

Chicopee Register

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COMMUNITY

Chicopee raises Polish flag to mark St. Joseph's Day



TURLEY PHOTO BY KRISTIN RIVERS

Polish heritage and pride was on full display in Chicopee during the St. Joseph's Day Flag-Raising ceremony on March 19.

By Kristin Rivers
Editor
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CHICOPEE - Residents, community members, local elected officials, seventh and eighth-grade students from St. Stanislaus School and many more gathered outside city hall on March 19 to raise the Polish flag for St. Joseph's Day. St. Joseph's Day hon-

ors St. Joseph, the husband of Mary and the Earth father of Jesus Christ, recognizing his role as a model in faith, family and work, specifically for fathers and workers. Mayor John Vieau reflected on the city's Polish heritage and St. Joseph as "a revered figure in the Catholic Church" and representing the virtues of protection, guidance, obedience and faithfulness.

"This day is an opportunity for individuals to reflect on his role as a steadfast protector, provider, for the Holy Family. Devotees often mark occasions with special Masses, feasts and acts of charity, embodying the spirit and compassion and humility that St. Joseph represents," Vieau said. "Whether through communal celebrations or personal reflection, St. Joseph's Day

is a meaningful time to embrace values of dedication and selflessness." City Assessor Victor Anop noted the large crowd for the flag-raising and Polish National Credit Union. "The main thing is the biggest crowd of the year is for the Polish and the Portuguese flag-raising, so welcome," Anop said. "The Polish National Credit Union, they're our local

jewel and Mr. Kelly from the Credit Union, they always support everything the city of Chicopee does." Zaneta Graskis, a branch manager at Polish National Credit Union, shared St. Joseph's Day is one of her favorite celebrations and how St. Joseph "is not portrayed as a speaker

See **ST. JOSEPH'S DAY** page 5

COMMUNITY

Student Advisory Council visits School Committee

By Amanda Munson
Correspondent

CHICOPEE - The School Committee had visitors from the Student Advisory Council who gave updates on the Chicopee schools on March 19.

The Student Advisory Council members spoke one by one, offering a variety of updates that the advisory board continuously goes over throughout the school year.

After the first student offered greetings and noted advisors Dr. Rebecca Pietrzykowski from Chicopee High School, Pinar Udemir from Chicopee Academy and Melanie Wilk, director of Food Services at ChicopeeFRESH, were in attendance with them, the second student began sharing the updates.

"Over the course of the first semester, we had been meeting regularly to develop initiatives that support high school students. One of our primary focuses has been building upon the work of the last year's work of the Student Advisory Council to implement the seal of community service. As mentioned, in our previous presentation, we have finalized the seal which will be introduced to the schools by grade level. In your electronic agenda

See **STUDENT COUNCIL** page 5

COMMUNITY

City Council Vice President/Councilor-at-Large Robert Zygarowski passes away

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - City Council Vice President/Councilor-at-Large Robert "Bob" Zygarowski, beloved community member and dedicated public servant, has passed away at the age of 80.

On March 24, the city lowered municipal flags to half-staff in his memory, and throughout this week, sign boards flashed this message in tribute: "Chicopee Remembers City Councilor Robert 'Bob' Zygarowski. If you see something, say something."

"If you see something, say something," was Zygarowski's motto and shared at the end of every City Council meeting.

A Lasting Legacy

Zygarowski was a resident of Chicopee since 1975 and served as a police officer



Robert Zygarowski

for 28 years, first appointed as a patrolman on July 15, 1974, and, later, became the police department's first K9 officer from July 1983 to July 1990. He also served as acting sergeant from May 10, 1991, to March 20, 1994, and was also the first D.A.R.E. officer and well-known for his work with the Drug Abuse Resistance Edu-

cation program.

After retiring in 2002, Zygarowski was elected to the Board of Aldermen and City Council in 2003, serving as At-Large Councilor ever since. He also served as vice president of the City Council for several terms and was a long-time chairperson of the Public Safety Subcommittee.

Outside of public service, Zygarowski was also a director and board member for the Chicopee Municipal Employees Credit Union and a member of the Chicopee Lodge of Elks 1849, the Knights of Columbus 4044, the Moose Family Center, the Tigers Athletics Club, Sons of the American Legion Post 275 and a past vice president of the Boys & Girls Club of Chicopee. Zygarowski also re-

See **ZYGAROWSKI** page 6

COMMUNITY



TURLEY PHOTOS BY KRISTIN RIVERS

A wide group shot of staff from the City of Chicopee, members of the Chicopee Fire Department, local and state officials and family members celebrating 50 years of ambulance service in the city of Chicopee.

Chicopee celebrates 50 years of ambulance service

By Kristin Rivers
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CHICOPEE - The city marked 50 years of ambulance service in a ceremony at City Hall Auditorium on March 17.

In 1975, the Chicopee Fire Department had eight members become certified as emergency medical technicians,

creating the city's first rescue ambulance service. The pioneers were John "Jack" Ryan, Gerard "Jerry" Roy, Ronald Moson, Dennis Kuznierz, John Sullivan, Melvin Brown, Paul Matte and Bob Stamborski, the father of Fire Chief Daniel Stamborski.

Mayor John Vieau shared how "everything starts at some point in time and some of the

people who started it are people who think outside the box."

"That's really the basis of what Chicopee's all about. Chicopee is a community that always strives to be the best at just about everything we do, whether it'd be ambulance service, public safety, our school

See **AMBULANCE** page 6

COMMUNITY

Puppies bark with excitement at RiverMills for National Puppy Day

By Amanda Munson
Correspondent

CHICOPEE - National Puppy Day was on March 23, 2025 and members of the senior center and their dogs were pleased to pose for the puppy photoshoot and take a walk around the center to celebrate.

A variety of dog breeds were making appearances, along with the thrill of seeing all the dogs inside the building, many dogs were wagging their tails happy to find new friends on March 21.

Sitting down with River the Dog, also known as Allan Salois, who's a member and driver of the senior center and longtime participant of

the center's events, he talked about the importance of companionship and aspects of the center that keeps him coming back.

Taking a break from the photoshoot, Salois spoke highly of the center and why he started coming in the first place.

"I'm one of the drivers here, I drive three days a week. I initially got involved during the pandemic since the center had monitors who would call the elderly and ask how they were doing and if they needed anything. The gentleman that was calling me was asking me about my background, like what I did for a living, and I told him I drove trucks most of

my life. He said they're looking for drivers for transportation, so I volunteered one day a week and then an opening came up. I like talking to people so I gave it a shot. This is now my fourth year!" Salois said.

Talking in a dog costume to visitors, Salois was happy to be the center of smiles last Friday, constantly seeing friends and coworkers he knew and greeting new dog friends. Starting as Santa Claus during Christmastime—one of many that help Santa himself during his busy schedule—Salois has done numerous mascot costumes like a leprechaun for St. Patrick's Day and the Easter Bunny, saying he really enjoys



TURLEY PHOTO BY AMANDA MUNSON

Dog Owner Dotti smiles with dog Rylee at one of the many lounge areas in the RiverMills Senior Center.

Referring back to driving, when asked about the most memorable ride he experi-

enced during his four years driving, Salois said this. "I figure you learn so much talking to older people.

I picked one lady up that was having cancer treatment and we started talking. She told me she grew up in the flat section of Holyoke and we found out we were neighbors! Right as I heard that, I told her to cancel her ride and we're going to drive through our old neighborhood and reminisce," Salois said. "She loved the idea and she got so excited, told me she was excited to go home and call her sister to tell her what she saw. I felt so good, I lightened up her day a bit."

RiverMills offers more than Salois imagined.

"The specialty dinners at

See **NATIONAL PUPPY DAY** page 6

IN THE CITY

Chicopee shows off Irish Pride at Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade



Chicopee Colleen Daiana Torres and her Court Members Wilmette Cumba, Meghan Oxley, Emma Caproni and Hannah O'Neil ride on this year's float, "Irish Fortune." The float won first prize.

CHICOPEE – The Chicopee Contingent came out in full force to march in the 72nd Annual Holyoke St. Patrick's Day Parade in Holyoke on March 23.

The contingent featured the Chicopee St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee, the police and fire departments, Mayor John Vieau and his staff along with members of the City

Council and other elected officials, Chicopee Little League, the Moose Family Center #1849, local Cub Scouts and Boy Scout Troops, the Chicopee High School and Chicopee Comprehensive High School Marching Bands, Chicopee Colleen Daiana Torres and her Court Members Wilmette Cumba, Meghan Oxley, Emma Caproni and Hannah O'Neil

riding on the award-winning float, "Irish Fortune."

This year's Parade Marshal was Billy Stetson, the 2025 Parade Committee President was Kathy Sliwa, the Woods Award Winner was George Balakier, the Meara Award recipient was Brady Procon and the Atkinson Award recipient was Corridan Funeral Home.



Mayor John Vieau and his team march in the parade and smile for the camera.



The 2025 Parade Marshal Billy Stetson waves to the crowd as he marches in the parade.



The Moose Family Center 1849 also took part in the parade.



Kathy Sliwa was this year's Committee President of the Chicopee St. Patrick's Day Parade Committee.



The banner showing off Chicopee as they make their way along the parade route.



The Chicopee Comprehensive High School Marching Band performs



Chicopee Parade Committee and Colleens kick off Parade Weekend



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOEL RODOWICZ

CHICOPEE - The Mummies are in town! On March 20, the Chicopee Colleen and Court and Parade Committee had a great time dancing to the tunes of Dickey Riley, the Aqua String Band and the Holyoke Caledonian Pipe Band. It was a great evening at the Portuguese Club to kick off parade weekend!





Janis Santos SCHOLARSHIP

Created in recognition of Janis Santos and her tenure at HCS Head Start, Inc.

In an effort to provide a pathway to the Early Childhood Education profession, the **Janis Santos Scholarship Fund** is available for **HCS Head Start alumnae**, past or current **HCS Head Start parents**, or current **HCS Head Start staff**.

One \$2,000 scholarship will be awarded annually.

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QUESTIONS?
 email: JSScholarship@headstart.org

Deadline April 25, 2025



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IN THE CITY

Chicopee Public Library lists April events for kids and families

CHICOPEE - Each month the Chicopee Public Library hosts a variety of free programs for children, teens and families. The Youth Services Department seeks to provide opportunities for entertainment and enrichment that promote literacy and explore creativity. Here is the slate of events for April 2025.

Terrific Twos will be on Tuesdays, April 1, 15 and 29 at 10:30 a.m. 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.

Dance Party On Wednesdays April 2, 16 and 30 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!

Afterschool Thursdays is a new program series for school age children that the library is introducing in March and plans to run through the spring. Each

Thursday afternoon at 4 p.m. will be a different opportunity for older kids to explore a fun, creative activity. Recommended for ages 6 and up, teens and tweens welcome. On the first Thursday of each month, the longstanding **Build with LEGO** program will continue. Freeform building time with a big pile of LEGO will be on Thursday, April 3 at 4 p.m. Thursdays April 10 will be an art and math activity using tangrams. Thursday, April 17 will be word games. No registration required.

Sensory Play Saturday will be held at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 5. 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, April 5, 12, 19 and 26. Come play at the library! The playspace will be open for families with kids of all ages to meet up and play.

Stop by for a **Kids Room Craft** on Tuesday, April 8 at 4

p.m. For all ages.

Storytime will be held in the children's program room on Wednesdays April 9 and 23 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. Older kids and big siblings are invited to join in during School Vacation Week on April 23.

Little Movers will be held in the children's program room on Fridays April 11 & 25 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!

The library will host a **Meet-up for Homeschooling Families** on Thursday, April 17 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. Families and library staff take turns leading different activities. This month will

be a STEM activity.

Read to a Dog on Wednesday, April 30 at 4 p.m. Meet Lina, a two-year-old chocolate lab trained as a pediatric therapy dog. She will be here to listen to kids practice reading. Therapy dogs are good listeners with calm energy and can help kids who struggle with reading aloud. For ages five and up. Space is limited, contact the Children's Room to Sign up.

The library will host School Vacation Week activities April 22 - 26.

Pineapple Project Tuesday, April 22 at 2 p.m. A fun and funny theater piece for children and families about playing together, gender, and being kind. Folks who like books by Todd Parr will enjoy this show. No registration required.

Pokemon Party! Wednesday, April 23, 2:30 to 4 p.m. Stop by the Children's Room for an afternoon all about Pokémon! We'll have different Pokémon themed activities for all ages, plus a scavenger hunt around the room! No registration required.

Talking Hands Theatre presents **Robotic**, a show about robots and emotions. Thursday, April 24 at 10:30 a.m. Part tabletop marionette show, part dance party, this show is all about recognizing and naming your emotions. Jeremy gets a robot for his birthday, and it can do all kinds of cool things, but can it feel emotions? We'll find out, and along the way, we'll meet seven different emotions, each represented by a different color animal marionette, a song, and a dance, led by a children's movement specialist next to the stage. For ages 3-10.

The library will host a **Crayon Art** program on Thursday, April 24 at 2 to 3:30 p.m. Participants will create Monet's Water Lilies using only crayons with Marie Tucker. In a 1.5-hour session, using this simple and inherently fun medium, artists will be led step by step to create their own beautiful work of art! All materials/supplies are provided. This workshop is open to kids ages 8 and up as well as teens. Contact the Children's Room to sign up.

Springfield Symphony Orchestra will present **The Musical Instrument Petting Zoo** on Saturday, April 26 at 1 p.m. An educator from Springfield Symphony will provide kids and families a tour of several musical instruments and give them the opportunity to try them out! This fun hands-on experience will give you an up-close look at different orchestra instruments. For all ages, no registration required. (Please note, no animals will be present at this event.)

The library will also have some programs for teens in April. Teen programs are open to middle and high school students.

Teen Anime Club will meet on Wednesday, April 16 from 3 to 4:30. This month's activity will be based on the manga Heaven's Design Team.

Teen Space Craft Wednesday, April 30, after school starting around 2:30. Stop by the Teen Space and enjoy an easy paper craft.

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

Win a Trip to Rome and Help Harmony House

CHICOPEE - Harmony House of Western Massachusetts, the home hospice patients, is sponsoring a raffle to win an all-inclusive trip for two to Rome and the Amalfi Coast from October 23, 2025 to November 2, 2025.

If you've always dreamed of a luxury vacation in Italy, now is the time to purchase a ticket and perhaps win the trip of a lifetime. Traveling with a small group and a private guide, the trip includes five nights in Maiori on the Amalfi Coast and four nights in Rome, all transportation, hotel stays, daily meals, and beverages.

This Italian sojourn is valued at over \$9,000.

The trip is sponsored by Figaro Ristorante, Italian Exclusive Vacations, and the

Guisepppe Polimeni Group.

Tickets are \$100 each and can be obtained from Board members, by emailing Lisa Potito at admin@harmonyhousewma.org, or via Venmo. The drawing will be held on June 6, 2025 and the lucky winner will be contacted.

It's time to brush up your Italian. Grazie Mille!

Harmony House is a local, non-profit organization whose mission is to provide a loving home offering compassionate care for people who are on hospice and are in need of care.

If interested in learning more or becoming a volunteer, please complete the online volunteer application form at www.harmonyhousewma.org/volunteer-1 or email us at admin@harmonyhousewma.org.

Chicopee to hold a public hearing for renewal on Charter/Spectrum Cable Services

CHICOPEE - The City of Chicopee will conduct a public hearing on April 2, regarding the renewal of Charter/Spectrum Cable services. This hearing pertains solely to cable services, which will continue unchanged.

It is important to note that the city does not have the authority to regulate pricing or service costs. However, we have managed to limit the increase of the public access fee to a minimal amount. We encourage the pub-

lic to attend this meeting and welcome any questions or concerns.

Date: April 2, 2025
Time: 10 a.m. - Noon
Location: City Hall Auditorium, 3rd floor, 274 Front Street, Chicopee, MA

Easter Egg Hunt at RiverMills Center April 18

CHICOPEE - Council on Aging will off an Easter Egg Hunt on Friday, April 18 at 9:30 a.m. at Chicopee Council on Aging's RiverMills Center, 5 West Main St.

Join RiverMills for our annual Easter Egg Hunt! Bring your grandkids to

hop around the building to find some eggs the Easter Bunny left!

After you've hopped around, take a break and get your photo with the Easter Bunny! You must register in advance at RiverMills Center or by calling 534-3698.

Space is limited as it is inside the building. You must provide your name and the # of grandchildren you will be bringing with you.

Please bring your own bag or bucket to collect eggs.

Wayfinders Presentation at RiverMills Center

CHICOPEE - The Council on Aging will host a Home Modification Loan Program information session on Wednesday, April 16 at 10 a.m. at Chicopee Council on Aging's RiverMills Center, located at 5 West Main St.

Wayfinders is an affordable housing organization dedicated to bringing home stability to people across Western Massachusetts since 1972. Join representatives as they discuss what Wayfinders is about and what services they have to offer when it comes to housing. Please register at RiverMills or call 534-3698.

A Life with Meaning and Purpose

CHICOPEE - The Council on Aging will offer the program "A Life with Meaning and Purpose" on Wednesday, April 2 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.

Welcome Spring Dinner

CHICOPEE - The Chicopee Council on Aging will host a "Welcome Spring Dinner" on Thursday, April 3 at 5 p.m. at The Chicopee Council on Aging's RiverMills Center, located at 5 W. Main Street.

Join your friends at RiverMills for a Spring Dinner on Thursday, April 3rd at

5:00 p.m. to welcome the warmer months ahead. You will enjoy a Roast Stuffed Pork dinner with entertainment by the O-Tones.

Beer, wine and non-alcoholic beverages will be available for purchase.

Tickets are \$20 and must be purchased at RiverMills Center prior to April 3.

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OPINION

LETTER TO EDITOR

Canada ready to defend itself

To the Editor:
The Canadian Foreign Minister, Melanie Joly, in an interview with television reporter and world news journalist Cristiane Amanpour talked about the Trump tariffs on Canada.

Melanie believes the Trump's strategy is to weaken the economy of Canada so that the U.S. can annex its neighbor more easily. Melanie stated that all of Canada's provinces are uniting to make Canada more resilient.

She also said that there is much in the way of natural resources that Trump is

aiming to seize by making Canada a 51st state.

Canada has an abundance of critical minerals, uranium, hydroelectricity capabilities, oil, gas, potash and is an agricultural superpower. Canada is working closer with Mexico, South Korea, Japan and the EU to be more independent.

To see the entire interview, go online: My jaw is dropped: Canadian official's interview stuns Amanpour (YouTube)

Bill Paul,
Chicopee

GUEST COLUMN

Blood donors are everyday heroes

By Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, RN

Earlier this year, a 77-year-old Massachusetts grandfather was celebrated for his 550th blood platelet donation. Ralph "Rocco" Russo was inspired to begin donating when his best friend's then-14-year-old daughter was diagnosed with cancer in 1996.

And he just kept giving.

We could use more everyday heroes like Rocco. Although the country seems to have weathered the severe blood shortage seen in January of this year, when the Red Cross declared a national crisis, hospitals can't have enough blood. A single trauma patient can require 20 units of blood – or more.

Regular blood donation by a sufficient number of healthy people is needed to ensure that blood will always be available whenever and wherever it is needed. With World Blood Donor Day celebrating its 20th anniversary on June 14, it's a good time to thank donors and encourage new ones.

Who can give blood?

Even though roughly 7 million Americans donate blood each year, that's only 3 percent of the eligible population. The qualifications are simple: Be 17 or older (there's no upper age limit as long as you're in good health); feel well; and weigh 110 pounds or more. Many people are disqualified because of various infections, low iron, travel, pregnancy and other factors, so if you are eligible, give it some consideration.

At the donation site, after a brief health assessment (temperature, blood pressure, iron level), you'll be able to give the gift of life to a fellow human being.

Isn't there artificial blood?

Researchers are racing to develop artificial red blood cells that could stand in for whole blood, but we're probably a decade or more away from that becoming reality. For now, there's no substitute for the real McCoy.

The parts can be greater than the whole

While you can donate whole blood six times a year, platelet donors (like Rocco) can give up to 24 times a year. This is because the donation process takes only part of your blood and returns the rest.

Platelets are tiny blood cells that form clots and stop bleeding. For millions of Americans, they are essential to surviving and fighting cancer, chronic diseases and traumatic injuries. Every 15 seconds, someone needs platelets.

You may even be able to sign up to donate platelets to help a friend with cancer. In platelet donation and transfusion, it's generally not necessary to match blood types.

Why don't more people donate?

The number of people who donate blood has

dropped about 20 percent in the last few years. Fears about safety and needles keep some people from donating. There's also the bystander effect: It's common not to take action in a situation if you think someone else will.

Does giving blood actually hurt? It can, but it's usually no worse than stubbing your toe. There's that moment when you know the needle is coming close to the vein in your arm; the best thing to do is look away or close your eyes and keep breathing until that moment passes.

There are also still myths about who and who can't donate. In the early days of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, there were no tests to screen for HIV, so gay and bisexual men were prohibited from donating. The FDA rescinded that blanket ban in 2023 in favor of questions that assess the risk of HIV regardless of gender or gender expression.

Also, yes, you can donate if you have tattoos and piercings, as long as it was more than three months prior, you're completely healed and you took care to be inked or poked at a state-regulated facility. (That also means you can't use fear of needles as an excuse!)

Virtual reality comes to blood donation

For some people, giving blood is easy – and you get snacks when you're finished. For others, though, it can be unpleasant, and they are unlikely to become first-time donors, let alone repeat donors.

Virtual reality to the rescue, or actually a subset of VR called "mixed reality," which mingles the real and virtual worlds.

In 2023, a blood collection center let donors take their minds off the process by focusing on planting a garden – with just their eyes. Donors used the Microsoft HoloLens 2 to play Paragon, a game created by Abbott Labs and Blood Centers of America. The thinking is that a positive emotional response to blood donation will encourage folks to become repeat customers.

A blood donation truly is a unique gift that transcends gender, age, ethnic and political lines. Find a collection center or blood donor event near you, and roll up your sleeve.

Teri (Dreher) Frykenberg, a registered nurse and board-certified patient advocate, is the founder of Northshore Patient Advocates LLC (NSHore). She is also founder and CEO of Nurse Advocate Entrepreneur, which trains medical professionals to become successful private patient advocates. Teri offers a free phone consultation to newspaper readers as well as to nurses interested in becoming advocates. Reach her at Teri@NurseAdvocateEntrepreneur.com.

GUEST COLUMN



Sandhill cranes



I received an email from a Worthington resident, who saw two sandhill cranes on Sunday, March 16.

It was most likely was just a coincidence. However, the next day March 17, I spotted a pair of sandhill cranes in my hayfield, a first ever sighting at that location.

Several people reported seeing sandhill cranes at various locations in town last year. There is a breeding pair, who successfully raised young, in nearby Hardwick.

The sandhill crane is a tall, 45," gray, heron like bird. It has a dark red patch on its forehead and a black bill. Some of the feathers on the sandhill crane's back are iron stained due possibly to preening from mud rich in that mineral.

Immature cranes are grayish with more rust stained feathers. They keep this plumage for two years. The female sandhill crane lays one to three olive eggs with dark marks in a mound like nest of weeds, grasses and marsh like plants placed on the ground or in shallow water. They migrate in flocks, feed on agricultural fields and roost in the center of shallow lakes or rivers. They display courtship behavior of

jumping off the ground during their migration. They feed on seeds, agricultural grains and small animals.

Common mergansers

I received reports of seeing common mergansers. My daughter saw common mergansers in Hardwick. A Hubbardston couple also saw common mergansers. A Brimfield resident, who sends bird reports on a regular basis, saw common mergansers at a pond in Warren last week. There was a large section of open water. He also saw lots of mallard, Canada geese, a few black ducks and a hooded merganser.

Bald eagles

The Brimfield resident in an email on March 8 said, "Yesterday in Ludlow I visited an eagle's nest on the bank of the Chicopee River. Eagles have nested in this area for over ten years with four different nest locations. I first found a nest across the Chicopee River in Springfield that was visible from Ludlow. Then the nest was on the Ludlow side of the river for one year. I lost track of the nest for a few years when it was in a tree that subsequently fell down. I was told about the fourth and current nest three years ago. If the bird on the nest is the female that has been nesting in this area and had at least one young two years ago she is banded and is twenty years old."

Two of my grandchildren and I saw a mature bald eagle perched in a tree at the edge of my hayfield on Saturday, March 15. I stopped the car

and my granddaughter, Lizzie, got out of the car to take a photo with her cellphone. I said the eagle will probably fly away. As she approached, the eagle turned its head to watch her. As she approached it bent down, opened its tail feathers displaying the white feathers and then took off. She got a photo of its white tail.

The Brimfield resident saw two bald eagles at a pond in Warren, an adult and an immature. The immature eagle flushed up some ducks while flying around the pond. On another day he saw four eagles, two adult and two immature. An Oakham resident also saw a bald eagle recently.

Other birds

The same person saw a great blue heron, hooded mergansers, three ringed bill gulls and a small flock of red-winged blackbirds. Earlier this month, he said, "Two fox sparrows showed in the afternoon, always nice to see them. A pair of blue birds are irregular visitors as are sharp-shinned hawks. Last week an adult chased juncos into a quince bush without success. And this week an immature sharpie was in the yard for awhile."

He said he takes in his feeders at night as bears should be out and about. He read an article that the skunk cabbage is up and is a sign that so are the bears. Black bears eat skunk cabbage leaves in the spring when they first emerge from the dens to "kick start" their digestive system. They also return to their favorite feeding grounds, often back yard bird feeders.

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.



GUEST COLUMN

Grateful for the March garden

I don't know about you, but those first few warmer days do something to my brain. I begin to expect that we are in for nice weather all the time.

It's easy to start dreaming and scheming, but alas, we are not exactly on a fast track to summer just yet, nor should we be. There is much to enjoy about this time of year.

Here are just a few of my favorite things about March.

First on the list is that my however-many-year-old Gerber daisy houseplant gave me a flower, with a couple more on the way. I had three of these plants last year. I gave a two away in one of my "less is more" moods.

Do they bloom as well as they did when they were a year old? No, but that bright



What a fun March activity!

I bent each long piece into a U shape and plunged the ends into the ground, starting the next one in the middle of the one prior. That outta keep my husband off the bulbs; I hope at least.

Speaking of prunings, I have started to accumulate "pea brush." I'll be sowing pea seeds in the next few weeks, and although I typically plant the seeds right up against the garden's fence, I am going to need more room this year, and these leftover prunings will be perfect for the tendrils to grab hold of.

I make a wide bed the length of the garden row, insert the prunings in the

See GARDEN page 5

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WE CARE ABOUT YOUR NEWS!

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

Election letters to the editor

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

For more information, call the editor at 413-283-8393.

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

IN THE CITY



PHOTO COURTESY OF RACHEL BEALDWIN

A group shot of the seventh and eighth grade students from St. Stanislaus School with Mayor John Vieau.



TURLEY PHOTO S BY KRISTIN RIVERS

Zaneta Grasakis, branch manager at Polish National Credit Union, holds up the mayor's proclamation she received from Mayor John Vieau during the St. Joseph's Day Flag-Raising.

ST. JOSEPH'S DAY from page 1

or accredited with any Scriptures in the Bible," but his actions defined his role.

Grasakis added he is, also, the Patron Saint of Immigrants, "having traveled to a foreign land to give his family a better life."

"As a first-generation Polish immigrant, I relate to that journey. It's important for me to pass down my Polish culture and traditions to my children. Yet, my story is not unique. Each of you here have a similar story," Grasakis said. "What we can take away from today, let it be the importance of family, faith and action. Let us embrace the spirit of St. Joseph for actions truly speak louder than words."

Vieau later presented the proclamation to Grasakis.

Then, the attendees broke

out in song singing a Polish song as two students from St. Stanislaus School cranked the lever to raise the Polish flag. Then, performances of "God Bless America" and "Stolat."

Grasakis expressed surprise at receiving the mayor's proclamation at the flag-raising.

"That's very special. I was not expecting to get this. I'm very humbled and honored and I'll be proudly displaying this in my office," Grasakis said.

She was also thrilled to see the students from St. Stanislaus School attend the flag-raising, stressing the importance of education and faith.

"I actually went to St. Stan's myself when I came from Poland and it's a phenomenal school. Faith and religion and education is so important. My kids go there now,

so I can see firsthand--second-hand now, right?--the importance of all of that," Grasakis said. "And I'm so proud of them that they're showing that tradition to the kids and teaching them St. Joseph's Day."

Grasakis is also proud of her Polish heritage, sharing how she came to the United States when she was five years old.

"It's the meaning of family, our traditions of holidays hard work and faith," Grasakis said.

She's also proud to work at Polish National Credit Union, a local business in Chicopee.

"Our CEO James Kelly really supports our traditions and cultures. Not just Polish, but every culture. So, I'm really lucky to work in an establishment that allows us to celebrate our cultures and traditions," Grasakis said.



Mayor John Vieau presides over the St. Joseph's Day Flag-Raising ceremony in Chicopee on March 19.

The message was this. "Our actions speak louder than words. Being kind to each other, doing good deeds and saying less does more

sometimes," Grasakis said. After the ceremony concluded, attendees enjoyed refreshments from Bernardino's Bakery and Bernat's Pol-



Mayor John Vieau looks on as Fr. Brad Milunski from St. Stanislaus Basilica cuts his birthday cake.

ish Deli, with the crowd also singing "Happy Birthday" to Fr. Brad Milunski of St. Stanislaus Basilica in celebration of his recent birthday.

STUDENT COUNCIL from page 1

packets, you will find a flyer made by our amazing Family Engagement Liaison Carmen Rodriguez," she said. "This flyer, along with the links to submit hours and research and volunteer opportunities, will be shared with the participants and families providing key information about the program. Additionally, the flyers future seal that will appear on diplomas for students who meet for the required certifications."

The third student fo-

cused on food options and protocols across the school district.

"In addition to our work on the seal, we have been meeting to discuss food options and protocols across the district. In early February, we met with food service director Miss Melanie Wilk to address the quality and procedures surrounding food services at the three high schools. This meeting was highly informative and provided an opportunity for CHS to provide a taste testing event which will take place on March 20, featuring

lemon pepper chicken and other items. Furthermore, with Miss Wilk's support, we will continue exploring ways to improve hot lunch options and expand choices to ensure students are satisfied," said the third speaker of the advisory board.

Staying on the topic of food service, the next student focused on the cuts recently announced by the Department of Agriculture to the Local Food for Schools program.

"We would also like to bring your attention to a significant challenge ahead, the

Department of Agriculture has decided to cut approximately \$1.2 billion—\$12.2 million just in Massachusetts—from the Local Food for Schools program. Which will have a major impact on districts like Chicopee, losing about \$100,000 in aid directly affecting local farmers and in turn, our school lunches. This reduction and support may limit locally sourced ingredients for our students and we recognize the importance of advocating for sustainable solutions moving forward. We directly see the benefits of this pro-

gram in our lunchrooms," she said. "If this funding is not available from the Department of Agriculture, we ask the School Committee and City Council to explore ways to support our amazing Food Services Program."

The final student concluded the updates from the Student Advisory Council by mentioning the board extends its support to the future Student Advisory Council with the upcoming switch in the coming fall.

Lastly, a shout-out to upcoming graduates from Chicopee Schools were men-

tioned, which were 2025 Class President Nyeira Wilson, a Health Science Academy student from Chicopee High School who wants to major in biology, Zadrana Cintron from Chicopee Comprehensive High School who plans to major in sports management, and Kayla Chun, a Chicopee Comp student who plans to major in pre-medical health science studies as a physician assistant at Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences.

GARDEN from page 4

dle of the row and plant pea seeds four deep up against the branches. In addition to my old stand by, shelling peas, I am going to be sowing sugar snap and snow peas.

My first experience with sugar snap peas came from harvesting some pods while on a weekend getaway at bed and breakfast. It was a cool little place in southern New Hampshire where you could pick the vegetables from the kitchen garden and eat them for dinner.

It'll be fun to grow my own for fresh eating.

"Pea brush" can also be used to support annual or perennial flowers that tend to have weak or floppy stems. The brush blends into the scenery a little better than

stakes and twine, and it's easily dismantled when the time comes.

My favorite March bulb is a harbinger of all harbingers, the Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*). Toughened points on the leaf tips make it possible for the snowdrop to push through the crusty soil of late winter.

Two or three strappy leaves grow from each bulb; most often there is just one flower. You'll notice three white outer petals first and upon closer inspection you'll see green tipped inner petals.

The flowers are held on the stem in a nodding fashion and in my experience they stay in bloom for upwards of three weeks. Reportedly they are well adapted for bees, at least those that are brave enough to venture out of the hive in

search of pollen during the warmest days of late winter!

Snowdrops will naturalize if happy, increasing in numbers both above and below the ground! Although we "deadhead" most bulbs, keeping spent flower heads of this genus in place will allow seeds to ripen and new plants to form.

It is interesting to observe the process of a snowdrop self-sowing. Once the flower has gone by a large seed will form; because of its weight, the stem will bend toward the ground dropping its ripe seed at a perfect distance from the mother plant.

Under no circumstances should the foliage of a bulb be removed until it is brown and dry. It may not be the most beautiful to look at, but all the while that it is green it is mak-

ing and storing food for next year's flowers.

Enjoy these early days in and around the garden.

Roberta McQuaid grad-

uated 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.

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IN THE CITY

ZYGAROWSKI from page 1

ceived two awards from the Boys & Girls Club: the Victor Geoffrey Youth Leadership Award and the Dr. Edward Ryan Award.

Zygarowski married his beloved wife, Patricia "Patti" (MacDonald) Zygarowski, in 1975 and they were together for nearly five decades until her passing on January 8, 2024.

He leaves behind two sons, Ryan and Sean, his grandchildren and many cherished family members.

Vieau, Laflamme pay tribute

Mayor John Vieau shared the news of Zygarowski's passing "hit hard," calling him "a good friend, a colleague and a true Chicopee native."

"Bob has not only touched my life but the lives of hundreds of others during his time. From being the first K9 Officer to the first D.A.R.E. Officer, Vice President of City Council and more, his legacy has made a lasting impact on generations within the city," Vieau said. "Bob was beloved by Chicopee and its residents. 'They say if you love your work, you'll never work a day in your life.' This quote comes to mind when I think of Bob and his contributions to the city. His passion and dedication were not something unknown; rather, they were a prominent aspect of his life."

Vieau also reflected on Zygarowski's passion for public safety and the joy he brought wherever he went.

"Officer Bob was a dedicated public servant who made a lasting impact on the Chicopee community, both as a retired police officer and City Councilor. His commitment to public safety and youth education undoubtedly left a legacy," Vieau said. "Apart from his public service, he was a devoted family man and friend. His love radiated through his words. Bob was everyone's favorite person to talk to. From the stories and the laughs, Bob always put a smile on everyone's face."

City Council President/Councilor-at-Large Frank Laflamme said, "It's gonna be tough" after Zygarowski's passing, reflecting on the impact of his long-time loyal friend when he first joined the City Council and beyond.

"Bob and Jim Tilton--a former councilor--were both instrumental in helping me--guide me--through a couple years of being on the council," Laflamme said. "I was in the

special police for over 20 years and worked sometimes with Bob on the special police. So, we had a relationship there too and talked a lot."

Laflamme was grateful he had the opportunity to see Zygarowski the week before with Councilor-at-Large Jerry Roy, the three of them talking and sharing "some good laughs."

"I've known him pretty much most of my life. So, it's been tough on me. We've done a lot together," Laflamme said. "At the end of the day, it's something that I'm going to cherish: our friendship and the knowledge he's given me."

Laflamme also reflected on when Zygarowski was elected City Council Vice President during his second term as president.

"Him and I were on the phone weekly, several times a day, several times a week on the phone. We were close. We would share ideas to each other and do what's best. I think we both had the love for the city and to keep it safe and help the city move forward," Laflamme said. "I think the two of us were like our own little A-Team--president and vice president--we were close together and I'm going to miss his calling and talking to me. We enjoyed it, I won't forget it."

On the Public Safety Subcommittee, Laflamme shared he was on there with Zygarowski before he became president.

"That was the main thing he always wanted to chair. Even when I became president of the board, he goes, 'Frank, I want to chair the Public Safety Committee' and I go, 'Bob, nobody takes that away from you. That's yours.' He was passionate about it," Laflamme said.

Laflamme thanked everyone who has called and shared their condolences with him and the City Council, adding he will relay this to the councilors when they meet next week.

"Thank you for all the people that called and send their regards," Laflamme said.

Vieau's message was this:

"Bob will be dearly missed. Our condolences go out to the entire Zygarowski family and to anyone whose life was touched by Bob. May we carry on with his legacy and echo the streets of Chicopee with his famous quote, 'If you see something, say something,'" Vieau said.

AMBULANCE from page 1

system, whatever it is. Our goal is to always be our best," Vieau said.

Vieau later thanked Stamborski and the fire department for their creativity in advancing the department.

"This year, we were able to buy two ambulances for the price of almost one, which just from thinking outside the box, shopping around and finding a vendor that is providing ambulances," Vieau said. "And I want to say thank you for that because you're saving taxpayers money."

Stamborski reflected on the history of the ambulance service, sharing how in the early 1970s, the federal government began investigating a national emergency services system and noted television shows like "Emergency!" demonstrating transporting people to the hospital and saving lives.

Mass General Law Chapter 11C, established in 1973, helped create the state's Office of Emergency Medical Services.

"The law mandated that one-third of all ambulance attendants be trained at the level of EMT by July of 1975. It was at that time that the Chicopee Fire Department was selected to train with members and create the ambulance system to provide essential emergency medical services to the city of Chicopee," Stamborski said. "In March of 1975, our members were ready to answer the call and today, we honor the original eight members."

Today, Stamborski said the city's fire department and ambulance service remain the busiest in Western Massachusetts, with over 10,800 calls responded to in 2024.

"Although the technology has changed and the advancement in medicine has improved many of our practices and protocols, we continue to proudly provide outstanding pre-hospital care and our members remain a vital part of the health system," Stamborski said. "None of this would have been possible without you elite starters in the program."

Stamborski expressed his gratitude to the founding members on behalf of the fire department.



John "Jack" Ryan, Chantal Hogue and Mayor John Vieau take a group photo together ahead of the ceremony marking 50 years of ambulance service for the city of Chicopee. Ryan was the one who brought the milestone to the Chicopee Fire Department's attention.

"Quite frankly, most of us wouldn't be here--wouldn't have careers--were it not for you pioneers starting that ambulance service and we're very grateful to you too," Stamborski said. "It's an honor!"

State Rep. Shirley Arriaga (D-Chicopee) called the milestone an accomplishment for the city, emphasizing giving thanks to all public safety officials.

"Thank you, truly, because it's not easy. Whether you are an EMT, you're a firefighter, you're a police officer, what you're doing is laying your life out there to help others and you want to help others," Arriaga said. "You guys decide--you all decide--that this is what you want, this is your calling. So, I think that's something special, so thank you so much for what you do every day, day in, day out."

Roy, who served in the fire department for 27 years, was thankful to his fellow pioneers.

"I think they were all dedicated, they all wanted to do something just a little bit more for themselves and for the community and my hat's off to all of them," Roy said. "I can't even believe it's been 50 years."

Roy expressed gratitude for the community support.

"We did have a lot of community support," Roy said. "Like the chief alluded to earlier, it was good to see somebody come into your home with a uniform that you were familiar and it kind of put

them a little bit at ease. All the guys did what they could and they did the best they could and did a good job."

Stamborski credits his late father--who had served for 28 years--for him becoming a firefighter himself, adding his son became a firefighter too; creating three generations of firefighters in the Stamborski family.

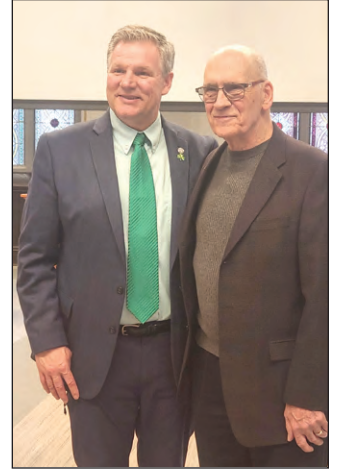
"I've always been proud of him, looked up to him since I was a little kid for what he did and him being part of that original crew of eight members for the ambulance is real important to me and our family," Stamborski said.

Stamborski said the thank you letters everyone also receives mean a lot.

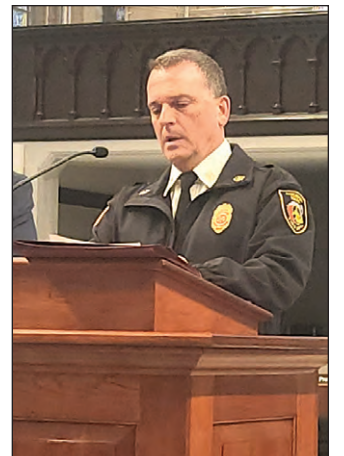
"It's always amazing to get thank you letters. We get these continually. In a world that we live in where everybody's always complaining, we're getting notes coming in on the regular where our guys and girls are treating patients with respect and dignity and being kind to them and, like I said, we respond to strangers' homes every single day and 99% of the time we're putting it in a better place than we found it whether it's a fire or medical call," Stamborski said. "So, it's just a great job."

He also thanked the many outside agencies that lend their support.

"We really appreciate that because we can't possibly handle all the volume of our calls, so we intercept with several of the private agencies and we



Mayor John Vieau and Paul Matte pose for a photo. Matte was one of the original eight pioneers of the ambulance service in Chicopee.



Fire Chief Daniel Stamborski reflects on the history of the city's ambulance service.

greatly appreciate it," Stamborski said.

Stamborski also expressed his gratitude to Vieau and the City Council for their continued support of the fire department. The two ambulances mentioned earlier by Vieau at the ceremony were thanks to Deputy Chief Douglas Sanford.

"Like the mayor said, the mayor and the City Council support everything when it comes to public safety," Stamborski said. "They've been very, very supportive. We appreciate that."

Stamborski's message was this.

"If you see a firefighter on the street--which they often do--or they're coming to your home or you're at a parade, say thank you," Stamborski said. "Just keep in mind that they work extremely, extremely hard and to just say thanks."



RiverMills members smile with their three dogs, also known as the three musketeers, named Ruby, Tina and Cookie.

NATIONAL PUPPY DAY from page 1

night are really good, we're very fortunate. We have two awesome cooks. The pastries at the cafe are delicious, it's nice to come in and have a coffee, talk with your friends.

It's just nice to come sit and talk, some people have a group they meet all the time with and talk for awhile. We have great people working here, they are all friendly," Salois said. "When I transport people, if they are unsure about coming in, I offer to

buy them coffee and see what the center is like. People have said they don't make friends easily and then the second or third time they come, they are able to be involved with what's offered. They meet the staff, see the space and how people are around the same

age, chances are you're going to run into somebody you know. One of the worst things is staying in the house and doing nothing."

If you are still on the fence about joining the RiverMills and also wondering what dogs he has, Salois ended by saying this.

"If you don't think you'll meet anybody, look for me and I'll be here! I'll sit down and have a coffee and pastry with you. At home, I have three dogs named Sheldon, Copper, and Cody known as 'Coodie-Bug', two are Shepherd mixes and then we have a Golden. The two mixes are my wife's dogs, they love her. The little one, the golden, he's my buddy since he'll stay up and watch movies with me. He's my shadow," Salois said.

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Sun shines bright on 48th Road Race

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

HOLYOKE – For the first time in several years, it was gorgeous weather for the Holyoke St. Patrick's Road Race last Saturday afternoon the city streets.

More than 6,000 people participated in this year's event, with nearly 5,000 participants finishing the 10K, or 6.2-mile course.

This year, it was Samuel Whittaker of Salem, CT, who

finished the race in 31:24. Alex Corbett, who placed second in last year's race, came in 23 seconds later at 31:47.

The top female finisher was Angelia Rafter at 34:13 and she placed 12th overall. Rafter is from Glastonbury, CT.

Among local finishers, Matt Provost of Monson was 19th overall at 35:09. Ryan Davis of South Hadley was a close 20th at 35:10. Lindsay Smith of South Hadley fin-

ished 22nd at 35:12.

While the race course, commonly known as a "hilly" course throughout downtown Holyoke ending with a turn off Beech St. and up the hill on Hampden St. toward the finish line remained largely the same, there was one noticeable change in this year's event.

Presidential Timing took over the official timing duties after 4RUN3 went out of business last year. Those looking for more results from

the events can go to www.presidentialtiming.com to look at more specific results from the race. Like previous timers, you can look up people by name and bib number to get more specific results.

The road race once again kicked off an excellent weekend celebrating the St. Patrick's Day holiday and also helped to prepare several participants in this year's event for future races in the coming months, including the Boston Marathon, which will take

place on Monday, April 21.

With the weather being much warmer, there were less participants in costumes, though plenty of harriers were wearing the green tutus that are often a part of each year's race.

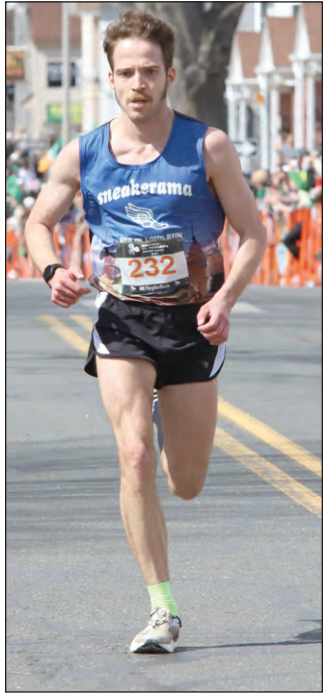
The city also had excellent cooperation from the Holyoke Police Department, Holyoke Fire Department, the Massachusetts State Police, and Cataldo Ambulance, which provided public safety services for the

event this year.

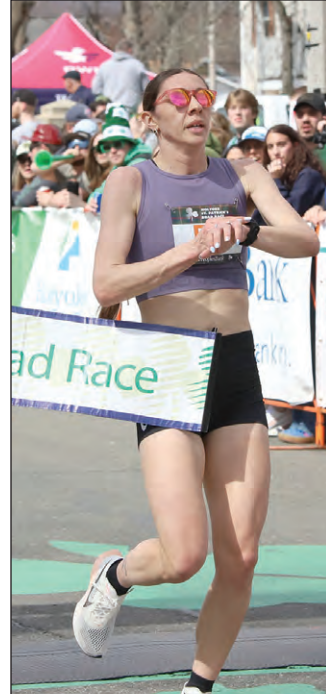
The race was kicked with a beautiful rendition of the Star Spangled Banner sung by Kate Caligaris and JFK Award winner and celebrity Bridget Moynahan shot the opening gun.

This year, there were four waves of runners followed by the fifth wave, which included walkers on the course.

Among the participants, there were nearly 400 participants in the race who were under 18-years-old.



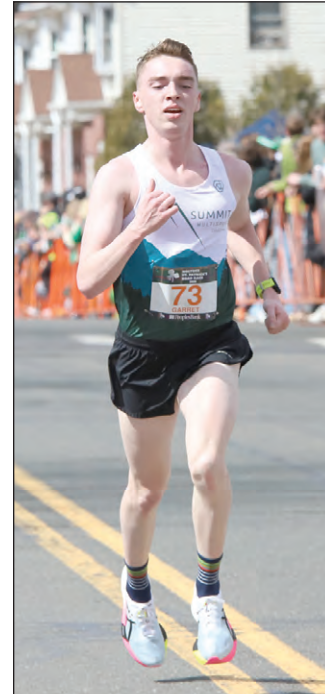
Alex Corbett takes second in the race for the second year in a row.



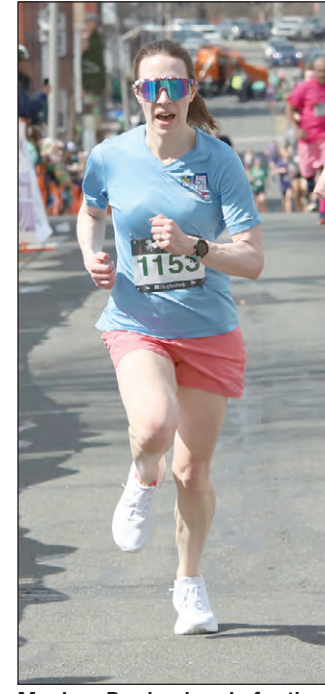
Female winner Angelia Rafter crosses the finish line at 34:13



Tyler Leahy crosses the finish line at 35:13.



Garret Theberge, of Chicopee, finishes at 35:55.



Meghan Perdue heads for the finish line and comes across at 43:07.



Alexander Celetti hustles and comes across the finish at 44:24.

Suburban League starts new award in honor of deceased coach

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

CHICOPEE— The Pioneer Valley Girls Suburban Basketball League was always very special to Eileen Monaghan.

Growing up in Chicopee, Monaghan played for a Suburban League basketball team. She then coached her daughter's Suburban League teams. In recent years, Monaghan was one of the referees in the league.

Monaghan most likely would've been back on the basketball court refereeing Suburban League games this winter, but she was tragically killed last April.

Suburban League Commissioner Joe Ciejka, who's from Ware, couldn't recall another person who played, coached and was a referee in the Suburban League during the past 40 years.

"I believe Eileen is the first person to play, coach, and has been a referee in the Suburban league," Ciejka said. "Eileen brought an incredible spirit to the Suburban League and the kindness of hearts. Even though her heart has been silenced, we're not going to let her spirit ever die."

The inaugural Eileen Monaghan Sportsmanship Award was given to the Gateway 5/6th grade basketball team prior to the start of the 5/6th grade Division 2 championship game between Easthampton and Hampshire, which took place at Chicopee Comp on March 9.

"I think the sportsmanship award is very special because it shows how many lives that my mom touched," said Kathleen Brooks, who is Eileen's youngest daughter. "She just loved girls sports, especially basketball. She prob-

ably would've been very proud of this award."

Brooks, who presented the sportsmanship award to Gateway, graduated from Chicopee Comp in 2019 where she played soccer, basketball, and lacrosse.

Her older sister, Ashley Rouleau, played two sports at Comp.

The Gateway Suburban League basketball team didn't win any games this season, but the players celebrated small victories and kept a positive attitude on the court.

"Being selected as the first sportsmanship award winner in the Suburban League is very special," said Gateway head coach Peter Sadler. "We didn't have a lot of experienced players this year, but we kept improving throughout the season. We came close to winning a couple of games. We just focused on doing one thing to get better in each game. The girls never gave up and kept a positive attitude."

The members of the Gateway girls' basketball team are Victoria Barnes, Riley Chornyar, Liv Dulu, Lila Castro, Senavieve Rosseau, Fiona Hollowell, Faith Chretlen, Evelyln Sadler, Abigail Sadler, Emma Johnson, and Alyvia Kaynowski.

The Suburban League referees voted for the Sportsmanship Award.

Unlike her daughters, Monaghan graduated from Chicopee High School. She played soccer and basketball for the Lady Pacers. She was inducted into the Chicopee Athletic Hall of Fame in 2013. Monaghan also played soccer and basketball at Western New England College. She was inducted into the WNEC Hall of Fame in 2006.

"My mom was always

very humble, but she always told us that she loved playing sports," Brooks said. "She didn't score 1,000 career points in high school, but she did at WNEC. She always worked very hard and that's what she wanted everyone else to do."

Monaghan graduated from college with a bachelor's degree in management. She was the Chief-of-Staff for Chicopee State Representative Joseph Wagner for twenty-one years. She was also the Executive Assistant to Sheriff Nick Cocchi at the Hampden County Sheriff's Department.

Monaghan was also a summer league soccer coach. Her older brother, John, coached the girls' summer league soccer team at that same time. The two siblings battled against each other several times.

"It was a lot of fun coaching against my sister's summer league soccer team," John Monaghan said. "Having the Suburban League name their sportsmanship award in her honor really means a lot to the family. She put a lot of time and effort into sports. She just wanted to help the kids get better."

A high school girls varsity basketball team will also be receiving the Eileen Monaghan Sportsmanship Award on March 20.

"We had high school Sportsmanship Award for about six or seven years, but then it stopped due to the COVID-19 Pandemic," Ciejka said. "We're going to be bringing the high school sportsmanship award back in Eileen's name at our referee's banquet on March 20."

The Gateway players didn't get to play in the Suburban League finals this year, but it was still a very special day for them.

Carriveau represents Comp at Senior All-Star Game

SPRINGFIELD – Last Thursday evening, Taryn Carriveau of Chicopee Comprehensive High School, represented the school in the High School Senior All-Star Games held at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.



Carriveau was the lone representative from Comp this year.



TURLEY PHOTOS BY DAVID HENRY WWW.SWEETDOGPHOTOS.COM
Taryn Carriveau looks to shoot.

T-Birds suffer loss as they pursue playoff spot

BRIDGEPORT, Conn. — The Springfield Thunderbirds (30-26-2-4) stumbled on the road and fell to the Bridgeport Islanders (14-40-4-3) by a final score of 4-1 on Saturday inside Total Mortgage Arena.

For a ninth straight game, the T-Birds spotted their opponent a 1-0 lead as 35-year-old Chris Terry cleaned up a rebound off the pads of Vadim Zherenko at 4:36 of the first to give Bridgeport the lead.

The T-Birds answered back thanks to their red-hot power play at 8:21, as Matthew Peca led a streaking Nikita Alexandrov to the blue paint for a backhand that found its way through

Henrik Tikkanen to even the game, 1-1.

Zherenko and Tikkanen dealt with some chaos near their creases early in the second, but the 1-1 tie carried into the midpoint of the game before a costly too-many-men penalty hurt Springfield.

With their first power play of the night, the Islanders struck as Adam Beckman fired a wrist to the top shelf just moments after he clanged one off the post, and Bridgeport had the 2-1 lead at 11:27 of the second.

Beckman was not finished with his exploits either, as the newly-acquired Islanders cashed in on 2-on-1 setup from Brian Pinho at

17:09 to give Bridgeport an insurance tally heading into the third, 3-1.

Cam Thiesing added further to the lead just 1:37 into the third, intercepting a puck in the Springfield zone and backhanding a chance past Zherenko to make it a 4-1 game. Springfield managed only seven shots in the final period, and Tikkanen finished a relatively stress-free night with 21 saves in the Bridgeport win.

The T-Birds return home on Friday and Saturday for the first-ever matchups on home ice against the Iowa Wild, with 7:05 p.m. puck drops slated for both nights inside the Thunderdome.

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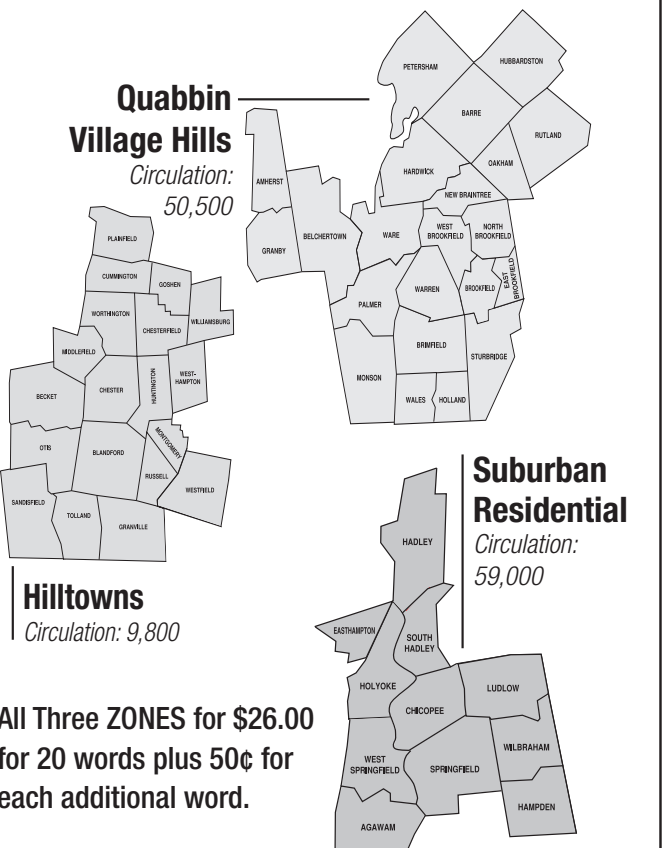
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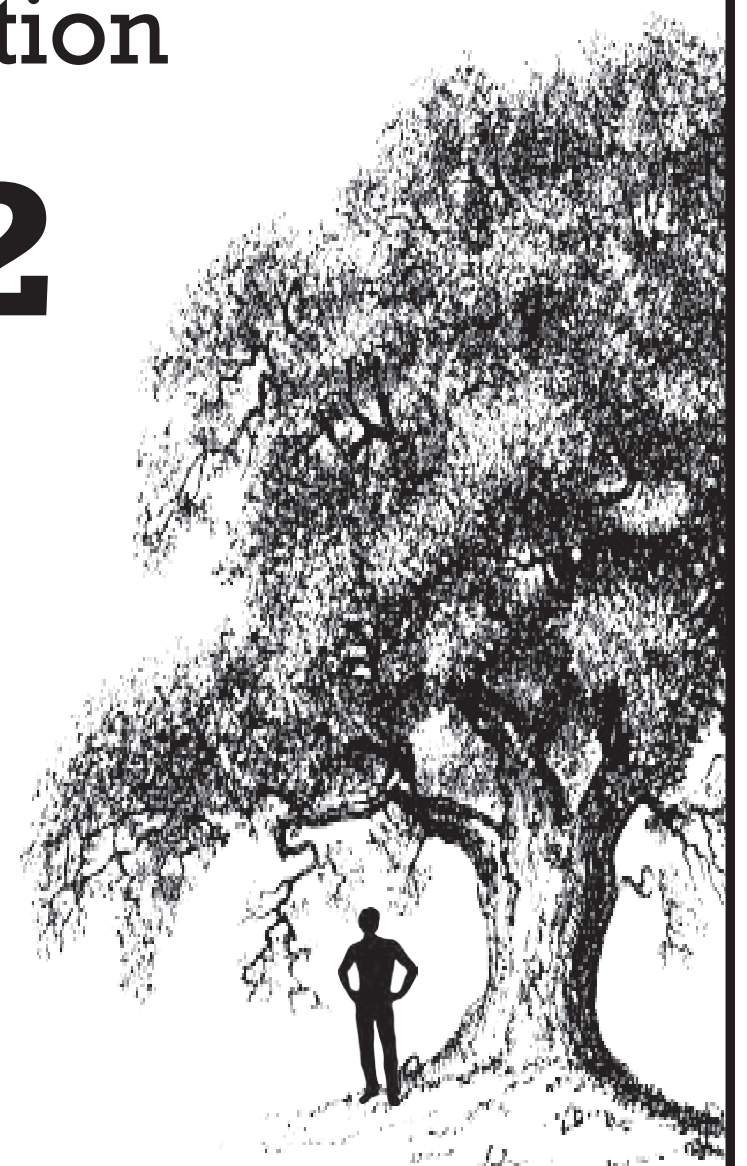
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