special that we’ll all be proud of.”

Santerre led the tour, as Director of Planning & Development Lee Pouliot was unavailable. She described the importance of viewing the site in person.

“Actually, seeing it versus looking at some photographs, there’s just no replacing the actual visual of being on site. I would say a day like today is vastly important for everybody,” Santerre said.

MARCH Kinamarie Ayala crowned Chicopee’s 2024 Colleen



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOEL RODOWICZ

Left to right: Giannalee Beach, Lilian Young, 2024 Colleen Kinamarie Ayala, Morgan Presnal and Madelyn Rice at the 2024 Chicopee Colleen Coronation Ball.

Colleen and her court reflect on the event

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
krivers@turley.com

CHICOPEE - Chicopee Comprehensive High School student Kinamarie Ayala was crowned the 2024 Colleen at this year’s Colleen Coronation Ball.

The 2024 court members are Giannalee Beach, Lilian Young, Morgan Presnal and Madelyn Rice.

The ball, taking place at the Portuguese American Club on Feb. 24, was an extravagant gathering with 12 contestants narrowed down to five finalists, who were scored on accomplishments, personality, poise and appearance.

This year’s scholarship recipients were Melia Young, Kate Gauthier, Morgan Presnal and Jordyn Lemelin.

Ayala said so many things were going through her mind after she was crowned, sharing she participated in the contest to do something for herself and stand up for women of color.

She looks forward to representing Chicopee.

“I’m just so overwhelmed right now and I’m just so thankful to everyone that showed up tonight,” Ayala said.

The girls had these messages for Chicopee.

“I’d like the city of Chicopee to know that I will try my very hardest to represent it and stand for it any way I can,” Ayala said.

“I would like my community to know that I’m so proud of them and I’m fortunate to get to all be part of a community that’s so supportive and loving,” Beach said.

“I’d like my community to know I am so grateful for all their support and everything they’ve done to push me to this moment,” Young said.

“I would like Chicopee to know that I’m so proud to live here and I just want to have a good time with them representing them,” Presnal said.

“I’m proud to be living in Chicopee and I can’t wait to do this,” Rice said.

Chicopee Colleen Controversy

It was later announced by The Chicopee St. Patrick’s Day Committee on March 18 that Ayala was removed as the 2024 Chicopee Colleen, with the Committee releasing a statement on Facebook addressing what happened.

APRIL

Families celebrate Easter at RiverMills Easter Egg Hunt

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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CHICOPEE - The senior center was packed with families on March 29 as they stopped by for the 3rd Annual Easter Egg Hunt.

During the event, children came in their Easter best with baskets ready to

collect eggs throughout the senior center filled with treats and prizes. Those who found the golden egg also received a special prize.

Afterward, families gathered on the second floor to get their picture taken with the Easter Bunny.

Program Coordinator Casey Conroy was ecstatic about the turnout, explaining the event has been growing every year and



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

From the left, Betty Shaheen, a volunteer at the RiverMills Senior Center, the Easter Bunny and Brandon Dumas, volunteer & activities coordinator at the RiverMills Senior Center, take a fun photo during the Easter Egg Hunt at the RiverMills Senior Center on March 29.

has become an intergenerational event.

“It’s nice to see people supporting the senior center and supporting the programming that we do and the work that we put in to offer services to our community,” Conroy said. “So, it’s nice to see that they’re well-received and appreciated.”

Allan Salois, a driver at the senior center, was excited about the turnout and to see his friend the Easter Bunny take pictures with families.

“It’s just nice to get together and see everybody’s smiling face. The kids have so much fun. That’s the thing is watching the kids having so much fun,” Salois said.

Nicole O’Connor came with her daughter, Thea, to the event and had a great time, hearing about it through her stepmother who works at the senior center.

“It was very organized and it was great to see all the kids running around and finding the eggs,” O’Connor said.

Marge Ribadeneyra also came with her family, sharing how her granddaughter, Selena, enjoyed meeting the Easter Bunny.

“She was so excited. She gave the Easter Bunny a high-five and sat with him and talked to him for a while,” Ribadeneyra said.

Ribadeneyra expressed gratitude for the senior center holding intergenerational events like this for the families.

“It’s great. It’s a nice opportunity for the grandkids to come along and see what we do, where we hang out too. It’s really fun. Fun for the little ones too,” Ribadeneyra said.

Chicopee Public Library celebrates 20 years

By Kristin Rivers
Staff Writer
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CHICOPEE - The library celebrated its 20th anniversary with a reception in the main lobby on April 9.

The reception included remarks from Laura Bovee, the library’s director, Mayor John Vieau, State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow) and State Sen. John Velis (D-Westfield) and an exhibit of photos showcasing the library’s construction process.

Bovee thanked everyone “who had a part in making this library building a possibility.”

“It’s a joy and a privilege to come in every day to a building that the community loved and wanted to make happen and willed to happen and worked really hard to raise the funds for,” Bovee said. “You can feel it in the building. It’s folks who showed up when there was a need and made it happen.”

Vieau reflected on the library’s impact on the city, calling it “a living, breathing entity that opens up the world for all of us.”

“Offering adventures in learning, opportunities through every page turned and through every story that’s told. Thanks to the unwavering dedication of our library professionals, it’s transformed into a treasure trove of knowledge and a central hub for our community’s growth and education,” Vieau said.

Oliveira shared he and his family used to go to the original library in Chicopee Center, stressing how libraries are places where the community gathers together.

“Libraries are centers of democracy and in this week as we celebrate Library Week and celebrate all of our public libraries, please know that libraries hold a special place in my heart,” Oliveira said. “It



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

An exterior shot of the Emily L. Partyka Central Library on Front Street in Chicopee, 20 years later.

is something we need to cherish, preserve and protect access to free thought and free material and that’s what our libraries do each and every day.”

Bill Zaskey, a former Ward 4 City Councilor who helped the city get the library where it is located today, credited the Friends of the Chicopee Public Library through their Raise the Roof campaign, adding everyone owes “a little debt of gratitude” to John Michon.

“He was a very, very friendly person., spoke to everyone, always had a good word to say about everybody. Just a pleasant person to be around all the time,” Zaskey said.

Zaskey encourages residents to continue supporting the library.

“Come in, take a look. Join the library if you haven’t joined it yet. Become a member, support the Friends of the Library because they’re always doing very positive things for the growth of the library,” Zaskey said.

MAY

Gov. Maura Healey announces Cooling Corridors program



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

A group photo comprising of Superintendent Dr. Marcus Ware, City Councilor-at-Large Gerry Roy, Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner Brian Arrigo, City Council Vice President/Councilor-at-Large Robert Zygarowski, Ward 1 City Councilor Abigail Arriaga, State Sen. John Velis (D-Westfield), State Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield), Mayor John Vieau, Governor Maura Healey, Amanda Theriault, principal at Stefanik Elementary School, Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper, first-grade students at Stefanik Elementary School and State Sen. Jacob Oliveira (D-Ludlow) during Healey's announcement of the Cooling Corridors program on April 26.

Also takes part in tree planting at Stefanik School

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - Governor Maura Healey visited Stefanik Elementary School in Chicopee on April 26 to announce the Cooling Corridors program to support tree plantings.

Healey explained the Cooling Corridors program is about planting trees around the state, with 2,300 of them having been planted in Chicopee through the Greening the Gateway Cities program.

"Today, we planted a lot of trees... and what do trees do? They give us oxygen, they give us cover, they give us shade, they protect us from the heat, they help keep our neighborhoods cool and they reduce the need for air conditioning which helps us save money," Healey said. "They're also the way nature cleans the air."

Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rebecca Tepper said the Greening the Gateway Cities program is important "because it's also an issue of environmental and economic justice."

"So, that is why we are so proud of the progress that our Greening the Gateway City program has and we thought it was important to expand that program to the Cooling Corridors program where we'll be able to better focus tree planting to benefit environmental justice communities," Tepper said.

After the announcement, Healey, Tepper, Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner Brian Arrigo, Mayor John Vieau and members of DCR, the City Council, Massachusetts State Senate and more assisted the school in planting a tree, the 40,000th planted through the Greening the Gateway Cities program.

Principal Amanda Theriault shared the school was honored the administration chose them for a visit, appreciating the opportunity to be part of something positive for the community and the school.

Theriault's message to Healey and her administration was this: thank you.

"Thank you for helping our community, thank you for being part of our community, thank you for coming to our school," Theriault said. "It's just awesome. Just the whole experience has been wonderful and my kids will never forget it and my staff won't either, so it's a memory they'll have forever. So, thank you."

State Legislators tour CCHS Farm to School program

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - State legislators visited Chicopee Comprehensive High School on May 2 to tour the high school's Farm to School program.

The tour included stops in the cafeteria, the greenhouse and the high school's compost machine to learn how the high school provides fresh, healthy and locally grown food to its students.

The Massachusetts Farm-to-School program is an initiative to help food service directors, farmers, parents, teachers and distributors increase local farm produce served in the state's schools.

After Melanie Wilk, director of food service at Chicopee Public Schools, welcomed the legislators, Bri Jackson,

farm-to-school coordinator for ChicopeeFRESH, stressed the importance of the program, especially in the Western Massachusetts area.

"It's important to know that there's a huge presence with this stuff and we really care about it out here. A lot of the farms are located out here. There's tons of farmland," Jackson said. "One thing that ChicopeeFRESH does really well is we order a lot of local food, we network with local producers. We have our own driver that goes out to different farms and either picks stuff up or brings it to all of the schools."

During the tour, State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow) credited the Massachusetts State House for taking the lead on, also, making universal school lunch permanent in the state last year.

"When you think of Chicopee, you



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

Brendan Myers, horticulture teacher at Chicopee Comprehensive High School, shows guests the greenhouse on campus during the state legislators' tour of Chicopee Comprehensive High School's Farm to School program.

think of more urban centers. It's not. There are working farms that are here in the city and working farms across Western Massachusetts and, so, that proximity and connection that we can have, makes this program even more of a model, I think, state-wide," Oliveira said.

Jonathan Duff and Brendan Myers, the high school's horticulture teachers, showed the legislators the greenhouse and provided information on the horticulture program.

"We're hoping that if we can get

started younger out and see the importance of it, we can maybe do some better introducing in that sense as they come up here to Comp," Duff said.

Myers also hopes to get more students interested in horticulture.

"It's nice to see them kind of come around once they get engaged and get to try these things," Myers said.

Upon the tour's completion, the legislators and other guests enjoyed a lunch of crispy chicken drumsticks, seasoned potato wedges and a fruit veggie medley.

Chicopee commemorates Memorial Day at American Legion Post 452



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHICOPEE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES

U.S. Air Force Veteran Al Kendall, who is also the chair of Commission on Disability, salutes alongside a member of the Chicopee High School Junior Air Force ROTC Color Guard after laying a memorial wreath in memory of World War I veterans.

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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CHICOPEE - Residents, community members and more gathered at the American Legion Post 452 on May 27 to commemorate Memorial Day in Chicopee.

Remarks were provided by Mayor John Vieau, Col. Jordan Murphy, maintenance group commander at Westover Air Reserve Base, State Rep. Shirley Arriaga (D-Chicopee), State Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield), State Sen. John Velis (D-Westfield) and Stephanie Shaw, director of Veterans Services.

Louis Breault served as the emcee.

Vieau stressed how we "must pause, honor, reflect and remember the precious lives lost" and "the demonstration of courage by those who served and the strength that they have no doubt shown throughout the most difficult of times is to be commended."

"That is why we must uplift everyone on Memorial Day. We are here today because of those who are not," Vieau said.

Murphy shared how Chicopee and

the base have experienced ultimate sacrifices, relaying the story of January 24, 1963, when a B-52 call sign frosh one zero with eight crewmen departed the base for a routine training mission. At approximately 2:50 p.m., the crew experienced severe turbulence with the vertical stabilizer falling off the plane.

"The aircraft's commander, Lt. Colonel Dan Bully, could no longer control the mighty bomber, and so, he ordered his crew to eject. Shortly thereafter, frosh one-zero crashed into the side of Elephant Mountain, six miles from Greenville, Maine," Murphy said. "Tragically, because of the low altitude and low response times, three of these eight crew members were able to bail out. Two of these eight survived the ordeal, Lt. Colonel Dan Bully and the navigator, Captain Gerald Adler."

Shaw vowed to make sure these ceremonies, including the prior day's candlelight ceremony at Vietnam Veterans Memorial Park, happen every year.

"As long as I'm able to do this work, I promise to do my due diligence to make sure that these ceremonies happen, that we say the names," Shaw said.

YEAR IN REVIEW

JUNE

CCHS celebrates 2024 graduating class

.By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - It was a beautiful day at Mitchell Kuzdzal Field at Chicopee Comprehensive High School on June 7 for the Class of 2024's graduation.

2024 President Nate Deren's speech was musical-themed, encouraging fellow classmates to embrace the things that bring them joy and be themselves.

"Tell everyone your obsessions. Express yourself. Let your loved ones know they are loved. Don't hold everything inside, and don't let the potential embarrassment of your feelings be the thing that holds you back. You will never know when the opportunity passes you. Take a chance on life and don't turn back," Deren said.

Salutatorian Andrew Wodecki encouraged everyone to face the curveballs when they come.

"When faced with this problem, the first instinct of many is to shut down and just stop. But when we do this, whenever



TURLEY PHOTO BY DAVID HENRY

The CCHS Class of 2024 watches as Valedictorian Julia Zielinski reflects on high school during her graduation speech

we give up in the face of difficulty, we not only waste our opportunity, we sell ourselves short of the truly amazing things we can accomplish. No matter what life decides to throw our way, we must endure," Wodecki said.

Valedictorian Julia Zielinski emphasized balance and making time for fun things outside of school.

"When it comes to life balance, we

are all able to decipher what we need more and less of. Even if you haven't done this yet, I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity to do it now to decipher what you need to be happy," Zielinski said.

Principal Andrew Lamothe credited the graduating class for playing "a very large part" in helping the high school's culture bounce back post-pandemic.

"I want to thank you for your hard work, over the entirety of your high school career, from the opposite side of a Zoom link from your kitchen tables and bedrooms in 2020 and 2021, to all of the excitement, energy, positivity and smiles that have filled our hallways more recently. While it hasn't always been easy, I do thank you and so does the larger Comp community," Lamothe said.

Chicopee Academy pays tribute to Class of 2024 graduates



TURLEY PHOTO BY DAVID HENRY

Josilian Ruiz Arroyo shows off her graduation cap and diploma as she stands with her family after graduating from Chicopee Academy on June 5.

.By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - Chicopee Academy celebrated the Class of 2024 in a graduation ceremony at the Chicopee High School auditorium on June 5.

Principal Lori Vaillancourt opened the ceremony by telling the graduates to feel the love, joy and pride surrounding them in this moment.

"You stand on the precipice of a new journey surrounded by the unwavering support of your loved ones. This day belongs to you. Your high school graduation is a culmination of countless humble, yet significant moments. It serves as a testament to the rhythm of life, reminding us that greatness lies not solely in grand achievements, but in the beauty of everyday experiences," Vaillancourt said.

Brian Cain honored Rose Abbott, sharing how she's not afraid to voice her

opinion and advocate for what is right, leading her to graduate a year early.

"You should be very proud of yourself because we are. Rose, you will forever be an example of what can be accomplished if a person sets their mind to it. You have shown not only current students, but future students that the Academy is not the end but truly the beginning to accomplishing your goals," Cain said.

Joanne Borowiec recognized Hesham Al Bakri, citing his kindness.

"Hesham, you are very deserving of a future filled with happiness, adventure and success and I wish you only the best," Borowiec said.

Wendy Belanger honored Brendon Armstead for his determination.

"To the point and most importantly, you stand here today making me so incredibly proud to witness this life-changing achievement and shift into your next chapter," Belanger said.

Shane Bogli, who paid tribute to Jo-

silian Ruiz Arroyo, said she "had the potential to achieve great things."

"Josilian, as you move forward, know that you have the foundation to achieve anything you set your mind to. Your suc-

cess in completing your courses early and graduating ahead of time is just the beginning. Continue to embrace challenges, stay curious and push your boundaries," Bogli said.

Chicopee High School celebrates Class of 2024

.By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - Despite moving indoors, Chicopee High School's graduation ceremony for the Class of 2024 kicked off without a hitch in the gymnasium.

2024 Class President DuWayne Barker reflected on overcoming failure and disappointment, advising his classmates to remember disappointment "is the universe's way of saying 'I've got something better.'"

"So, be patient, have fun and live your life. Remember, tough times never last, but tough people do. I want you all to keep in mind the difficulties we overcame, the lessons we discovered and the connections we made when we look back on our time here," Barker said.

Salutatorian Henry Ryczek credited the high school for helping him succeed.

"Use everything you can from your four years here to make the world a better place. Most importantly, remember to enjoy life and never take anything for granted. You only live once so make the most of it. You will always represent Chicopee High School no matter what happens. We are Chicopee High Pacers and nobody else can top that," Ryczek said.

Valedictorian Khushi Patel advised classmates to persevere and power through the challenges life throws at them.

"I want you to know that no matter the size of obstacles life brings, if you take a step back and take a deep breath,



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

CHS Valedictorian Khushi Patel hugs her mother as she's recognized during Chicopee High School's graduation day on June 6.

you'll find a little spark within you that will give you the energy to fight through," Patel said.

After Barker paid tribute to Principal David Lemke—retiring from the high school—he came on stage to address the graduating class.

"As you go forth, remember that you are not alone. You are part of a community that believes in you, that supports you and that will always be here for you. Your high school experience has given you a foundation of knowledge and a network of relationships that will continue to be valuable throughout your whole life," Lemke said.

BACKYARD from page 4

manageable enough to be swallowed.

Loons swallow fish whole, headfirst. When a loon starts to swallow a large fish, it will first ensure that it is oriented properly, sometimes dropping the fish and picking it up several times until it is properly positioned. Once the fish is aligned so that it is headfirst in the loon's mouth, the loon begins the process of swallowing. Loons have

sharp, rear-facing projections along the roof of their mouths and on their tongues. These projections, called denticles, interlock with the fish's scales, ensuring that the fish is not able to escape back into the water. Loons then press their tongue into the fish and begin to inch it down the throat, into the esophagus. Depending on the size of the fish a loon is trying to eat, it may take a few seconds to several minutes for

the loon to swallow. Once in the esophagus, the fish moves down into the gizzard. A loon may open its mouth and repeatedly extend its neck upward and then contract it back towards its body to help move particularly large fish through the esophagus to the gizzard.

American crow

I saw about five or six American crows foraging on a lawn on my way to church

this cold Sunday morning. With the temperature registering 8 degrees F, the crows had their feathers all puffed up for warmth.

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.

YEAR IN REVIEW

JULY

Center Fresh Farmers Market serves fresh offerings at Wisniewski Park



TURLEY PHOTO BY AMANDA MUNSON

Velvet and Meila St. Amand, the mom and daughter duo of Mahameli, pose with their gel nail designs.

The market runs through Oct. 31

By Amanda Munson
Correspondent

CHICOPEE - Center Fresh Market offers a taste of farm fresh food, unique craft and artisan goods, with ready-to-order food and relaxing music to enjoy.

The market, which kicked off on June 13, is held in the center of Wisniewski Park, abundant with fresh food and distinctive vendors, accessible for families right outside their doorstep.

Vendors include Froebel Art, Hobbit Hollow Herbals, GT Nails, Pearl and Company, DarkDiamond Designs13, Tribe Power Bites and much more. There was also music by Eli Elkus, and food by Cote's Cooks and Fry'd Guys.

Erin Sewell, the farmer's market manager, discussed her unique connection to the Center Fresh Market. Sewell was selling microgreens as a vendor around 2022, when the manager position opened up. It was a smooth transition since Sewell already knew the business and the vendors associated with it.

"I was selling my microgreens in Northampton when the seller of Froebel Art, who was buying my greens for over a year, told me about the position. It's pretty cool how we all connect," Sewell said.

Marketgoers were happy to see the fresh goods that were accessible to them. The market was beaming with life, people were browsing the vendors' stands, eating delicious food, and enjoying the music throughout the market.

Courtney Froebel, a Chicopee resident, is the artist and vendor of Froebel Art. Froebel considers herself a traditional stylist artist.

"I specialize in nostalgic, vibrant, pop culture influenced artwork. As a child of the 90's, my artwork definitely reflects that. What inspires me to do my artwork is I can't not do it. It's in me. I've been doing art since as long as I can remember. It's my passion and there's nothing better than loving what you do," Froebel said.

Sewell encouraged residents to stop by.

"We have an incredibly diverse roster of vendors with something for everyone, in a very welcoming community that needs our support," Sewell said.

Community celebrates summer at 3rd Annual Summer Carnival

CHICOPEE - Seniors, community members and more came together outside the senior center from 3 to 6 p.m. on June 25 for the 3rd Annual Summer Carnival.

Program Coordinator Casey Conroy shared the staff has fun organizing the Summer Carnival along with other events that go on at the senior center.

"It's huge because a lot of people

might not know that these agencies are out there and what services they can provide and it might be a service they've been looking for and need, whether it's for them or a family member or friend," Conroy said. "So, being able to have the agencies come here, our members can learn about them and realize 'Oh, this is something that I can benefit from.'"

Alexandra Maggio, senior director for volunteer engagement at the United Way of Pioneer Valley, was one of the many vendors at the carnival, sharing information about food assistance, their direct-service food pantries in the area and volunteer opportunities.

"About 15% of residents are food-insecure and they need supplemental food assistance. So we saw that they really could meet this need by partnering with the Food Bank to get some food in and we saw that we could meet this need here in Chicopee," Maggio said.

Allyson Grammo, marketing and

sales director at The Arbors, said the turnout for the carnival shows Chicopee "is a really engaged community."

"I think it's a really great opportunity to meet people in our community, tell them about The Arbors and everything that we can provide. We just love giving back and engaging with the wider Chicopee community," Grammo said.

Conroy thanked everyone for coming and for all their support.

"Without the support of the community, we wouldn't be able to have these events. Community support is huge, so thank you everyone!" Conroy said.

AUGUST

National Night Out connects police department and community



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

Members of the Chicopee Police Department pose for a group photo during this year's National Night Out at Sarah Jane Park on Aug. 7, also celebrating 30 years this year.

This year also marks 30 years

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - The community gathered in droves on Aug. 7 for this year's National Night Out at Sarah Jane Park, with this year also marking 30 years.

In his opening remarks, Chief Patrick Major stressed the importance of partnerships.

"The City of Chicopee is fortunate to have such fantastic partners. I know speaking just from the police department, all the agencies that we're involved with that come out to support us and engage with our community to help us form better relationships with the citizens of Chicopee," Major said.

City Council President/Councilor-at-Large Frank Laflamme said how "every year it's getting bigger and bigger."

"I want to thank all the volunteers on it, all the city departments and, also, all the vendors that come out on behalf of their companies or the cities or the Sheriff's Department or wherever to support this super, super organization for the whole city," La-

flamme said.

Capt. Douglas Lambert, who chaired this year's event for the first time, was excited to carry the torch.

"There's been a lot done by my predecessors--that was Capt. Holly Cote, she's done a great job over the last 30 years organizing and building this to what it is today--so, that made it easy to keep that tradition going," Lambert said.

Fire Capt. Katie Collins-Kalbaugh, who also serves on the committee to plan National Night Out, hopes attendees took away that local first responders are here for them.

"That people in Chicopee are here because we care about them, we care about giving them a great night out, we care about their safety, we have programs to keep them safe and we're here for them any time they need us," Collins-Kalbaugh said.

Kimberly Downing, manager at Florence Bank on Memorial Drive in Chicopee, shared the bank was happy to be a sponsor for the event.

"It's just such a great community event. Everybody wants to support the police and the fire and it's great for the children to see the police and be able to experience that," Downing said.

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YEAR IN REVIEW

SEPTEMBER

ValleyBike expanding to Chicopee, new e-bikes coming soon



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow), Jeff Goodmark, regional operations manager for Drop Mobility and director at ValleyBike, State Rep. Shirley Arriaga (D-Chicopee), Mayor John Vieau and Jacob Roberts, operations manager for ValleyBike on behalf of Drop Mobility, celebrate after the ribbon is cut to mark the return of ValleyBike to Chicopee on Sept. 16.

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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CHICOPEE - ValleyBike's expansion into Chicopee, along with new e-bikes on the way soon, was celebrated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony outside city hall on Sept. 16.

The ribbon-cutting comes after ValleyBike Share returned to Western Massachusetts at the end of May after Drop Mobility became the new vendor for the regional program.

Jeff Goodmark, regional operations manager for Drop Mobility and director at ValleyBike, shared how Drop Mobility believes that micro-mobility "can offer that same kind of freedom" that you get from driving a car.

"Micro-mobility has a lot to offer. In order for it to be successful, you not only need the big cities, but also need small cities--blue-collar cities as the mayor mentioned--to be part of this whole organization that makes this work as a system for a large geographic area," Goodmark said.

State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow) said he used the first iteration of bikes

while campaigning in 2022 and they were a convenient way to get around in South Hadley and Granby, expressing excitement for their return.

"I want to thank this company, I want to thank ValleyBike and I want to thank the mayor of Chicopee for always understanding that we need different modes of transportation. Also, green modes of transportation and having an electric bike like this helps out," Oliveira said.

Before the ribbon was cut, Mayor John Vieau thanked the City Council for their support and for helping him understand the importance of the program.

"It takes seed money to get this program up and running and without the support of the City Council, I wouldn't have been able to do this project," Vieau said.

Goodmark encourages the community to take advantage of the program and check out the bikes.

"ValleyBike is back and, hopefully, here to stay and we have a lot of plans for--like I said--what the future of the system is. It's only going to get better. The more people download our app and get into our system, the more data we have to put bikes where people want them," Goodmark said.

Chicopee cheers on at Chicopee Day at the Big E



TURLEY PHOTO BY AMANDA MUNSON

Chicopee Comprehensive High School Colts Cheerleaders walk in the Chicopee Day parade on Sept. 24 and smile away when kicking off the start of the march.

By Amanda Munson
Correspondent

CHICOPEE - The Big E, also known as the biggest party on the East Coast, hosted a "Salute to Chicopee Day" featuring a special parade with Chicopee cheerleaders, high school bands, Civil Air Patrol and a variety of floats.

Huddled together before the parade, Chicopee Comp Colts Varsity Cheer Coaches Victoria Gauthier and Jordan Chmura talked about their involvement with the cheer team and the prep work for an event this size.

"We start each season with tryouts, so they started this season in the summer at cheer camp and building a team. They learn cheers, stunts, stunt sequences and jumps and put it all together for the season

for these events. The uniforms this year are classic uniforms for Chicopee Comprehensive High School, they haven't been used for a little over five years," Chmura said.

"We do a lot of cheering and crowd work practice, how to engage with people, which is really great when we do the parade today. We also haven't been to the Big E for Chicopee Day in five years either," Gauthier said.

After the parade, Chicopee Braves Cheerleaders were still full of energy, excited to see more of what the Big E has to offer. Director of the football and cheer association, Crystal McCollaum, talked about her involvement with the association and her connections within the cheer team.

"We have been wanting to do the pa-

rade for a couple of years for Chicopee Day, so we were on top of it this year to make sure we were here today. It's a great event, great publicity for Chicopee, and shows off our youth programs," McCollaum said.

Layla Ryder, a junior varsity cheerleader for three years and daughter of

Crystal McCollaum, commented that her favorite part about being a cheerleader is competition.

"Performing is my favorite part because everyone is watching. The best part about being part of the Big E was seeing all my friends in the crowd," Ryder said.

OCTOBER

Long-Forgotten 1976 Bicentennial Celebration time capsule unveiled

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
krivers@turley.com

CHICOPEE - Residents, community members, local, state and federal elected officials and staff and many more gathered at city hall on Oct. 2 to open a long-forgotten Bicentennial Celebration time capsule from 1976.

The time capsule, crafted by vocational students at Chicopee Comprehensive High School, was dedicated by the Bicentennial Commission back on December 21, 1976, and placed in a sundial between city hall and the former Central Library, marking the country's Bicentennial Celebration of the American Revolution.

It was supposed to be opened back on July 4, 2000. However, it was forgotten until recently when Gail Boone, secretary for Chicopee Comp's Class of 1976, brought it to City Council President/Councilor-at-Large Frank Laflamme's attention. Laflamme then relayed it to Mayor John Vieau.

"Fast forward to today, in talking with members of the Class of 1976 and Mr. President (Jeff Sattler), we felt that instead of waiting for the 250th anniversary, you know what, time is of the essence," Vieau said.

Following Sattler raising the Bicentennial flag used in the ceremonies back in 1976, everyone headed inside to City Hall Auditorium to await the official unveiling.

Upon the unsealing, many items were discovered including a replica of a golf ball from Spaulding, a gold medallion presented by Chicopee Savings Bank and designed by 1976 Comp Graduate Michelle Boisvert, 1976 yearbooks from Comp and Chicopee High, a gold kielbasa, varying letters, a copy of Edward Bellamy's book "Looking Backward," a film strip from WWLP-22News, three ledgers with signatures from students and teachers from



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

A close-up of the gold medallion, with the design created by Chicopee Comprehensive High School 1976 Graduate Michelle Boisvert. The design was one of 6,000 entries submitted.

all the Chicopee schools, four scrolls with signatures from city residents, a "1776" movie advertisement and a 1976 John Doe tax bill.

Also, copies of varying newspapers along with news clippings and photos of bicentennial events and the 1976 Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade and Chicopee's Colleen, an agenda and results from the Chicopee '76 Operation Pride town meeting, a city manual, a legal requirements newsletter from Uniroyal and two souvenir flags and a stand from the city's Bicentennial Ball, with other items from the Bicentennial celebrations and many more.

Since the unveiling, the items inside the time capsule were on display at the library through November and, then, returned to city hall to be placed in a new time capsule with additional items put in to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution.

The new time capsule will be opened during the 300th anniversary of the American Revolution in 2076.

NOVEMBER

Thousands show up for a 'SPOOKtacular' night!

By Amanda Munson
Correspondent

CHICOPEE - "It may be better than Halloween night!" Mayor John Vieau said, while talking in Szot Park surrounded by thousands of families, trick-or-treaters and local business booths for SPOOKtacular on Oct. 24.

Featuring over 100 vendors distributing candy to children, SPOOKtacular is a testament to the power of a community collaboration, bringing families together, all embodying the spirit of unity and care.

Vieau shared how grateful he was to the community who made this night possible.

"Every year it has grown, people have such a great time. It's a safe way to trick-or-treat, nearly 100 vendors handing out candy, it is the new way to trick-or-treat in Chicopee," Vieau said.

Talking with Tom Therrien of Give Back Services LLC, Therrien was happy to show off his new business and support the city he and his wife grew up in.

"To be part of SPOOKtacular, it's a great event for Chicopee and have the kids



TURLEY PHOTO BY AMANDA MUNSON

Clifford the Big Red Dog, the Joker, a gorilla and their mom were all smiles after receiving more candy and having a fun time at Szot Park during this year's SPOOKtacular event.

See YIR page 12

Sports

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Knights offense too much for Pacers

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

HOLYOKE—Holyoke High School won the previous games against rival Chicopee High by 19 and 20 points. There also wasn't very much suspense in the only meeting of the 2024-25 regular season between the boys' basketball teams.

Led by the duo of senior Calvin Godbolt and junior Jordan King-Perilli, the Purple Knights celebrated an 84-58 non-league victory before a large crowd in their home opener at John "Jin" O'Connor Gymnasium on December 23.

"Chicopee is one of our rivals just like every other team that we play during the regular season," said Holyoke head coach Juan Maldonado. "We're very happy that we were able to win tonight's game."

Overall, it was the sixth time that the Purple Knights defeated the Pacers on the hardwood since the beginning of the 2017-18 regular season.

While Maldonado and Chicopee head coach Jordan Miller matched wits in a varsity game for the first time, they've known each other for their entire lives.

Coach Miller and I are like brothers," Maldonado said. "Our parents have known each other for a very long time, and we grew



Cyair Charles goes for the free throw.



Jonah Mateo drives toward the hoop.



Jayanthony Serrano extends for the shot.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY GREGORY A. SCIBELLI

up together. Jordan's brother, Gavin, is the boys' varsity basketball coach at Chicopee Comp. We're very close, and it's always very special whenever we do play against them."

Jordan Miller, who had been the Pacers JV boys' basketball coach for the past eight years, replaced Craig Smith as the varsity

basketball coach. Smith retired from coaching at the end of last season.

"This rivalry game isn't as big as it should be right now. When we're finally able to beat Holyoke, it'll become a much bigger game," Miller said. "Juan and I played basketball together when we were younger. I really

wish that we could face them again during the regular season."

Following the contest, the Purple Knights had a 2-0 overall record. They posted a 76-64 win at the Springfield International Charter School in the season opener a week earlier.

The Pacers saw their overall record fall to 1-4. They defeated

archrival Chicopee Comp, 51-50, at the Pioneer Valley Tip-off held at the UMass Mullins Center on December 15.

Godbolt, who scored a game-high 30 points, and King-Perilli (23 points) combined to make 12 of the Purple Knights 15 3-pointers in the home opener.

See PACERS page 11



Colts raise record to 3-3

CHICOPEE – Thanks to a comeback on the road, Chicopee Comprehensive, which trailed by 25 points at halftime, came all the back to defeated Taconic 67-65 on Friday, Dec. 27. The win raised Comp's overall record to 3-3. In the big comeback win, Comp's Brody Fay led the team with 21 points. Francis Jordan 16 points and Garrett Gauthier had 14 points. Comp next faces East Longmeadow on Jan. 6 at 7 p.m.

TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM

Francis Jordan shoots in traffic during recent action in December.



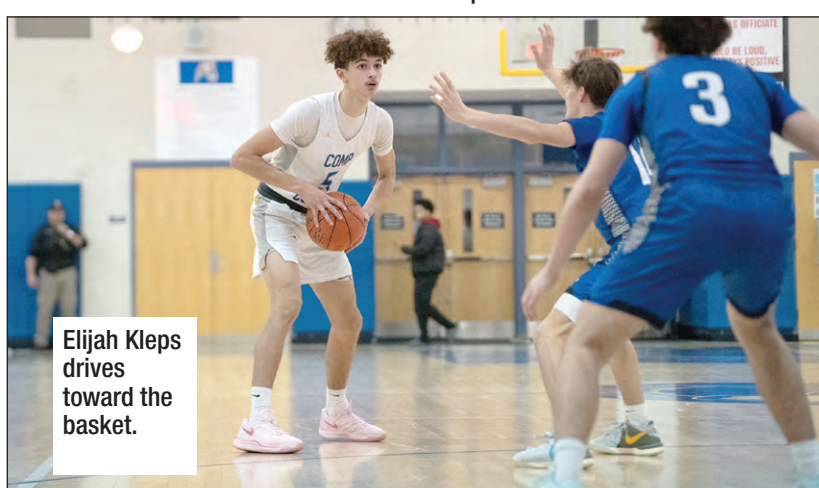
Elijah Kleps elevates before making a pass.



Modesto Galindrez takes a three-point shot.



Brody Fay heads toward the hoop.



Elijah Kleps drives toward the basket.

Longtime referee Lavoie wins MIAA award

LUDLOW – Last month, long-time referee Joe Lavoie was recognized as the MIAA Football Official of the Year.

According to information provided, Lavoie joined the Western Mass Football Officials Association (WMFOA) in 1974 (51 years) as a junior at AIC in Springfield, MA.



Referee Joe Lavoie

Lavoie was a 3-year starter for Milt Piepul's 8-1 ('75) AIC Yellowjackets. He was selected All-New England Honorable Mention by the AP and Boston Herald ('75), and selected to the ECAC team of the week versus Northeastern University.

After college, Lavoie taught and coached football in Ludlow for Steve Marino and subsequently in Agawam for Roger LeClerc, before joining private industry as a computer systems programmer/analyst. Retired from MassMutual with 30-plus years of service.

See LAVOIE page 11

Isles outlast T-Birds in 7-5 track meet

SPRINGFIELD — The Springfield Thunderbirds (13-13-2-1) could not escape a furious push by the Bridgeport Islanders (7-19-2-2) in a high-flying 7-5 contest on Saturday night inside the MassMutual Center.

The Islanders tried to spoil the T-Birds debut for rookie netminder Will Cranley when Liam Foudy opened the scoring on a rebound to the goaltender's right at 7:36.

Springfield would be tested after the Islanders went to a power play at the 13:04 mark, but captain Matthew Peca took matters into his own hands to change the tide. After skating out of his zone with possession, he challenged a forward wide on the left side before surprising Henrik Tikkanen with a short-side snapper to tie the score, 1-1, on Springfield's second shorthanded tally of the season. Peca's tally was his team-leading 12th of the campaign and second in as many nights.

Peca was in the middle of things again just 5:04 later, weaving into the offensive end to create a 2-on-1 outnumbered attack. This time, Peca played the role of playmaker, laying a perfect pass to the blade of Matt Luff in the right circle. With no wasted movement, Luff one-timed it past a sliding Tikkanen, giving Springfield the 2-1 lead with just 1:26 left in the frame. Peca's assist was his 100th as a member of the T-Birds, making him the first player in club history to hit the 100-assist plateau.

The Islanders gave a glimpse of what was to follow in the middle period when Tyce Thompson one-timed a slapper off the post and off Cranley to tie the game, 2-2, at 3:15 of the second period, as the T-Birds were scrambling to get back into position.

The T-Birds' special teams had the next notable moment just 2:09 later, as Marcus Sylvegard beautifully spotted Luff on a pass from the left corner to the top of

the crease, allowing the veteran winger a tap-in for his second of the night to restore the Springfield lead, 3-2, at 5:24.

After a rare stretch of scoreless hockey on this evening, the Islanders found their way to a tie score again when Matt Maggio surprised Cranley with a quick wrister from the left circle off a setup from Grant Hutton, evening the game, 3-3, at 14:20.

Before the T-Birds could escape the onslaught, the Islanders got their second lead of the night at 19:06, when a poor Springfield line change set up a 3-on-2 for Bridgeport. Gemel Smith neatly left a puck for Foudy near the crease, and the veteran winger had an open net for his second of the night and a 4-3 Islanders lead after 40 minutes.

Midway through what had been a quiet third period, the T-Birds power play connected for a second time as Sylvegard deflected an attempt from Aleksanteri

Kaskimaki over Tikkanen's shoulder, and the game was tied again, 4-4, at 10:04 of the third.

Despite their scrappiness to get back even, the T-Birds could not salvage a point on this night, and Maggio capped his four-point night with a corner-picking wrister at 16:20, which gave Bridgeport a 5-4 lead. Cole Bardreau added an empty-net tally at 18:45 to push the lead to 6-4.

That Bardreau tally proved pivotal when Hunter Skinner found the net from the right side with 25 seconds to play, trimming the margin back to 6-5. Ultimately, however, the T-Birds ran out of time, and with the clock about to expire, Marc Gattcomb flung a clearing effort into the empty cage to round out the scoring. Cranley finished his T-Birds debut with 35 saves, while Tikkanen escaped with his first win in six tries with 31 stops.

Railers fall to Thunder in first half home finale

WORCESTER — The Railers lost 7-3 loss to the Adirondack Thunder on Sunday afternoon to close out the first half of the 2024-25 home schedule.

Worcester went into the second period with the score tied, 1-1. The Railers then allowed four goals in a little less than seven minutes starting at 3:53 and their afternoon was over.

Coach Nick Tuzzolino refused to place the blame for the defeat on Bullion's shoulders when asked if it was his fault.

"I would never say that in that light," Tuzzolino said. "We've got to be good in front of him and could have been better. Could have blocked a couple of those shots. I'm sure he has his own thoughts on those goals but we're a team."

Worcester got two goals from Jordan Kaplan and one from Griffin Lough-

lan. Anthony Repaci assisted on all three goals. Repaci's historic season continues unabated. He extended his points streak to seven straight games. He is 3-10-13 during the streak.

The game was his 193rd for Worcester, passing Barry Almeida as the all-time franchise leader in that category. The assists give him 90 in a Worcester uniform, tied with Almeida on that list. They are tied for fourth among all Worcester pro players with Tom Cavanagh of the Sharks next at 92.

The Railers were 2 for 5 on the power play and are among the league leaders in that category. They have at least one power play goal in seven straight games. That ties a team record set in February of 2022.

"That's probably the most frustrating

thing," Tuzzolino said. "It's all those little pieces. We just have to find the right piece."

Loughran gave Worcester an early lead at just 2:36 of the first period. Repaci found his linemate all alone at the bottom of the left circle and Loughran made no mistake burying a 15-footer.

It was 1-1 after 20 minutes, then the Railers hit an iceberg.

"I think we got confidence early," Tuzzolino said, "then some of those goals they scored killed our confidence, and confidence is the easiest thing to lose and the hardest to get back."

Ryan Francis was 2-3-5 to pace the Adirondack offense. Josh Filmon, Ryan Wheeler, Alex Young, Grant Loven and Dylan Wendt had the other Thunder goals.

LAVOIE from page 10

He was a 1971 graduate of Ludlow High School playing football for Chick Patullo and baseball for Bill Mullins.

In high school, he was selected All-Suburban League and All-Western-Mass as a tri-captain for Chick Patullo, Jim Cavallo, Dave Dzuira, and Joe Andreis, who instilled the love of football, hard work, and fair play into their teams.

As an official, he was elected president of the WMFOA in 1993, and started and taught a first, second, third-year official's training class, and game sign-in requirement for new officials to attend pre-games and work the chains in varsity games. That process is still in effect today. In 1994, amended the training classes to have a separate class for first-year officials and started instructing the second and third-year officials' class, and still instruct that class today.

Among his many accomplishments, he officiated numerous MIAA playoff and championship games around the state and at Gillette Stadium. He joined the Western Mass Basketball Officials Association in 1980, was elected board President in 2013, subsequently elected sec-treasurer from 2015-2017. He still officiates basketball games.

Lavoie earned a CAGS from Springfield College, an MS in management from RPI Hartford, and an MBA from Western New England College. He has taught business and computer systems courses at HCC for over 25 years.

Lavoie has been married to high school sweetheart, Edna (Robertson) Lavoie, for over 45 years, and has three wonderful sons. Two sons live and work in Boston, and one son lives in Longmeadow and is an attorney in Springfield.

PACERS from page 10

"We didn't make very many 3-pointers in our first game," Maldonado said. "We do have a couple of very good shooters, and they were making shots in tonight's game."

With the help of several turnovers leading to lay-ups, the Purple Knights raced out an 8-0 lead less than three minutes into the first quarter.

"We started off very slowly in tonight's game," Miller said. "We just couldn't adjust to their pressure defense and could never catchup."

In the middle of the opening quarter, a foul-line jumper from Chicopee junior Dom Garcia (9 points) did close the gap to 10-6.

The Pacers' three double digits scorers were senior Jovan Gollman (13 points), sophomore Brandon Thomas (11 points), and senior Jayanothy Serrano (10 points).

Senior Charles Cyair also added seven points for the visiting team.

Holyoke managed to build a 10-point lead (16-6) following a fast-break lay-up from junior Aden Cabrera, who netted six of his 11 points during the first eight minutes of the contest.

Chicopee did slice their deficit to 16-15 after reeling off the next nine points during the final two minutes of the first quarter. Charles and Thomas began the comeback run with an inside hoop and a lay-up. Then Serrano hit a runner in the lane before burying a 3-pointer from the right side.

The visitors couldn't take the lead as senior Jacob Andujar (6 points) made a 3-pointer from the top of the key, which jump started an impressive 21-3 Holyoke run.

During the first four minutes of the second stanza, two 3-pointers from Godbolt and three more long bombs from King-Perilli helped the Purple



Jovan Gollman tries to dribble around an opponent.

Knights build a 37-18 lead.

Sophomore Michael Medina (3 points) joined in the fun by sinking another 3-pointer which gave Holyoke a commanding 41-21 lead with 3:15 left in the first half.

"We made a few 3-pointers during the second quarter, which helped us build a large halftime lead," Maldonado said. "I'm hoping to we can continue to play well the rest of the regular season."

Chicopee responded with a 7-2 spurt, but they were trailing 46-28 at halftime.

The Purple Knights made four more 3-pointers during the third quarter which added nine points to their lead. Three of the four shots from behind the three-point line were made by Godbolt. He made back-to-back treys with less than two minutes remaining in the quar-



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Rafael Aviles gets to the foul line.

ter giving the home team a commanding 71-41 advantage.

Holyoke's largest lead was 81-44 with 5:25 remaining in the contest following a tip in basket by King-Perilli.

With both team reserve players on the court, Chicopee finished the game with a 14-3 run, but the outcome had already been decided by that point.

The two basketball teams could face each other again in the Western Mass tournament or the Division 2 state tournament.



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YEAR IN REVIEW

YIR from page 9

come out and be able to have a safe space to trick-or-treat," Therrien said.

State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow) talked about his experience coming to SPOOKtacular for the very first time.

"What's nice about this event is the Chicopee community comes together, whether it's public safety or the library, all come together providing free fun for the community. You can tell this event is successful by the never-ending line trying to

get into the park," Oliveira said.

Bri Jackson, farm to school coordinator of Chicopee Fresh, talked being able to provide free food for the event.

"We come to community events because it's awesome recognition for us with our truck and seeing the whole family, along with the kids we usually see. Every year it gets better and better, I keep seeing the little ride along the train drive by, I feel the flow is better every year. It's great to see everybody!" Jackson said.

well. Someday your own brothers, sisters, friends might need and want to be part of your haven. You must keep the pathway open for them as well," Vann said.

After the ribbon was cut, Reed was feeling many emotions.

"It's been a long process, kind of from

conceptual through design through construction to today," Reed said. "But, being able to welcome our teens into the building for the first time today for the first day of official programming here, it's a great feeling. Just overcome with emotion."

Chicopee Lodge of Elks #1849 honors veterans



SUBMITTED PHOTOS DENISE WESSIG

CHICOPEE – The Chicopee Lodge of Elks #1849 honored the city's veterans on Nov. 10 with a Veterans Dinner. The event chairman was Dolly Asselin and comprised of a Color Guard, a dinner of meatloaf, mashed potatoes and vegetables, with music performed by Richie Mitnik and a raffle.

Boys & Girls Club of Chicopee celebrates opening of Haven Teen Center



Turley photos by Kristin Rivers

State Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow), teen members of the Boys & Girls Club of Chicopee, Jason Reed, executive director of the Boys & Girls Club of Chicopee, Kevin Vann, chair of the Haven Teen Center Campaign Committee, Club Members Cody and Nevaeh, Mayor John Vieau, State Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield), State Sen. John Velis (D-Westfield) and Mike Vogel, president of the Boys & Girls Club of Chicopee Board of Directors, get ready to cut the ribbon for the grand opening of Haven Teen Center on Nov. 1.

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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CHICOPEE - The Boys & Girls Club of Chicopee cut the ribbon on Nov. 1 to mark the official grand opening of Haven Teen Center.

The new teen center was designed with input from the teens and will offer programming for workforce readiness, nutrition and well-being and more, with numerous spaces inside including a Zen Room, a Digital Media Lab which also includes a recording booth and other multimedia tools, classroom spaces, a gaming den, a full kitchen, a large gathering space and much more.

Executive Director Jason Reed said,

"Today, we begin a new chapter in the history of this organization."

"Now, for the first time, our teen members will have the dedicated space they so deserve. A space designed by them and for them. A space to learn and grow and a space that is a true haven," Reed said.

Mike Vogel, president of the Boys & Girls Club of Chicopee Board of Directors, shared when Reed first presented the idea to the Board of Directors two years ago, they were "quick to agree that the project was a necessary one."

Kevin Vann, chair of the Haven Teen Center Campaign Committee, advised teens to stay focused on the pathway journey at the teen center.

"The Haven is here to help you and you are here to help other members as

DECEMBER

Chicopee celebrates the Christmas season at tree lighting



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

A group photo of The Grinch, Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus smiling and waving at the Chicopee Tree Lighting event on Dec. 6.

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - Bitter cold temperatures didn't stop the community from coming to city hall on Dec. 6 for this year's Annual Tree Lighting.

Mayor John Vieau declared it "a beautiful night in Chicopee as we kick off the holiday season with Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus."

"I want to wish you all a Merry Christmas. We're all very thankful for what we have and I wish you all a very happy, healthy and prosperous New Year and I'm excited about the holiday season," Vieau said.

After a countdown from 10, the tree and lights around city hall were lit, also debuting a custom-made star topper from Facilities Department Technicians Aiden Thayer and George Mabb.

Outside city hall, Mrs. Claus couldn't have been happier to be kicking off Christmas in Chicopee.

"To spread the joy, the love, the happiness, be together as a family, be united

and above all, keep the holiday spirit going and teaching our kids growing up that we are one family and that we can celebrate and keep community and love always," she said.

Victoria Narvaez, who sang "O Holy Night" inside City Hall Auditorium, shared it was her second year taking part in the tree lighting.

"I think it's just a fun time for everyone because they get to spend time with people and snacks and take pictures and enjoy the music," Narvaez said.

Noah Trainor and Geoffrey Gleason, NHS members at Chicopee Comprehensive High School, handed out cookies made by the high school's Culinary Club to attendees and helped direct people inside.

"Everyone should definitely try in the future to come out here because it's nice. Everyone's in a good mood. There's this free stuff," Trainor said.

"I haven't seen a lot of friends in a while, so it's a nice meetup spot for you to have. You just get to meet up with people you haven't seen in a while, just get food, music, have a nice fun time," Gleason said.

City Council approves licenses for Burnett Road truck stop

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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CHICOPEE – The City Council approved two licenses for the truck stop and travel center on Burnett Road on Dec. 17.

The controversial approval comes after two 10-3 decisions to for an amended fuel storage license from Chicopee Inn, Inc. and a service station license from Pilot Travel Centers LLC for 357 Burnett Road.

There was also an 8-5 vote to not send the items back to the License Com-

mittee for another public hearing. The night before, the License Committee voted 2-2, with one abstention, creating an unfavorable report.

City residents speaking for and against the project took about two hours to complete during public input, and during council discussion, Ward 6 Councilor Samuel Shumsky addressed several things, including his upbringing in the Burnett Road area, the ongoing problems with traffic and the threats and harassment that took place over the last two months.

See YIR page 13



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

This vacant lot at 357 Burnett Road in Chicopee, where a controversial truck stop and travel center will be located following City Council approval on Dec. 17.

YIR from page 12

Shumsky voted against the development.

“This should not happen and, quite frankly, the fact that it did happen is pretty concerning and I’m going to spend the remainder of my term trying to figure out ways that we can reunify the city and bring civility and respectful dialogue back to a conversation because this should never happen again,” Shumsky said. “Quite frankly, I’m disheartened and just utterly disgusted at the way this was all brought about.”

After giving it a lot of thought, Councilor-at-Large Tim Wagner said he’d vote in favor “because what we’ve done here over the last several years is show that we’re unfriendly to any business opportunity and we’ve discouraged

further business development within the community.”

“I really am just sad about this whole process though. I wish it could have been done in a more respectful and open manner. I’m going to vote for it, I think. I’m really just sad that this is what it’s come to in Chicopee,” Wagner said.

Ward 9 Councilor Mary Beth Costello called it a teachable moment, learning from the dialogue that “taxes are very, very important” and sometimes get taken for granted.

“What I did learn through the residents and through the business community is we’re going to have to do better at how we do our taxes and how we set our tax rates, and a lot of calls that I got was about how do you spend your money and can you do better,” Costello said.

Brightside’s Toy Drive and Motorcycle Run supports Lorraine’s Soup Kitchen



TURLEY PHOTO BY AMANDA MUNSON

From the left: Mayor John Vieau, Kim Caisse, executive director of Lorraine’s Soup Kitchen & Pantry, and Bruce Rivest with volunteers pose in front of the shopping carts that are full of toys.

By Amanda Munson
Correspondent

CHICOPEE - To celebrate the season of giving back, Event Organizer and President of ‘Hope for the Holidays’ Bruce Rivest organized an annual toy drive and motorcycle run to support Lorraine’s Soup Kitchen & Pantry on Dec. 21.

Rivest reached out to Executive Director Kim Caisse when he saw on Facebook that Lorraine’s was in need of teenagers’ toys, and they delivered more than Caisse ever expected.

“I had posted on Facebook that we were looking for teen gifts because we didn’t have a lot last week, and the very next day I was here putting gifts together for what we did have when Bruce called me saying ‘I saw your post and we are going to help you’. My response was that he already helped us because we benefited from their toy drive already, but he was adamant that since we didn’t get teen stuff that he was going to help. He said he had a meeting with some of the members

and motorcycle groups and we’re going to come together and do a small run for you. I told him he doesn’t have to do it and his response was, ‘Too late, we are already doing it,’” Caisse said.

Rivest felt it was his duty to give back more to the community.

“We can see the distress in a lot of the organizations that need help and when we didn’t have the normal donation that we usually make to Lorraine’s, we put on this second event in a week’s time and tried to get as many toys together as we could,” Rivest said.

Rivest talked about the moment he knew this work was meant for him.

“When I first started doing this, we had an interview with a couple of clinicians from Brightside, and they told me a story of a five-year-old child who never experienced Christmas. As far as I’m concerned, no child should be left behind and we try to do the best we can every year to make sure that doesn’t happen,” Rivest said.

RiverMills celebrates holidays with Bright Nights adventure



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CITY OF CHICOPEE MAYOR’S OFFICE

CHICOPEE - Over two magical nights, the city of Chicopee celebrated with the community, bringing smiles, laughter, and holiday cheer to 300 happy seniors for this year’s Bright Nights for Seniors event.

The event featured a delightful spaghetti dinner sponsored by the Mayor’s Office and made possible thanks to the generous donations of:

Cebula Electronics, Chicopee Electric Light, Florence Bank, MAC Massachusetts, JimBuddy’s, Dunkin’, Holyoke Medical Center, Chicopee Moose Lodge 1849/Chapter 1489, The Polish National Credit Union, PeoplesBank, Westfield Bank, Republic Services, METRO Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram, Texas Roadhouse-Springfield and Walmart.

The Christmas tree gift card raffle giveaways sponsored by Beauty Battles Lounge, Gyro Express, Sabor Latino Restaurant, House of Koolada’s, Roger’s Place, Colonial Cafe’, Key Food Marketplace, Island Spice, Julie Nails, Faded Barber Lounge, Green Mountain Electric Supply, The Munich Haus Restaurant and Girl Time Nail’s.

Your contributions made this event a huge success, creating moments our seniors will cherish forever.

Special thanks to the Chicopee Police Department for safely escorting our seniors on a round trip and to King Gray Coach Lines Charters for providing comfort and care during their travels. A big shoutout to the Chicopee Pacer Athletics Chicopee High School Track Team for their outstanding help throughout the



event.

And of course, a magical appearance by Santa and Mrs. Claus brought extra holiday spirit and smiles to everyone in attendance!

We’re deeply grateful for the tireless efforts of the Mayor’s Office staff, the Council on Aging staff, and the Friends of RiverMills Center Chicopee Council on Aging for organizing this beautiful event.

Bright Nights 2024 was a heartwarming success, all thanks to the amazing support and love from our community. Here’s to many more moments like these!



This paper publishes birth, engagement, wedding and significant anniversary announcements free of charge. Simply log on to our web site, choose the paper you want the announcement to appear in, then use our SUBMISSION link to email your information.





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Nonmedical home care can provide support to those with Alzheimer's

Certified dementia care professionals share safety, support strategies for Alzheimer's Awareness Month

CHESHIRE, CT -- There are currently more than 6 million Americans living with Alzheimer's Disease with that number expected to increase to 13.8 million by 2060. While some families may opt for care at a facility, Connecticut-based nonmedical home care agency Assisted Living Services, Inc. has developed new solutions in combination with technological devices to ensure the right supportive care at home.

"We know from experience that an Alzheimer's diagnosis and other memory related disorders pose real challenges for the entire family," explains Mario D'Aquila, MBA, Chief Operating Officer of Assisted Living Services, Inc. and Senior VP of Assisted Living Technologies, Inc. "It may seem overwhelming, but we can offer support since more than half of our clients have some degree of dementia or memory impairment.

D'Aquila notes that if families want to keep their loved one living at home, they need to be prepared for the responsibilities, which include managing medications, monitoring every-day activities, ensuring home safety, and addressing loneliness and isolation.

First on the list of priorities is being evaluated by your primary care physician or specialist. Although there is no cure for Alzheimer's, there are new medications that can slow progression and lessen symptoms. Accordingly, Alzheimer's patients in mild to moderate stages of the disease can significantly improve medication compliance with today's technology. Automated medication dispensers provide both a visual and auditory alert and can even send a call to the patient as a reminder, as well as notify caregivers if a regimen is not being followed. ALS has experienced compliance near 95% with clients across Connecticut who use these dispensers that typically cost only \$2 per day.

"Families should partner with a trusted provider who can create a strong plan for day-to-day care management and ensure it is continually implemented," said D'Aquila. "Even better, is an agency like ALS that has management staff who are Certified Dementia Care Practitioners (CDP®)."

Administered through the National Council of Certified Dementia Care Practitioners, the full-day 8-hour CDP® certification represents that the front line management staff have received comprehensive knowledge in the area of dementia care and completed the Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Care course/seminar. The CDP® commits to ongoing professional development and re-certifi-

cation every two years. The certification reflects a deep personal commitment to maintaining the dementia patient's quality of life physically, emotionally and socially.

Although the agency provides solely nonmedical care, it has focused on staff development that will ensure appropriate support from its team of Homemakers that assist clients with personal care - to its Live-in Companions that provide around-the-clock support. Caregivers receive approximately two hours of training and education on how to work with individuals experiencing memory difficulties due to Alzheimer's or Dementia related disorders. This includes reading materials, testing, and time for dialog with instructor(s). They also benefit from supervisors that have the CDP training to help with managing care as problems arise.

In addition to quality of care, families also need to compare the cost of a facility versus in-home care. If the client qualifies for Medicaid, they may be eligible for the CT Homecare Program for Elders which pays for in home care. This program can benefit those with cognitive disabilities and memory impairment brought on by Alzheimer's Disease, Parkinson's Disease and other dementia related disorders. ALS is also a credentialled provider of the CT Homecare Program for Elders which also requires specific training for staff.

In conjunction with personal care, the sister company of ALS, Assisted Living Technologies, Inc., offers a wide variety of primarily wireless, sensor-based technologies for a second layer of security. Stovetop fire prevention devices, personal body worn GPS locators, automatic fall detection sensors, video-visit systems and more provide constant monitoring.

"Wandering is one of the most dangerous behaviors of Alzheimer's and may happen earlier in the disease than families expect," said D'Aquila. "Today's technology allows us to set up a virtual safety net inside and outside a home to ensure the wellbeing of a loved one."

D'Aquila explains that discreet wireless sensors placed throughout a home can detect motion, activity from room-to-room, exiting, sleep patterns, and even moisture to help caregivers address an issue before it leads to something more serious.

D'Aquila encourages family caregivers to visit the ALT Technology Arts Gallery in Cheshire to view and experience all of the latest devices that can assist with every aspect of caring for an Alzheimer's patient. All of the products are available online as well.

"Families need to know that they don't have to go it alone when caring for a loved one," concluded D'Aquila. "There are countless resources and support to ease the stress."

PUBLIC NOTICES

SALE OF MOTOR VEHICLES

Under G.L. c.255 Sec. 39A

Notice is hereby given by Interstate Towing, Inc. pursuant to the provisions of G.L. c. 255, section 39A, that on January 17, 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.

2002 Saturn SL1
VIN: 1G8ZH5286Z2197040
Jose Vega Custodio
31 Davidson St.
Springfield, MA 01108

2014 Volkswagen Beetle Turbo
VIN: 3VWV77AT0EM624879
Shannon Scott
81Conz St., Apt. 415
Northampton, MA 01060

2006 Chevrolet Trailblazer
VIN: 1GNDT13S962193829
Jonathan H Mikula
61 Pachaug River Dr.
Jewett City, CT 06351

1999 Toyota Carolla Ve/CE/Le
VIN: 2T1BR12E8XC157787
Josephine Reyes - Rodriguez

10 Colony Rd., Apt. 2A
West Springfield, MA 01089

2019 Ram 1500 Classic Tradesman
VIN: 1C6RR7FG9KS620547
Pat McDonagh
1674 W Taylor St.
Chicago, IL 60612

01/03, 01/10, 01/17/2025

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 10, 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.

1999 Honda Accord LX
VIN: 1HGCG554XXA086747
Luis Beltran
16 Middle St., Apt. 703
Lowell, MA 01852

2015 Jeep Cherokee Limited
VIN: 1C4PJMDB0FW704073
Natalie Parer
227 West Franklin St.

Holyoke, MA 01040

2005 Honda Accord Ex
VIN: 1HGCM56725A081623
Malcolm Tiggett
170 Sisson Ave., Apt. 16
Hartford, CT 06105

2009 Honda Fit
VIN: JHMGE88299S015665
Lis Thomas
91 Elm St., Apt. 307
Westfield, MA 01085

2011 Audi A4
VIN: WAUFAFLXBN007685
Damien Hart
27 Bissell St.
Springfield, MA 01119

12/27/2024, 01/03, 01/10/2025

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 3, 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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VIN: JNKBV61F38M275462
Derek Mark Frakes
10 Silver Shell Beach Dr.
Fairhaven, MA 02719

2011 Honda Fit Sport
VIN: JHMGE8H5XBC006595
Emily Tobler
175 1st St., Apt. 1R
Pittsfield, MA 01201

2017 Ford Edge SEL
VIN: 2FMPK4J92HBC37396
Trisha Bayrouy
361 Pleasant St.
Southbridge, MA 01550

2015 Subaru Impreza Premium
Jeremiah Carpenter
VIN: JF1GJAC63FH002696
124 North St.
Ware, MA 01082

2011 Toyota Highlander
VIN: 5TDBK3EH7BS063745
Ivette Ortiz Mauras
14 Riverview Pl., Apt. 3
Chicopee, MA 01013

2006 Suzuki Rm -Z250K
VIN: JKSXCPC26A016277
Sean Barrett
30 B Morgan Ave.
Westfield, MA 01085

2010 Toyota Prius
VIN: JTDKN3DU5A0034526
Kevin Kelly
118 Draper St.
Springfield, MA 01108

12/20, 12/27/2024, 01/03/2025

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS THE TRIAL COURT HAMPDEN, Div.

Probate & Family Court Dept.

HD24E0046PP
To Norman R. Langlois, II, of Chicopee, Hampden County, and to all other persons interested.

A petition has been presented to said Court by Elysia M. Pete, of Chicopee, Hampden County, representing that they hold as joint

tenants in an undivided part or share of land lying in Chicopee, in the County of Hampden, setting forth that they desire that all of said land may be sold at private sale or public auction for not less than Three Hundred Four Thousand (\$304,000.00) Dollars, and praying that partition may be made of all the land aforesaid according to law, and to that end that a commissioner be appointed to make such partition and be ordered to make sale and conveyance of all, or any part of said land which the Court finds cannot be advantageously divided either at private sale or public auction, and be ordered to distribute the net proceeds thereof after full adjudication of the equitable claims contained in said petition and supplemental memorandum filed with the Court.

If you desire to object thereto, you or your attorney, should file a written appearance in said Court at Springfield before ten o'clock in the forenoon on the **fourth day of February 2025**, the return day of this citation.

Witness, BARBARA M. HYLAND, Esquire, First Justice of said Court, this 4th day of December 2024.

Rosemary A. Saccomani,
Register
12/20, 12/27/2024, 01/03/2025

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Probate and Family Court

Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758

Docket No. HD24C0406CA

In the matter of: Miriam Adorno Rosado aka: Female Adorno CITATION ON PETITION TO CHANGE NAME

A Petition to Change Name of Adult has been filed by **Miriam Adorno Rosado aka: Female Adorno of Chicopee, MA** requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:

Miriam Adorno IMPORTANT NOTICE

Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: **Hampden Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 01/27/2025.**

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

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

Date: December 30, 2024
Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
01/03/2025



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

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Chicopee Public Library hosts events for Kids and Families

CHICOPEE - Each month the Chicopee Public Library hosts a variety of free programs for children 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 2025.

Little Movers will be held in the children's program room on Fridays Jan. 17 and 31 at 11 a.m. Babies crawling to 24 months and their caregivers are invited to join us for free play followed by circle time exploring songs, fingerplays and movement!

Sensory Play Saturday will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, Jan. 4. Come let your babies socialize and explore sensory play! We will have our play area set up with some sensory activities and other play opportunities. For babies 0-24 months and their caregivers.

Saturday Playgroup will be held at 1 p.m. on Saturdays, Jan. 4, 11, 18, and 25. Come play at the library! The playspace will be open for families with kids of all ages to meet up and play.

This month, the Children's Room is starting a new program for two year olds and their caregivers called **Terrific Twos**. This program includes a short storytime and a rotating selection of crafts and activities. No registration is required. This program is just for 2-year-olds and their caregivers. It will be on Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m., Jan. 7 and 21.

On Wednesdays Jan. 8 and 22 at 10:30 a.m. in the community room, the library will have a **Little Kid Dance Party** geared for kids five and under and their caregivers. Older kids are welcome, as well. There will be songs, dancing and big movement! This is a new day for this program, which was previously held on Tuesdays.

Stop by for a **Kids Room Craft** on Tuesday, Jan. 14 at 4 p.m.

Storytime will be held in the children's program room on Wednesdays Jan. 15 and 29 at 10:30 a.m. Storytime is based loosely around the early childhood literacy skills: sing, talk, read, write and play. We read books, sing and move, and do a craft or activity. Recommended for

preschool aged kids.

Come play a few rounds of **BINGO** for a chance to win some family DVDs on Thursday, Jan. 16 at 4 p.m. All ages welcome, no registration required.

The library will host a **Meet-up for Homeschooling Families** on Thursday, Jan. 23 at 11 a.m. Homeschooling families can meet each other and hang out. Chicopee's point person for AHEM (Advocates for Home Education in MA) will be there. An activity will be provided.

Read to a Dog will return on Feb. 5!

The library will also offer some programs for teens in January. All teen programs are for middle and high school students.

Teen Throwback Thursday will be on Thursday, Jan. 9 at 2:30 p.m. Teens are invited for an afternoon full of "kid" programming that is just for teens! Enjoy playtime with foam blocks, an exciting craft, and even the big parachute!

The **Anime Club** will meet on Wednesday, Jan. 15 from 3 to 4:30 p.m. to discuss anime fandom, watch episodes, make crafts and do other ac-

tivities. This month's program theme is Isekai, also known as "That Time Anime Club Got Reincarnated with a Really Long Title."

The library is hosting a **Hands-Only CPR Class** offered by The Red Cross on Wednesday, Jan. 22 with two sessions, 3:30 and 4:30. This free course teaches people how to perform hands-only CPR. CPR training certification is not provided through this course. This program is open to teens and adults. Registration is required. Contact the Reference Department to sign up.

The library will host a **Breaker Space** for teens on Wednesday, Jan. 29 at 3 p.m. Ever wonder what the inside of a computer looks like or how a VHS tape works? The best way to find out is by taking them apart with your own hands! (And of course putting them back together again afterwards!) Registration is required, contact the Children's Room to sign up!

For more information about the library and all of the upcoming events, visit www.chicopeepubliclibrary.org.

Medicare 101

CHICOPEE - The Council on Aging will offer the program "Medicare 101" on Tuesday, Jan. 14 at 10 a.m. at Chicopee Council on Aging's RiverMills Center, 5 West Main St.

Greg Keochakian, owner of Medicare Counselors, will be at RiverMills for this Medicare 101 program. This program will provide clear, step-by-step guidance on how to navigate Medicare. This program will cover enrollment, eligibility, costs and more to help members choose the right coverage for their needs. You must register in advance.

A Life with Meaning and Purpose

CHICOPEE - The Council on Aging will offer the program "A Life with Meaning and Purpose" on Wednesday, Jan. 8 at 12:30 p.m. at Chicopee Council on Aging's RiverMills Center, 5 West Main St.

Join Henry Quinlan, owner of Omni Publishing, as he chats with you about how to build a life after retirement that is meaningful to you! The cost is \$2 and you must register in advance at RiverMills Center.

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